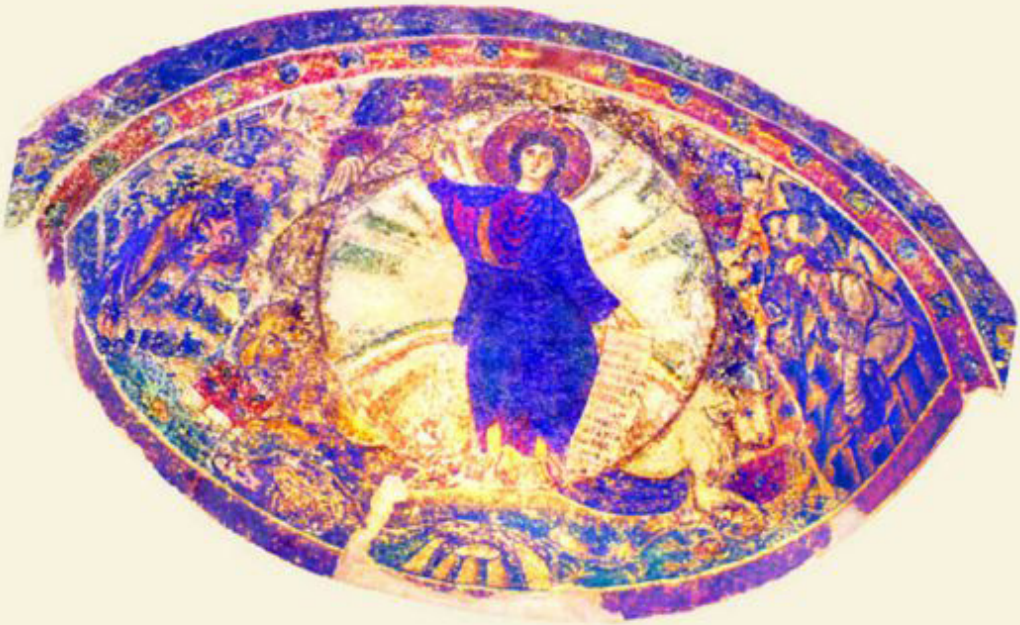

IN SEARCH OF THE

EARLY CHRISTIANS

WAYNE A. MEEKS

edited by

ALLEN R. HILTON &

H. GREGORY SNYDER

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SELECTED ESSAYS

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CONTENTS

EDITORS' PREFACE

The title of this book, *In Search of the Early Christians,* appropriately characterizes the work of Wayne A. Meeks. While the essays collected here diverge widely in content and focus, all of them spring from the fundamental conviction that people are more than disembodied intellects. The men and women who were drawn to the first Christian groups were subject to all the vicissitudes of life in ancient cities: they lived in neighborhoods, they were embedded in complex webs of status relations, they were subject to diverse social and economic pressures. While giving intellectual and religious history its due, Meeks and others began to lay increased emphasis on the concrete social existence of the first Christians, rather than attending solely to their ideas and beliefs. It now seems obvious that any story of the growth of Christianity must take account of such factors. In fact, forty years

ago, it was not at all obvious, and the degree to which it seems so now is in large part because of Wayne Meeks's careful and insightful scholarship.

The challenge that his work has posed to the discipline of New Testament studies and the role these articles played in issuing that challenge is chronicled in the author's introductory essay, "Reflections on an Era." It is our task here simply to make way for the essays themselves. To that end, it may help to mention a few editorial decisions that we hope will make them accessible to more readers. We have left the articles essentially untouched. Because the volume is meant, in part at least, to record a period in the history of scholarship, we have not supplied subsequent bibliographical references to supplement the original citations. In fact, the only substantive change in these is the manner in which Hebrew, Greek, and Coptic quotations are represented. Keeping one eye on specialists and the other on the general reader, we have rendered all ancient languages in their own script and then supplied parenthetical English translations. We hope that this decision has the utility we have imagined.

Finally, it is ours to thank those who have made this book possible. We are especially grateful to the original publishers of these articles, who are credited individually on a separate page, for their ready permission to reproduce them, to our colleagues at Yale Divinity School and Davidson College for their support and understanding during our work on this project; to the Wabash Institute for grant assistance; to Glenn Snyder, Allen's research assistant at Yale Divinity School; to Jeremy Hultin, who assembled the indices; and to Lara Heimert, Heidi Downey, and Margaret Otzel, the Yale University Press editors on this project, who have helped us considerably at each stage. Most of all, of course, we thank Wayne Meeks. As we have reread and prepared these essays for publication, we have been continually reminded of the influence their author has exerted over us and over a generation of scholars. We offer these essays back to him in new form, with our considerable gratitute and deepest respect for him as mentor, exemplar, and friend.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Allen Hilton and Greg Snyder not only persuaded both me and the Press that publishing a collection of my essays was a good idea, they are also responsible for making the collection into a *book*. It was they who conceived the order and shape of the whole and who browbeat me into providing an introduction and afterword to give voice to that conception. They helped me to place the individual chapters within a narrative about the transformations that study of the New Testament had undergone in the past several decades. For all that, as well as the countless hours of hard labor they have invested in every detail of the project (which they might more prudently have devoted to their own work), I am more grateful than I can find words to express.

Thanks also to Lou Martyn, Dale Martin, and Cyril O'Regan for reading

and commenting on the introduction and afterword, though I fear my revisions were not fully adequate to their sage criticisms. Finally, I thank Yale University Press for adding this volume to a series of happy collaborative ventures, and in particular Charles Grench, who first encouraged this project before departing for a warmer climate, and Larisa Heimert, Joyce Ippolito, and Margaret Otzel, who saw it through to completion.

REFLECTIONS ON AN ERA

Wayne A. Meeks

The essays gathered in this volume represent three decades of trying to understand the New Testament—and the people who wrote and first listened to and used the writings out of which the New Testament came into being. Looking back over that career, all this labor to understand such a small book seems odd even to me. Yet I have hardly been alone. These essays constitute but a drop in the sea of ink that has spread around those few pages of Greek text in nineteen centuries. There must be something odd about these old documents themselves—or, rather, about the peculiar and infinitely varied parts they have played in the lives of particular individuals and communities and even whole cultures.

A rather miscellaneous collection of things, this New Testament: a bit of history about a new cult with grand pretensions, some rough biographical

sketches about a Jewish prophet, a handful of letters to people we do not know about issues we do not completely understand, a few tracts and pamphlets. Very little of it is of high literary quality, by ancient or modern standards. Yet there it lies, deep within the layers of our cultural memory, glowing at times with an uncanny light, at other times exuding a dark, destructive aura. Its words have inspired the occasional saint to a life of heroic service, purity, self-sacrifice, or martyrdom; they have elevated whole communities of ordinary people to extraordinary expectations of moral exertion and mutual caring. But its dark sayings have also enchanted otherwise sober and pious souls to terrible beliefs and acts: the defense of slavery, murder, genocide, madness, suicide.

The story of the uses and effects of the New Testament, for good and ill, must wait for another time. The essays that follow tell a much more limited story. They reflect a career-long attempt—by no means completed—to find an adequate way to describe the very beginnings of the Christian movement. This conceit of the *beginning*, the notion that if we can get at the origins of a thing the thing itself will become clear, is both ancient and, in the form that has driven my scholarship and most other twentieth-century investigation of early Christianity, distinctly modern. The ancient determination to hold fast to the beginning was empowered by a sense, perhaps peculiarly Christian, of a particular time and place when things happened ("under Pontius Pilate") that made the human story swerve into new channels. Its modern permutation emerges from the evolutionary mood of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century science and humanistic scholarship, and often sets itself squarely against the tradition's ritualizing and sacralizing enshrinement of the beginning. This modern zeal for the origins of things engenders a kind of inquiry that loves to describe itself in organic metaphors: it speaks of the soil in which the seed of Christianity was planted (and wonders whether that soil was most characteristically "Jewish" or "Hellenistic" or "Roman" or "syncretistic"); of flowering and branching and giving birth. This way of understanding rests on the assumption, as often as not unacknowledged, that the essence of a thing is present *in nuce* at the origin. Yet the typical mode of inquiry, paradoxically, seeks antecedents for every phenomenon, as if there were always some prior thing that would explain the new. The danger here of infinite regress, the arbitrariness of starting points, the inability to confront genuine novelty, and above all the *abstractness* with which the evolutionary interpreter typically describes the supposed forces of cultural history—all these signal hidden flaws in the habits of modernist historiography. For a variety of reasons, those concealed cracks in the armor of critical rationality spread to

the surface for my generation. However reluctantly, we had to deal with them.[1]

These essays, then, are bits and pieces of a quite personal story, a kind of academic memoir. At the same time, they represent a period of scholarship that has seen some far-reaching changes in our ways of thinking about the early Christian movement—perhaps it is not too pretentious to speak of a shift of paradigms, although there is as yet no agreement on what the new paradigms ought to be. Beside the intellectual shifts (and affecting them in ways that have yet to be fully analyzed), there have also been significant shifts in the defining social context within which such scholarship is done: from theological faculties and seminaries to humanities faculties in universities, from a discipline defined in Europe and imported to America to one in which the most lively discussion occurs in North America. None of these shifts has been absolute, of course, but the center of gravity has moved in each case enough to tip the balance in the kinds of questions asked. Whether the results are good or bad on balance will be for future historians to decide. In any event, I have had the good fortune to be in the right place at the right time and thus to be in the middle of these changes, and so I imagine that my story may be of interest to a wider circle than those few students who will find it merely convenient to have these articles gathered between two covers. For the same reason the editors and I have decided not to try to bring the essays up to date. They stand as roadmarks on a way that goes on, and that function outweighs any embarrassment I may suffer from opinions no longer held, positions baldly stated that now would need to be hedged about with explanations, and all those subsequent publications that ought to be included in the footnotes.

REINVENTING A DISCIPLINE

"The Image of the Androgyne" was not the first of these essays to be published (1974), but it does exhibit my first attempts to break free from what I had come to see as the artificiality of the then-prevailing modes of New Testament interpretation. At the same time it illustrates continuities between that scholarship and my own, and it sounds certain themes that would persist and develop as I learned more. Research for this article actually began seven years before its publication, in the second year of my teaching at Indiana University. The question that drove the research, however, forced itself upon me earlier still, when I was undertaking to teach a course in "New Testament ethics" at Dartmouth College in the spring of 1965. Anyone who

wants to base ethical judgments on the New Testament must face up in some fashion to the variety of moral directives within its pages, some of which seem flatly to contradict others. Among the topics I posed for my class was the dissonance between two passages in the letters attributed to the apostle Paul. In the Letter to Galatians (3:27–28) the apostle writes: "For all of you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (like a garment): there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no 'male and female,' for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Against this vision, which sounds so exhilaratingly egalitarian to modern ears, there stood another group of texts, also attributed to Paul: "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord; . . . children, obey your parents in every way; . . . slaves, obey in every way your masters according to the flesh . . . " (Col 3:18–22; cf. Eph 5:22–6:9). In the history of Christian moral formation, it is clearly the latter set of texts that have had the greater influence; it was the former that excited me. But how to make sense of that revolutionary vision —and of the suppression of its subversive potential?

Some tools were ready to hand for my excavation of the past, forged in German universities and sometimes sharpened or adapted by North American importers. Apart from the standard methods of classical philology, it was especially the techniques called "the history of forms" (bowdlerized in translation as "form criticism") and "the history of traditions" that were promising. So in that strikingly stylized sentence of Paul's in Galatians I was able to identify a "form," that is, a pattern of language shaped in repetitive use by a group of people in a certain context of their life together. The rhetorical excess of the sentence—going far beyond what Paul's argument required—as well as its contradiction of some things Paul said elsewhere could be explained if Paul was *quoting* such a pattern familiar to his audience. Moreover, the context provides unmistakable clues to the setting within the community's practice ("Sitz im Leben") where the form would have been at home. Thus I came to propose a "baptismal reunification formula." The next step was to inquire about the malleability of such a tradition: different ways in which Paul and other early Christians might cash in the rhetorical potential of this richly evocative formula.

All of this was quite conventional in the sixties, at least for those of us who thought we were on the cutting edge of scholarship—that is, *au courant* with what was happening in Germany. My understanding of *Form- und Traditionsgeschichte* had been refined, to be sure, by the free adaptations by two of my teachers, themselves trained in Europe. Paul Schubert, who had studied classical philology as well as New Testament in Germany and then at the Univer-

sity of Chicago, pioneered in the stylistic analysis of letter conventions, carefully comparing the theories of letter style in the rhetorical handbooks of the Greek and Roman world as well as the actual practice of the ancients in both literary collections of letters and the hordes of private letters preserved on papyri. In place of the German technical terms "form" and "life situation," Schubert borrowed the architectural motto, "form follows function." His insight, that to understand religious language one should ask after its function, was to prove prolific for my thinking. My other master teacher in these matters was Nils Alstrup Dahl, who had studied in Germany with the best-known New Testament scholar of the century, Rudolf Bultmann, but who brought to that experience a grounding also in the broader Scandinavian tradition of the history of religions, including the phenomenology of myth and ritual, as well as a deep and sympathetic knowledge of the Jewish sources contemporary with the emergence of Christianity and good Norwegian common sense.

The study of the New Testament, whatever techniques it might use, was conceived as a theological enterprise. For anyone who might inquire after the sociology of this body of knowledge, the relevant facts would be that those scholars who defined the discipline were employed in theological seminaries or the theological faculties of certain universities and that the consumers of their product were other religious professionals, mostly priests and ministers or seminarians. If one asked about the ethical consequence of a passage such as my "baptismal reunification formula," the intermediate step would be to ask what was the theological implication of the text. "Theological" might be construed in various ways, but two constructions dominated the interpretive models. Most common was a cognitivist or propositional model. The question was, to what theological proposition does the text point, from which ethical implications might be systematically deduced? The other model was the existentialist, so powerfully advocated by Rudolf Bultmann in his famous "demythologizing" proposals. Here the texts were seen as symbols expressing an existential way of being in the world, and each text potentially an instantiation—or an obstacle, for Bultmann was ruthless in exposing the failure of most of the early Christian theologians to live up to the best and most necessary truth—of the power of "the kerygma" simultaneously to challenge and to empower individuals to live authentically. The "kerygma," Greek for "proclamation" or "preaching," was mysterious: a Kantian *Ding an sich* that was falsified, Bultmann believed, whenever it was put into words or in any other way (e.g., by sacrament or ritual) "objectified."[2]

None of this made much sense to my Dartmouth students nor to their successors at Indiana and Yale. The more I wrestled with the permutations of my "baptismal reunification formula" in early Christian documents, the less sense it made to me either. There was something airless and abstract about our professional way of talking about such problems, which seemed increasingly to me to have little to do with the way real religious groups actually behave, or, for that matter, with those organic traditions of believing that, in another time, might have counted as the church's theology (or the churches' theologies).

The major alternative to the theological modes of interpretation was a comparativist approach, which had blossomed in the first half of the twentieth century and which most theological interpreters now routinely incorporated in some fashion into their cognitivist or existentialist appropriations. Comparativists, like theologians, could be grouped into two loose families according to their theoretical perspectives and their practical methods. One could be called the phenomenological approach, represented for example by the Dutch thinker Gerardus van der Leeuw and brought to the United States by Joachim Wach, founder of a program in the comparative study of religions at the University of Chicago, the best-known proponent of which became the Romanian emigré Mircea Eliade. For the phenomenologists, religion in all its multiple manifestations could be found to exhibit certain commonalities of human experience and symbolization—the experience of uncanny power, awe before the boundary situations of finitude and death, the dangerous transitions of birth, puberty, childbearing, aging, and dying. To understand any particular phenomenon, say a ritual or a myth, one needed to discover its similarities with other phenomena in the same or other cultures, which in turn were thought to point to the underlying "essence" of religion.[3]

The other major family of comparativists, which had far greater influence on New Testament scholarship, was the "History of Religions School" that began at the University of Göttingen in the 1890s. Scholars of classical and "oriental" languages as well as Old and New Testament specialists in the protestant theological faculty, the members of this group were more resolutely historical than the later group at Chicago (although the latter, too, adopted the phrase "history of religions" to describe their phenomenological work). The Germans' comparisons were within *one* broad and mixed culture, defined loosely as that of the ancient Near and Middle East, particularly the lands around the eastern sector of the Mediterranean Sea. Rather than universal human patterns, they sought antecedents and influences that could plausibly have been mediated by direct contact among the peoples of that ge-

ographical area. They were particularly fascinated by the influence of the peoples from the "oriental" parts of that region on the cultures of Greece and Rome and by the resulting "syncretism," out of which Christianity emerged as a new composite.[4]

From the theological side, the German historians of religion saw Christianity as a result of the conflict-ridden meeting between "Judaism" and "Hellenism." Half a century earlier, the theologian F. C. Baur and his followers in the "Tübingen School" had focused on that conflict in its intra-Christian form, between "Jewish Christianity" and "Hellenistic Gentile Christianity," as the primary engine that, they thought, propelled the whole evolution of the new movement. The dialectic between the two wings of the nascent church pressed toward the synthesis that Baur and his disciples dubbed "early catholicism." The scheme was ingenious, and it resonated powerfully with the grand Hegelian worldview that was coming to dominate the liberal German intellectual temperament. In the Tübingen scheme, "Judaism" and "Hellenism" were code words for complex sets of ideas masquerading as historical entities. On the one side is the particularity of a national or ethnic religion; on the other the universal religion for all humankind. On the one hand the limited and conditioned facts of historical circumstance, on the other the universal truths of reason. On the one hand flesh, on the other spirit. On the one hand "legalism," on the other freedom.[5]

The History of Religions School would use the code words "Hellenism" and "Judaism" with different referents. It was neither the biblical and legal tradition of Israel nor the intellectual culture of classical Greece that provided the best clues for understanding the rise of Christianity, but the effects in both the Jewish and the pagan worlds of "oriental" influences in the sphere of religion. What seemed typical of the Judaism out of which Christianity arose was *apocalypticism,* with its myths of cosmic warfare and its expectations of an immediate, cataclysmic transformation of the world. On the Hellenistic side, attention was focused on the initiatory *mystery religions* that flourished in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and on *Gnosticism,* which was now taken to be a pre-Christian religious movement sharing many of the sensibilities of the mysteries.

The History of Religions School had in common with the Tübingen School an evolutionary perspective. Members of the school tended to identify the critical phases in the development of Christianity with its expansion into successive geographical spheres, each with its own culture, beginning with the purely Jewish circle of the earliest Jesus movement and ending with the wide world of syncretistic Hellenism, with several intermediary steps. So

Christianity was transformed from an apocalyptic sect of Judaism into a cultic mystery of Hellenism.[6]

In my baptismal reunification formula, however, and in the curious mythic construct of the androgynous originator of the human race that seemed to lie somewhere behind it, distinctly Jewish and broadly Hellenistic and vaguely oriental notions and images seemed to be quite promiscuously mixed together. None of those categories, nor the evolutionary schemes that informed the History of Religions School, helped me at all in sorting out the mixture.

Two things were wrong. One embarrassment was that both new discoveries (papyri, inscriptions, the famous Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi horde, monumental evidence unearthed by archaeologists, Jewish iconography) and—perhaps even more important—new approaches to the writing of ancient history were challenging some of the most cherished "facts" upon which the standard pictures of Judaism's place in the Greco-Roman world were based. Scholars were reluctantly discovering that ancient people often refused to stay in one or another of the cultural boxes that modern interpreters had constructed for them. In particular, the variety of ways in which Jews adapted to the larger culture of the Greco-Roman world, and the comfort with which many of them seemed to hold simultaneously beliefs that to modern scholarship were mutually exclusive, were becoming too obvious to suppress.

The other problem was that the genealogical approach to cultural phenomena did not tell me anything about what the results of the various influences that scholars hypothesize meant to the people who were actually affected. I had come to believe that baptism for some of the earliest followers of Jesus was an evocative ritual that dramatized the death of the old, divided humanity, the putting off of the "garments of skin" that were nothing less than the gendered human body, and putting on the "garments of light" that represented the original, undivided Image of God. If that was true, it might indeed be interesting if one could show that this or that fragment of the imagery was shaped by Middle Platonic speculation on the Aristophanes fable in Plato's *Symposium,* another influenced by old Iranian notions of a primaeval person, another by Jewish speculations about a human figure in heaven or an angel bearing God's name. Yet none of those possible or probable ingredients of the baptismal myth would help me to understand what *happened* when a new convert to the Jesus movement was baptized and, consequently, what effects that ritual would have had on the practice of the community thus formed, or on the ideas and feelings of the people that Paul was trying to engage when he echoed that baptismal formula in his Letter to the Galatians.

I needed to rethink Paul Schubert's dictum that form follows function in religious discourse and in rhetoric. I needed to discover as a historian what some philosophers were saying, that the force of language (including symbolic actions) comprises not merely what speech and ritual *say* but also what they *do*.

The first task was to try to understand the function of myth. Myth was a central category for the History of Religions School. The term made theologians acutely uncomfortable, at least from the time when David Friedrich Strauss made myth one of the fundamental analytic tools in his critical analysis of the Gospels.[7] Rudolf Bultmann, heir to but outspoken critic of the liberal theology inaugurated by Strauss and the other pupils of Strauss's teacher F. C. Baur, and active in the second generation of the History of Religions School, proclaimed "demythologizing" to be the primary task of biblical theology in the 1940s. By that term he did not mean the removal of myth from the discourse of the early Christians, he said (that was the liberal fallacy), but its *translation* into an appropriate philosophical language. For Bultmann, the fitting philosophy was the existentialism of his colleague at Marburg, Martin Heidegger.

For me, however, Bultmann's relentless existentialism seemed to lead into the quicksand of subjectivism. Thus both of the prevailing schools of New Testament interpretation seemed increasingly to yield a sense of unreality. I began to search for new ways of putting the central question, which I came to formulate roughly like this: What exactly do religious language and religious practices do for people?

One of the centers around which Bultmann's exegetical and theological work revolved was the Fourth Gospel; the other was the letters of Paul. My dissertation had been on the christology of the Fourth Gospel. It was natural that my research at first should continue to focus in that area, even as I was wrestling with the mystery of the Androgyne and the Pauline baptismal formula. Everyone who wrote about the Fourth Gospel used the words "riddle," "puzzle," or "enigma." Bultmann offered a comprehensive solution to the puzzle. Behind the Gospel, he said, is hidden an elaborate myth, broken by the Evangelist (who thereby became the prototypical demythologizer and Bultmann's worthy forerunner). Trying to reconstruct the original myth that "John" had reinterpreted, Bultmann was led to focus on an obscure syncretistic, baptizing sect that still exists in certain areas of modern Iraq and Iran. Other scholars prior to Bultmann had noticed some striking resemblances between the language of some of the cultic texts of that sect and the distinctive language of Jesus' discourses in the Gospel of John. Those texts,

moreover, were preserved in Aramaic, the language of much of the ancient Middle East, including the Palestine of Jesus' time, and the sect preserved stories about John the Baptist and about their ancestors' trek from a place in the West. A theological term especially prominent in the texts was the Aramaic noun *manda*ʿ which was the equivalent of the Greek *gnōsis,* "knowledge," leading modern scholars to call the sect "Mandaeans" and to associate them with the "Gnostics" attacked by ancient Christian heresiologists.

Here, then, Bultmann found a survival of the pre-Christian Gnosticism that had become a key hypothesis in the history-of-religions explanations of Christian origins. Even though the extant Mandaean texts could not be shown to have been composed before the fifth century C.E. at the earliest, Bultmann argued that the sect must have originated among the followers of John the Baptist, and that the polemical notes referring to John in the Fourth Gospel must stem from the Johannine Christians' hostility to a rival sect that was none other than the proto-Mandaeans. The proto-Mandaeans, Bultmann reasoned, identified the Baptist as a Gnostic revealer, come down from the world of light to awaken and save the sparks of divine light trapped in a world of darkness. Then a member of the sect converted to the Jesus movement and transformed the myths that had been applied to John to speak of Jesus in those astonishingly lofty images that characterize the Fourth Gospel.

The riddle of the Fourth Gospel, then, could be solved only if one knew the "powerful myth" that lay hidden behind it, which the author had deliberately broken. By putting the myth back together, with the help of the Mandaeans, one could understand what the evangelist had meant by what he had not said. The brilliance of Bultmann's historical construct is matched by the adroitness of his detailed exegesis. There is nothing else in New Testament scholarship of the twentieth century to equal the grandness and precision of the whole. And yet, as a historical explanation, it does not finally work. For someone fresh out of graduate school, my dawning recognition of that failure was rather frightening.

I thought that a different way of putting the question might work better. Instead of trying to solve the riddle, perhaps one should first ask in what kind of situation riddles can serve as a privileged means of communication. That led me into a number of wild goose chases and blind alleys in the social sciences, but eventuated in the essay published in 1972, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism." In search of theoretical guidance, I had blundered into the sociology of sect-formation—a not uncontroversial field—and into attempts to describe religious phenomena as elements of cultural systems.

In the meantime, I had plunged enthusiastically into the study of Paul. It occurred to me that one of the most interesting things about the Pauline letters was the astonishing variety of the ways they had been interpreted and ways those interpretations had affected the history of Western religious thought. I launched an undergraduate course at Indiana University called "Paul and His Influence." That led to my being asked to do a Norton Critical Edition of "The Writings of St. Paul." In the epilogue to that volume, I called Paul "the Christian Proteus." Still possessed then of some of the self-confidence of the modernist historical criticism, I wondered how a more *historical* exegesis might yet enable us to grasp that elusive, polymorphic *daimon* from the sea of the past and force him to speak truth to our time.[8] Perhaps here, too, one might try focusing on the communities and the communicative situations for which the letters were written, rather than on the theological concepts that, one could argue, lay somewhere "behind" Paul's often contradictory statements. Suddenly I became aware that these letters represented an extraordinary mine of primary information about some of the earliest Christian communities: a social historian's dream. And I found that by asking some very simple questions, I was quickly led into enormously complicated problems.

EMERGING ISSUES

By the time I had published the first two essays in this collection, a series of questions had taken shape in my conversation with the primary texts, with students, and with colleagues in my own field and in other disciplines. Those questions have continued to drive my subsequent research. They form the leitmotifs of the publications gathered here, and they also represent issues that have preoccupied many other students of early Christianity and early Judaism over these three decades, including some who would take an approach quite different from my own or who would offer quite different answers.

Foremost among these questions was one I formulated like this: "What was it like to become and be an ordinary Christian in the first century?"[9] The question implied a shift in focus from the intellectual leaders of the movement to its more typical participants, from the general to the particular, from genealogy to function, from ideas to social patterns. To begin answering such a question, it became necessary to learn about aspects of everyday life in the ancient Roman world. If new initiates into the messianic sect of Jesus's followers, emerging naked from the symbolic death and rebirth of baptism, as

they were reclothed with the "New Human" of Christ, the very Image of God, heard recited the mysterious phrases, "no more slave or free, no more 'male and female,'" what would those words have meant to them, and did the words have any practical consequences? One knew something about the Roman laws of slavery, but how did people think and feel about being slaves, having slaves, different categories of slavery, the prospects of manumission, the status of slaves and freedpersons whose owners had high social standing, like those in the household of Caesar? What was happening to the roles of women in the era of the Roman principate? Who were all these women who seem to play such leading roles in the accounts of the Pauline mission and Pauline communities in the letters and in the Book of Acts? How did they acquire the freedom to act as leaders and patrons of this new cult, and how unusual was that freedom? How would that affect what they (and their husbands) heard in the baptismal formula?

Training for New Testament study, however, did not prepare one to investigate such questions. The student, as I began my career, learned the classical languages, something about the philosophical and literary traditions—which represented a very tiny élite of the population—and the rudiments of Roman history. Roman history, however, was principally political and military history; it did not concern itself with ordinary people. Fortunately, that was changing rapidly at just the time I began my quest for insights into the Roman provincial commonplaces. Roman social history, inaugurated by such pioneers as Mihail Rostovtzeff at Yale in the 1930s, had begun to blossom under the leadership of people like A. H. M. Jones, Moses I. Finley, Keith Hopkins, Geza Alföldi, P. R. C. Weaver, E. A. Judge, Geoffrey de Ste. Croix, Peter Brown, and, most crucially for my own developing understanding, Ramsay MacMullen at Yale. Indeed the essays below could never have been written or even conceived in their actual form apart from a profound, years-long conversation with two colleagues at Yale, Ramsay MacMullen and Abraham Malherbe. Malherbe was my senior New Testament colleague for twenty-four years, and he brought to our conversation a vast, detailed knowledge of the philosophical and rhetorical literature of Greece and Rome (my own research had taken me more into the variety of Jewish sources from antiquity). Different as we were, we three shared an insatiable curiosity about the way everyday things work, an itch to solve hard puzzles, a distrust of theory and deduction when it came to writing history, a fascination with religious change, and a keen sense that social context is a key to understanding the past.

A closely related question, or set of questions, had to do with the dialectic between language (including communicative actions) and social context. In

what ways and to what extent do social forms control the force of speech acts? On the other hand, how far do forms of speech, especially when habitual and ritualized, go to shape a group's identity and its practice? To approach such questions systematically is to enter a realm that has been fought over by armies of modern social theorists. My readings in the classics of sociology and social anthropology, in part in graduate seminars with several generations of Yale graduate students, in part with two groups of colleagues in summer seminars sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1977 and 1979, showed me how complex the matters were. I found myself most in tune with the work of Max Weber and his successors, although his theory was perhaps more invested with philosophical idealism than I was comfortable with. Weber's was an approach to sociology that aims at understanding rather than explanation, correlations ("elective affinities") rather than one-sided laws of causation between social structure and ideology, a human rather than a natural science.[10] Standing in the Weberian tradition, the discipline of the sociology of knowledge, as defined especially by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, helped me to formulate the issues to be sorted out. The other major contributors to my emerging theoretical perspective were social and cultural anthropologists. The notion of the historian as ethnographer, trying to understand the culture of strangers in a different time as well as a different place, was suggestive—although one had to keep reminding oneself that this notion is a metaphor and the cases are in fact quite different. The common distinction among ethnographers between "etic" and "emic" descriptions is, nevertheless, an important one for the historian to contemplate. The "emic" is the subjects' own description of their world, as they make sense of it. The "etic" is the redescription by the ethnographer (or historian) of that world, as we try to make sense of it.

In any description of a social world, the formation of values and norms, the socialization of individuals into the community's norms, and the practical reinforcement of approved behavior are quite central matters. The shaping of practice and the effects of practice on the shape of perceptions and belief constitute an enormously intricate tangle of problems. It is a tangle, however, that anyone seeking to understand the dynamics of change in values and behavior must try to unravel. The hope of understanding those dynamics is one of the primary reasons why the history of Christianity continues to intrigue believers as well as unbelievers. Disappointed with the prevailing ways of doing theology, I felt increasingly that questions about the ways Christian patterns of moral practice came into being might get us closer to the matters actually dealt with in the earliest Christian documents. Ethics

and community formation seemed more the immediate point than doctrine, for example, of Paul's letters. After the debacle of my Dartmouth course on "New Testament ethics," however, I came slowly to question the usual way of putting the question. I came to see that, despite the many books that continue to be published on the topic, "New Testament ethics" is a misleading category, confusing historical constructions with normative judgments, eliding difficult questions about the nature of a scriptural canon, and above all failing to take with sufficient seriousness the dialectic between the formation of a community and the development of the community's norms of belief and behavior. I began to tackle these questions cautiously, mistrusting generalizations and theoretical constructions, exploring particular situations revealed by close reading of specific texts in the light of all I could learn about social and cultural contexts. Among the essays below, "And Rose up to Play," "The Man from Heaven in Paul's Letter to the Philippians," and "Judgment and the Brother" explore the peculiar grammar of moral discourse in the letters of Paul. "The Circle of Reference in Pauline Morality," "The Polyphonic Ethics of the Apostle Paul," and "A Hermeneutics of Social Embodiment" move to more general questions of method and perspective.

Intertwined with all these questions was another: a question imposed on my generation by the events of European history and at the same time opened to new dimensions of scholarly inquiry by new discoveries and by new developments in the structure of North American universities. This was the question about the nature and consequences of the Jewishness of early Christianity. Of course everyone knew that Jesus and his first followers had been Jewish (everyone, that is, but a few German-Christian writers in the thirties who tried to show that Jesus was an Aryan). Yet that fact was beclouded by traditional theological categories, the practical divisions of scholarly labor, difficulties inherent in the complexity of the Jewish sources and nonliterary evidence, and inherited prejudices.

I have already called attention to some ways the antithetical constructs "Judaism" and "Hellenism" came to define the cultural map of Christianity's environment for several generations of scholars. The interpretive power of this sharp division lent the scheme a resilience in the face of contradictory facts, producing a strange blindness to cumulating bodies of evidence. Further blinkering our understanding was the habit of referring to this bipolar world as the "background" of the New Testament. It is, of course, natural for scholars to focus on the subjects of their specialty, so that other occupants of the field of vision are less clearly and fully seen. In this case, however, specialization was reinforced by a conscious or unconscious privileging of Chris-

tianity for religious or theological reasons. Christianity emerged from the syncretistic culture of the Roman world as *the* world religion; it transcended its Jewish matrix as Judaism's *fulfillment.* Thus unwittingly the polemical strategies of the early Christian movement, by which it established and distinguished itself over against other varieties of Judaism, were perpetuated. Rhetorical invective came to be treated as historical description: the defensive moves of an endangered new cult were embedded in its foundation documents and thus carried forward after Constantine into the self-understanding of an imperially sponsored and powerful institution. In our time perhaps the most significant shift in the way the guild of scholars of ancient Christianity views its job has come from our being shocked into awareness of the ideological dimensions of the sacred texts we study—to say nothing of the texts we produce.

No longer is it possible to conceive of early Christianity's environment as *background* divided into two neatly separated worlds. Instead we face an enormously complex cultural context within which the varieties of Christianity —like other sects, groups, and movements of Jews—were indigenous. The shift in our perceptions of Judaism in the period of Roman dominance, during the past generation, has been dramatic—nothing less than an intellectual revolution in the historiography of second-temple and Tannaitic Judaism. What is most remarkable—a singular grace, which we could by no means take for granted—is that students of early Christianity were present at the creation of this revolution, sometimes even participants. The mutual engagement between students of Jewish communities of the Greco-Roman world and students of early Christianity, an engagement that is now routine in American professional societies and universities, does not take place on this scale anywhere else in the world. The implications of this engagement can hardly be exaggerated.

I was fortunate that my work on the Fourth Gospel had forced me into an encounter with a wide diversity of Jewish and Samaritan sources and led to the recognition that this extraordinary document, containing some of the harshest excoriations of "the Jews" of any early Christian writing, was at the same time perhaps the most thoroughly Jewish piece of literature in the New Testament. I came to see that the very structure of this complex composition, with its sublime symbolism and sometimes hauntingly beautiful passages, was a direct expression and indeed an implement of the traumatic separation of an early group of Jesus followers from their disbelieving fellow Jews. I set out the argument for this "weak functionalist" reading of the Gospel in the first of the essays to be published, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sec-

tarianism." That essay met a surprisingly large and favorable response, and encouraged me both to try to discern other dimensions of the Johannine group's history ("Equal to God") and to explore different uses of similar imagery in other Christian groups ("The Man from Heaven in Paul's Letter to the Philippians"). "Breaking Away" attempted to make some more general comparisons, while "On Trusting an Unpredictable God" explored some of the theological implications of the apostle Paul's wrestling with the identity of the communities he had founded. Directly or indirectly, however, the question of the various Christian groups' continuity and discontinuity with the variety of ways Jews inhabited the Greco-Roman world is a constant motif in all the essays below.[11]

One might say (echoing Winston Churchill's famous *bon mot* about American and British English) that Jews and Christians, in the formative period we are discussing, were divided by a common Bible. Different readings of the same texts played a central role in the polemics between the early followers of Jesus and other groups of Jews. But scripture and its multiple interpretive possibilities were also important for internal debates and the formation of identity of each of the distinguishable communities of Jews in antiquity and for each of the varieties of what came to be called "Christianity." Over the past several decades, comparative analysis of the variety of ways in which different circles of Jews and different circles of the emerging Christian movement interpreted scripture has become a key tool for historical understanding. Nils Dahl understood early on the importance of the three-way interaction among scripture, traditions of interpretation, and new experiences by the interpreting community, as revealed in the Dead Sea Scrolls,[12] and I have used this insight as one of the threads of Ariadne in my explorations of the New Testament texts (see especially the essay "And Rose up to Play," but this motif appears in most of the others as well). Furthermore, much of traditional Jewish midrash approaches the text with a kind of openness often shading into playfulness, implying not only multiple possibilities of meaning in the same words, a superabundance of communicative potential, but also a postponed closure, a way of being comfortable with depths not yet disclosed. It may be that such ways of reading have things to teach us not only about interpreters of the past but also about our own possibilities (see "Polyphonic Ethics" and "On Trusting an Unpredictable God").

The emphasis on social context of writing and meaning, which has been perhaps the principal theme of my scholarship, is only one of the dimensions of the interpretive task that now lies before us. There are many other paths that we have only begun to explore, and the essays gathered in part 2 below

under the rubric "revisioning" only point sketchily toward some of those paths. One of the discoveries made by modernist critical reading, specifically by "form criticism," has been the surprising fact that the most novel and startling ways of talking about Jesus—precisely the language that would lead the church later to define its great, complex credal formulae about Christ's divine and human nature and the doctrine of the Trinity—first appear in the records in *poetry.* The most profound intuitions of the early followers of Jesus found expression, not in doctrinal propositions, but in the singing and chanting that marked their ritual gatherings. Western Christianity, especially after the Reformation and Counterreformation, has been so dominated by the tradition of its great theologians that too often the history of doctrine has masqueraded as the history of the church and of faith. We have too often forgotten the metaphoricity of all effective speaking about God, and we have neglected those extrarational and extraverbal forms of communication that birth and nurture faith in the people of God, without which the dogmas would be only dry fossils. The final essay in this collection ventures beyond the usual field of New Testament interpretation to inquire about an anonymous artist's visualization of the Image of God, freely revisioning verbal images from biblical texts, in a fifth-century mosaic. Perhaps it is not too much to hope that the next generation of scholars may take the revisioning of images as one of the goals of our endeavor.

Notes

1. For an illuminating discussion of the preoccupation with beginnings in post-Enlightenment scholarship, see Stefan Alkier, *Urchristentum: Zur Geschichte und Theologie einer exegetischen Disziplin,* Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1993).
2. For identification of the "cognitivist" and "symbolic-expressive" types of theological models of religion, see George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Post-Liberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984). I am deeply indebted to Lindbeck's analysis, more subtle and more complex than I can here reproduce, for the sketch that follows. A good introduction to Bultmann's program may be found in the collection of essays in Rudolf Bultmann, *Existence and Faith,* ed. Schubert M. Ogden (New York: World Publishing, 1960); in his Schaffer lectures popularizing his "demythologizing" proposal, *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (New York: Scribner's, 1958); and in his *Theology of the New Testament,* trans. Kendrick Grobel, Scribner Studies in Contemporary Theology (New York: Scribner's, 1951), the latter to be read with the penetrating review by Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Jesus the Christ: The Historical Origins of Christological Doctrine,* ed. Donald Juel (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 187–216.

3. See, for example, G[erardus] van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation,* translated by J. E. Turner (New York: Harper & Row, 1963); Joachim Wach, *Types of Religious Experience Christian and Non-Christian* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972 [originally 1951]); Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion,* trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper and Row, 1961).
4. Gerd Lüdemann and Martin Schröder, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule in Göttingen: eine Dokumentation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987); C. Colpe, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule: Darstellung und Kritik ihres Bildes vom gnostischen Erlösermythus* (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments; (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961).
5. I have discussed the Judaism vs. Hellenism model, which continues to inhibit our understanding of Judaism and its daughter Christianity in antiquity, at greater length in an essay not included here: "Judaism, Hellenism, and the Birth of Christianity," in *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide,* ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001): 17–27.
6. A classic representative of this perspective is Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus,* trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970) [First German edition 1913].
7. David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined,* trans. George Eliot, ed. & introd. by Peter C. Hodgson, Lives of Jesus Series (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972). The first edition of the German original appeared in 1835–36.
8. Wayne A. Meeks, ed., *The Writings of St. Paul* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), 435–44.
9. Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 2.
10. Reinhard Bendix, "Two Sociological Traditions," in *Scholarship and Partisanship: Essays on Max Weber,* ed. Reinhard Bendix and Guenther Roth (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 282–98.
11. I cannot record here the names of all the scholars who have helped and influenced my attempts to understand the relevant sources and the clues they offer to the variety of Jewish forms of adaptation to the Greco-Roman world, but three are too important to go unmentioned: the late Judah Goldin, who first introduced me to the mysteries of midrash; Jacob Neusner, who over a period of years enabled me to engage with him in exploring the revolutionary implications for both Jewish and Christian historiography of his freshly critical reading of the classical rabbinic texts; and Steven Fraade, who has been a generous and stimulating colleague at Yale.
12. See especially Nils Alstrup Dahl, "Eschatology and History in Light of the Qumran Texts," in *Jesus the Christ: The Historical Origins of Christological Doctrine,* ed. Donald H. Juel (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 49–64.

IN SEARCH OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

I

READING AND WRITING THE PAST

THE IMAGE OF THE ANDROGYNE

Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity

When Maximus the Confessor (seventh century) takes the "corners" of the Jerusalem wall (2 Chronicles 26:9) as a type of "the various unions (ἑνώσεις) of the divided creatures which were effected through Christ,"[1] we might once have assumed that he is indulging in rhetorical fancy. Similarly, we might have dismissed his chief example of such unions as the hyperbole of a Byzantine ascetic: "For he [sc. Christ] unified man, mystically abolishing by the Spirit the difference between male and female and, in place of the two with their peculiar passions, constituting one free with respect to nature."[2] Now, however, the Nag Hammadi texts have reminded us of the extent to which the unification of opposites, and especially the opposite sexes, served in early Christianity as a prime symbol of salvation. To be sure, in the second- and third-century gnostic texts this sym-

bolism flourishes in some bizarre forms which are not always clear to us, but the notion itself had an important place much earlier in the congregations founded by Paul and his school. For it is the baptismal ritual that Paul quotes when he reminds the Galatians that in Christ "there is no Jew nor Greek, there is no slave nor free, there is no male and female" (Galatians 3:28).

The unification of opposites is a well-known motif alike in religious phenomenology and in the history of ancient philosophy.[3] Edmund Leach goes so far as to say: "In every myth system we will find a persistent sequence of binary discriminations as between human/superhuman, mortal/immortal, male/female, legitimate/illegitimate, good/bad . . . followed by a 'mediation' of the paired categories thus distinguished."[4] However, it does not follow from the motif's near ubiquity that it is banal. The very simplicity and universality of the structure fit it to carry communications of great variety, from the most obvious to the most profound of human experiences. While in some cases the symbol doubtless does become otiose, its actual significance in a given instance has to be determined. That can be done only by asking about its specific functions in the network of internal and external relationships of the community which uses this symbolic language. There is reason to believe that the symbolization of a reunified mankind was not just pious talk in early Christianity, but a quite important way of conceptualizing and dramatizing the Christians' awareness of their peculiar relationship to the larger societies around them. At least some of the early Christian groups thought of themselves as a new genus of mankind, or as the restored original mankind. When Tertullian sarcastically defends the church against pagans' pejorative description of it as "a third race,"[5] his ambivalence about the phrase is only the reverse side of the pride in uniqueness that could be expressed, for example, in the quasi-gnostic Ode of Solomon: "All those will be astonished that see me. For from another race am I."[6] Both express a sentiment that was first announced, so far as our sources permit us to see, in the Pauline congregations of the first century, and which in different settings could serve a variety of models of Christian existence, from universal mission to radical sectarianism, from strong communal consciousness to subjective isolation. To pursue all the permutations of this cluster of symbols would require a very large monograph. As a small first step toward such a study, I shall here undertake only a sketch of some ways in which one of the pairs of opposites, "male and female," functioned in several early Christian groups. First, however, it is necessary to form some picture of the way in which the difference of the sexes was ordinarily perceived in the Greco-Roman world.

I. WOMAN'S PLACE

By and large the opposition of social roles was an important means by which Hellenistic man established his identity. For example, a rhetorical commonplace was the "three reasons for gratitude," variously attributed to Thales or Plato: "that I was born a human being and not a beast, next, a man and not a woman, thirdly, a Greek and not a barbarian."[7] As Henry Fischel points out,[8] the pattern was adopted by the Jewish Tannaim and eventually found its way into the synagogue liturgy: "R. Judah says: Three blessings one must say daily: Blessed (art thou), who did not make me a gentile; Blessed (art thou), who did not make me a woman; Blessed (art thou), who did not make me a boor."[9]

For a long time, however, forces had been at work in the Hellenistic world that tended to reduce this sharp differentiation of role, particularly between men and women. The queens and other prominent women among the families of the Diadochoi often overshadowed the men around them by their shrewd exercise of political power. In them, as Carl Schneider remarks, the extraordinary feminine characters of Euripides' tragedies became flesh and blood.[10] The legal rights of women were greatly enhanced both in East and West; the traditional absolutism of the *patria potestas* was attenuated in Roman law of the imperial era.[11] Particularly, the economic rights of women in cases of divorce and inheritance improved, and with them arose the figure of the wealthy woman, able to exercise considerable influence through the pervasive patron/client relationship in Roman society.[12] Some of these women of property as well as women of lesser means undoubtedly engaged in trade, though there is insufficient evidence to determine the extent of feminine participation in mercantile occupations or handicrafts. In Greece even professional athletics were opened to women in the first century B.C.[13] It is significant both for the rising status of women and for the general weakening of social categories in the period that mixed marriages between freed slaves and free women, between Greek and barbarian, between partners of different economic status, and the like, became more and more common in the Greco-Roman period.[14]

In such a society, in which many forms of social relationship underwent extensive change, it is reasonable to ask whether, apart from Christianity, there were groups which significantly modified the roles of men and women or used the symbolism of the equivalence of male and female as a hallmark of group identification. Likely places to look would be religious associations,

philosophical schools, and, because of its peculiar relationship to larger Greco-Roman society, Judaism.

There are in fact signs that in some cultic associations the ordinary social roles were disregarded. For example, the famous inscription on a shrine in honor of Agdistis (and several other savior deities) in Philadelphia, Lydia, begins: "The commandments given to Dionysius [the owner of the house] (by Zeus), granting access in sleep to his own house both to free men and women, and to household slaves." And it concludes with similar words: "These commandments were placed [here] by Agdistis, the most holy Guardian and Mistress of this house, that she might show her good will [or intentions] to men and women, bond and free, so that they might follow the [rules] written here and take part in the sacrifices which [are offered] month by month and year by year."[15] Initiation at Eleusis was permitted, at least as early as the fourth century B.C., to women, even *hetairai* (courtesans) as well as to slaves, and to foreigners if they spoke Greek.[16] In Roman Hellenism syncretic mysteries of Oriental and Egyptian origin became important foci in the quest for identity pursued by so many persons who had been uprooted from the city, tribe or clan (πόλις, φρατρία, *gens*).[17] In most of them, the notable exception of Mithraism,[18] women were initiated on a par with men, just as distinctions of origin, family, class, or servitude were put aside.[19] In some of the cults, moreover, the exchange of sexual roles, by ritual transvestism for example, was an important symbol for the disruption of ordinary life's categories in the experience of initiation.[20] This disruption, however, did not ordinarily reach beyond the boundaries of the initiatory experience—except, of course, in the case of devotees who went on to become cult functionaries, like the *galli* who irrevocably assimilated themselves to Cybele by the sacrifice of emasculation. Otherwise, dissolution of role in the initiation must have been more a safety valve than a detonator for the pressures of role antagonism in the larger society.[21] Initiation did not have the social consequences of "conversion"; the mysteries created no enduring, inclusive *community* that could provide an alternative to the patterns of association in the larger society.[22]

Within the philosophical schools the equality of women with men was generally affirmed in principle but, apart from the Epicureans, hardly ever actualized in practice. Plato had advocated similar education for boys and girls and, in the ideal state, equal participation in all occupations, including the political and the military. Yet that reflected more an extension of the gradual emancipation then taking place in Athenian society than a radical

innovation.[23] Plato himself, moreover, always regarded women as inferior by nature to men.[24] The Greek intellectual tradition persistently strove to discover the underlying unity of reality, a quest which could provide the motive for criticism of the empirical divisions of society. Such criticism was more likely to occur when the philosophers themselves, as not infrequently happened, were alienated from the prevailing organs of power. The Cynics are depicted throughout the literature of antiquity as the very models of alienation. Diogenes-*chriae* portray a man who, for the sake of his citizenship in the cosmos and his mission as messenger of the gods, disdains the roles and obligations that belong to the citizens of any earthly city.[25] Appropriately the epigram, "Virtue is the same for men and for women," is attributed to Antisthenes, teacher of Diogenes.[26] The Stoics took up this theme—Cleanthes is said to have written a book on the subject[27]—and developed it into a grand picture of the unity of all rational being—the gods, men, and women—all having one virtue as they all partook of the one *logos*.[28]

Nevertheless, the traditional philosophical school was a "closed masculine community from which women were excluded,"[29] which yielded only reluctantly to the ideal of equality. In late Hellenism the new educational requirements of the bureaucratic classes replaced the masculine ideology of the old education.[30] Ironically, though, the practical ethics of the schools came more and more to be shaped by the conventional stratification of society,[31] so that there was little pragmatic reason for the admission of women as pupils. Like Plato, Zeno wrote a *Republic* sketching a utopia in which men and women would be equal, even wearing identical clothing,[32] yet none of Zeno's disciples were women,[33] and the report that Plato had two female students who also heard Speusippus, if it is to be believed, is isolated in the traditions of the Academy.[34] The story of Hipparchia, who refused high-born and wealthy suitors to become the wife of Crates, adopting the Cynic's cloak and ascetic life, was a favorite subject in the collections of *chriae*.[35] Yet its popularity is probably an index precisely to the novelty of a woman philosopher, even among the Cynics. Only from the Roman Stoics do we hear serious advocacy of a philosophical vocation for women, for example in the essay by Musonius Rufus on the theme "That Women Too Should Study Philosophy."[36] Yet Musonius's own pupil, Epictetus, can speak of women with contempt,[37] and even Seneca by and large shares the common prejudices against women as innately inferior to men.[38] Though there were women in the old Pythagorean community—principally the wives and daughters of male members of the association, like the famous Timycha, wife of Myllia—

and Iamblichus lists seventeen of "the most illustrious Pythagorean women,"[39] the role of women depicted in the Pythagorean traditions is quite conventional.[40]

Only in the Epicurean "Garden" did women participate on a fully equal basis. Both married women and *hetairai* belonged to the original fellowship of Epicurus, and one of the latter, Leontion, served as president in the rotating succession.[41] The fact is more significant because the intimate fellowship of the Epicureans is a central factor in the movement's existence. Seneca remarked, "It was not instruction but fellowship [*contubernium*] that made great men out of Metrodorus, Hermarchus, and Polyaenus."[42] The Epicureans' exaltation of *philia,* "consolidated by the communal living (κοινωνία) of those who have attained the full complement of pleasure,"[43] seems to contradict their extreme quest for self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια)[44] as well as the "dogma" attributed to Epicurus, "that man is not by nature sociable (κοινωνικόν) and civilized."[45] Perhaps, however, the case is not so paradoxical. The Epicureans were radically pessimistic about the public order (πολιτεία), for this existed by coercion, inimitable to self-sufficiency and therefore to happiness. The great cosmic state of men and gods envisioned by the Stoics was for the Epicureans a dangerous figment of the imagination. However, when Epicurus recommended the "private life,"[46] he meant not the life of a hermit, but the intimate fellowship in which the self-sufficiency of each individual could be enhanced by their mutual support. Like the Pythagorean groups, the Epicurean fellowship was a therapeutic cult.[47] Consequently, while the Epicureans rejected the institution of marriage and the duty to produce children for the society,[48] the original Garden included several married couples, at least one of which came from the marriage of two members, and Epicurus's will made elaborate provision for the care of Metrodorus's children.[49] Though the sage (σοφός) ought not to fall in love (ἐρᾶσθαι),[50] presumably because *eros* would work against self-sufficiency, the relationship between man and woman within the community could be transformed into the friendship (φιλία) of free persons. Thus the Epicureans, alone among the philosophical schools and initiatory groups (θίασοι) did create a communal existence in which the normal social roles of the sexes were abolished, and male and female were equal.

If there was any group in antiquity renowned in popular imagination for its peculiarity over against the laws and customs of the larger society, it was the Jews. Did any group of the Jews distinguish themselves by uniqueness of the male/female relationships among them? We might suppose so, for one outside observer at least tells us that "concerning marriage and the burial of

the dead, he [sc. Moses] established practices different from those of other men."[51] Yet in practice the Jewish communities in the Roman empire seem to have reflected all the diversity and ambiguities that beset the sexual roles and attitudes of the dominant society.

The marriage laws of ancient Israel gave to women an honorable but circumscribed and decidedly subordinate place. As there was in the biblical tradition no asceticism properly so called, so also there was no misogyny,[52] but, like all ancient Near Eastern cultures, Israelite society in all its historical periods was dominated by the male. The praise of national heroes in Ben Sira (chaps. 44 ff.) includes only "famous men"; there is no place for a Sarah or a Deborah. Indeed the older wisdom literature recognizes only two classes of women: good wives and dangerous seductresses.[53] Nevertheless, Judaism felt some of the winds of change that affected its neighbors. Like the larger Hellenistic kingdoms, Hasmonean Judea had its shrewd and ruthless queen, Salome Alexandra. And, despite Ben Sira, it had its legendary heroines, Esther and Judith, competent to exercise their wiles for the good of their people in any Hellenistic royal court. At a more humdrum level, there were evidently Jewish women engaged in trade and commerce, for several of the obviously well-to-do patronesses of Paul were Jewish-Christians.[54] There is no record of any woman having served as an officer of a synagogue, but at least three women in the Roman Jewish community were honored in tomb inscriptions with the title *mater synagogae,* corresponding to the more frequent (nine times) *pater synagogae.*[55]

Just as the Stoics discussed the question whether women ought to philosophize, so there was disagreement among the Tannaim whether women should be instructed in Torah. The predominant opinion was certainly negative, although few would take the extreme view of Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, to whom are attributed the sayings: "Every man who teaches his daughter Torah is as if he taught her promiscuity,"[56] and, "Let the words of the Torah be burned up, but let them not be delivered to women."[57] There were women who learned Torah—one of the synagogue lessons could be read by a woman[58]—and the Talmud preserves numerous stories about the sagacity of Beruria, wife of R. Meir, who bested both a sectary and her own husband in argument, and whose opinion on one occasion was even accepted by R. Judah the Prince.[59] By and large, however, the presence of a woman in the rabbinic academies must have been at least as rare as it was among the pupils of the Stoics, who in theory were much less opposed to the idea.

Moreover, there were in Judaism of the Hellenistic era, as in pagan Hellenism,[60] pockets of real misogyny. The most blatant example is Philo,

who commonly uses the female figures in the Bible as symbols of feeling (αἴσθησις) or emotion (πάθος), but the male for mind (νοῦς) and reason (λόγος)[61] and who associates with woman an extraordinary number of pejorative expressions: weak, easily deceived, cause of sin, lifeless, diseased, enslaved, unmanly, nerveless, mean, slavish, sluggish, and many others.[62] When he does give a positive value to biblical women, such as Sarah, "the allegory robs these figures of their feminine character."[63] Moreover, in striking contrast to pagan society in Hellenistic Egypt, where women attained unusual independence in economic, legal, and even political affairs, Philo interprets the biblical laws in a way decidedly inimical to the rights of wives and mothers.[64] To be sure, despite his ascetic and dualistic tendencies,[65] Philo is both Jewish and Greek enough to regard marriage as natural and necessary—but the husband's relationship to his wife is like that of father to children and owner to slaves.[66] The proper relation of wife to husband is expressed by the verb δουλεύειν "to serve as a slave,"[67] and the sole legitimate purpose of marriage and of sexual intercourse is procreation.[68] We shall look in vain in Philo, therefore, for any advocacy of equalization or unification of the opposite sexes. His attitude toward male and female roles is, on the contrary, more conservative than that of his gentile environment. To the extent that the Alexandrian Jewish community as a whole tended to grant more legal equality to women than did the biblical laws, on the other hand, it did so evidently more by accommodation to Egyptian custom than in distinction from it.

The options are not vastly different if we consider all the varieties of Judaism in the Second Commonwealth period—insofar as our limited data permit us to know anything about them. Some, like Philo, sharply depreciate the worth and place of women;[69] there are groups that tend toward sexual asceticism, notably the Essenes and other baptizing sects of Palestine, yet without abandoning male dominance.[70] Nowhere in Judaism do we hear of any real tendency to harmonize the social roles of male and female, except to the limited extent that Hellenized Jews follow the general but by no means universal trend toward equality. Only perhaps in the strange vigil of the Therapeutae, as Philo describes it, is there something like a ritual unification of the sexes, which in ecstatic song dissolves their strict separation observed in the everyday life of this ascetic community.[71]

If any generalization is permissible about the place of women in Hellenistic society of Roman imperial times, it is that the age brought in all places a heightened awareness of the differentiation of male and female. The traditional social roles were no longer taken for granted but debated, consciously

violated by some, vigorously defended by others. While the general status of women had vastly and steadily improved over several centuries, the change brought in some circles a bitter reaction in the form of misogyny. The groups that made possible full participation of women with men on an equal basis were few and isolated; the Epicurean school is the only important example. Among those who advocated preservation of the status quo, the constantly salient concern is a sense of order: everything must be in its place, and the differentiation and ranking of women and men became a potent symbol for the stability of the world order. That concern comes through clearly, for example, in the protestations by moralists about the "natural" difference in hair styles of men and women.[72] Thus the aphorism of an anonymous Attic comedian was still valid: "Woman's world is one thing, men's another."[73]

II. THE BAPTISMAL REUNIFICATION FORMULA

I suggested at the outset that when Paul speaks of the reunification of pairs of opposites in Galatians 3:28 he is not engaging in ad hoc rhetoric but quoting a bit of the liturgy of baptism. It is time now to vindicate that assertion by formal analysis and to inquire about the symbolic and social context of the language. The reunification language is found three times in the Pauline corpus: in Galatians 3:28, where the unified opposites are Jew/Greek, slave/free, male and female; in 1 Corinthians 12:13, Jews/Greeks, slaves/free, and in Colossians 3:11, where the terms are expanded: Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free. Perhaps there is an echo of the formula also in the "whether slave or free" in the *Haustafel* Ephesians 6:8, and in the "whether among the Jews, or among the gentiles, in one body" of Ignatius, to the Smyrnaeans 1:2. The following observations bespeak a quoted formula: (1) A synopsis[74] shows the consistency of the major motifs: baptism into Christ (or, "one body"), "putting on Christ" (or, "the new man"), simple listing of two or more pairs of opposites, and the statement that "all" are "one" or that Christ is all.[75] The simplicity of the basic pattern, within which details of wording may vary widely, is characteristic of the liturgical and kerygmatic formulas which New Testament scholarship has isolated in recent years. (2) The declaration is associated in every instance with baptism, though it is not baptism as such which is under discussion in the letters. (3) The formula stands out from its context—most clearly in Galatians 3:28, least clearly in Colossians 3:11, precisely where the context is filled with other motifs which probably come from baptismal parenesis.[76] The allusion to Genesis 1:27 in the third pair of Galatians 3:28[77] has

no connection with the immediate context nor with any of Paul's themes in Galatians. Only the first pair, Jew/Greek, is directly relevant to Paul's argument. The second pair, slave/free, may be connected with what follows, as Paul compares "adoption" or coming of age with release from slavery. If so, the connection is verbal, not material, for in the argument "slavery" and "freedom" are used metaphorically, while in verse 28 all the pairs refer quite concretely to social statuses. Hence it is more likely the occurrence of "slave or free" in the formula that suggested this turn in the argument rather than the reverse. There is a change of person from first plural in verse 25 to second plural in verse 29.[78] We may therefore speak with some confidence of a "baptismal reunification formula" familiar in congregations associated with Paul and his school. Of course it is a moot question who first may have introduced such a statement into baptismal parenesis—it may perfectly well have been Paul himself. The point is, however, that it was not an idiosyncratic notion of his, but imbedded in the act of initiation into the Christian congregation.

If the foregoing form-critical analysis is correct, then a resident of one of the cities of the province Asia who ventured to become a member of one of the tiny Christian cells in their early years would have heard the utopian declaration of mankind's reunification as a solemn ritual pronouncement. Reinforced by dramatic gestures (disrobing, immersion, robing), such a declaration would carry—within the community for which its language was meaningful—the power to assist in shaping the symbolic universe by which that group distinguished itself from the ordinary "world" of the larger society. A modern philosopher might call it a "performative utterance."[79] So long as it is spoken validly, as perceived within the community's accepted norms of order, it does what it says. Thus, though we might suppose that the only possible realistic function of such language would be to inculcate an attitude, the form of the statement is not "you ought to think . . . ," but "there is . . . ." A factual claim is being made, about an "objective" change in reality that fundamentally modifies social roles. New attitudes and altered behavior would follow—but only if the group succeeds in clothing the novel declaration with "an aura of factuality."[80]

We have seen evidence for an intensified sense of role oppositions in Greco-Roman society and both a longing to overcome them and a fear of such a change. These currents would assure that the baptismal reunification formula would at least attract attention. Whether it would be taken seriously is another matter. Its "aura of factuality" could be enhanced in two ways: (1) by the internal coherence of the larger symbolic system of which it was part,

that is, by its mythical context; (2) by a repatterning of the ordinary behavior of persons in the group, so that the structures of the myth and the structures of social relationships would mutually reinforce one another. New Testament scholarship in the past fifty years has given a great deal of attention to the former, surprisingly little to the latter.[81] Here I want both to describe the main outlines of the underlying myth of reunification and to offer at least a few guesses about some social functions of that myth.

III. THE MYTH

Reunification follows directly from having "clothed yourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:28), that is, "the new man" (Colossians 3:10). Putting on clothing implies having previously removed clothing, and "putting on" (ἐνδύεσθαι) Christ is preceded by having "taken off" (ἀπεκδύεσθαι) or "laid aside" (ἀποτιθῆναι) "the old man" (Colossians 3:9; Ephesians 4:22)—"the body of flesh" (Colossians 2:11). There can be little doubt that the "taking off" and "putting on" is first of all an interpretation of the act of disrobing, which must have preceded baptism, and of the dressing afterward. By being taken up into the symbolic language these simple procedures become ritual acts.[82]

To be sure, the metaphor of change of clothing has several common uses in religion, and more than one are present in the New Testament contexts. The most obvious is the parenetic usage, as in Colossians 3:8, and Ephesians 4:17–24, in which the old garment represents vices, the new, virtues.[83] Related to this is the use of the metaphor for a conversion, a change of lifestyle.[84] Change of clothing in initiations and other *rites de passage* is of course a particularly well-known phenomenon, which may symbolize the death and rebirth of the initiate but also the assimilation of the power of the deity represented by the new garb.[85] Incidentally, transvestism in initiatory rites is not unusual, for the initiate is conceived of as in a liminal state, participating in divine power and therefore momentarily transcending the division between male and female.[86] Yet there is no hint in the earliest Christian sources of ritual transvestism.

However many varied resonances the early Christian ritual clothing language may evoke, it is most fundamentally related to a particular myth. The "new man" symbolized by the clothing is the man who is "renewed according to the image of his creator" (Colossians 3:10; cf. Ephesians 4:24). The allusion to Genesis 1:26–27 is unmistakable; similarly, as we noted earlier, Galatians 3:28 contains a reference to the "male and female" of Genesis 1:27

and suggests that somehow the act of Christian initiation reverses the fateful division of Genesis 2:21–22. Where the image of God is restored, there, it seems, man is no longer divided—not even by the most fundamental division of all, male and female. The baptismal reunification formula thus belongs to the familiar *Urzeit-Endzeit* pattern, and it presupposes an interpretation of the creation story in which the divine image after which Adam was modeled was masculofeminine.

Myths of a bisexual progenitor of the human race were very common in antiquity, as they have been in many cultures.[87] For anyone trying to understand the strange sequence of the first two chapters of Genesis without the aid of modern source criticism, it would have been very plausible to read such a myth into the text—especially if one lived in a culture where Plato's version of the myth was widely known. Small wonder, then, that rabbis in early talmudic times knew a text of the Septuagint which translated Genesis 1:27 and 5:2, "male and female he created *him.*"[88] A midrashic tradition, extant in several variants, cleverly exploits Psalm 139:5, read as, "You have shaped me back and front," and Genesis 2:21, "And the Lord God . . . took one of his *sides,*" to form a coherent story that, in its fullest version, clearly betrays the influence of Plato: "R. Samuel bar Naḥman said, When the Holy One, blessed be he, created the first man, he created him "two-faced" (διπρόσωπον). Then he split him and made two bodies, one on each side, and turned them about. Thus it is written, 'He took one of his sides.'"[89] But even the simpler versions betray by their interchangeable use of the Greek loanwords for "androgyne" and "two-faced" (often, δυ᾽ πρόσωπα) their Platonic paternity.[90] Though the Palestinian adaptation of the myth cannot be precisely dated,[91] Philo attests the familiarity of this reading of the Genesis story in first-century Alexandria.[92] Of course the use to which the Jews put the androgyne myth is quite different from its meaning in Aristophanes' tale in the *Symposium.* Only those elements which could be adjusted to the midrashic problems of Genesis 1–2—and to a thoroughly heterosexual ethos[93]—were retained. In Judaism the myth serves only to solve an exegetical dilemma and to support monogamy.[94]

The Adam legends may also have provided the medium for the special configuration of the *clothing symbolism* found in baptismal contexts, for the "robes of skin" of Genesis 3:21 are sometimes taken to be the physical body, replacing the lost Image of God, which is correspondingly construed as a "robe of light."[95] Restoration of the Image could very readily be represented therefore by a change of clothing, most dramatically perhaps in the well-known scene in the Hymn of the Pearl, where the prince sees in the "splen-

did robe" that comes to meet him the "reflection" of his true self and at the same time the "image (εἰκών) of the king of kings."[96] In Jewish and Samaritan tradition, reclothing with the Image is occasionally said to have taken place at Sinai, particularly in the Moses legends,[97] or to be promised for the righteous in the age to come.[98] Robing with "garments of light" restores the heavenly self in the Mandaean *maṣbuta* and *masiqta* rituals,[99] as well as in early Syrian Christian baptismal liturgies[100] and in the Gospel of Philip.[101] The "removal of the body of flesh" (Colossians 2:11), that is, "the old man" (3:9), in order to "put on the new man, who is renewed . . . after the image of his creator" (3:10) can confidently be assigned to the same stream of tradition.

The mythic pattern we have been describing received its most luxuriant development at the hands of the gnostics, who were particularly entranced by the androgynous character of the primal man.[102] In a number of gnostic systems the division between male and female is the fundamental symbol or even the mythical source of the human plight, and consequently their reunification represents or effects man's salvation: "When Eve was in Adam, there was no death; but when she was separated from him death came into being. Again if <she> go in, and he take <her> to himself, death will no longer exist."[103] However, the reality denoted by this reunification and the means of accomplishing it or symbolizing it are construed in various ways.

IV. RITUAL AND COMMUNITY

A number of gnostic groups developed explicit corporate rituals by which the bisexual Image was renewed or recovered. Irenaeus tells of a "mystic rite" (μυσταγωγία) of "spiritual marriage" practiced by some Marcosians in a "bridal chamber" (νυμφών).[104] Moreover, his vivid description of the way in which he said Marcus seduced wealthy women[105] is evidently a parody of the Marcosian sacrament, for it closely parallels elements of the "Mystery of the Bridal Chamber" which are now known from the Gospel of Philip and other Nag Hammadi texts: "becoming one" with the Bridegroom,[106] "establishing the germ of light in the bridal chamber,"[107] receiving grace and the Spirit.[108]

The Gospel of Philip reveals a system of five sacraments, of which the Mystery of the Bridal Chamber is the highest.[109] It illustrates the tendency of motifs originally connected with baptism to become distinct rituals, as the mythical context of these motifs also becomes more and more elaborate. Thus, while the receiving of the garment or body of light is still connected

with baptism in some of the sayings in the Gospel of Philip compilation (§101, cf. §106), in others the clothing with light is effected by Chrism (§95) or the Bridal Chamber (§77). The symbolic referents of the sacral marriage itself are multiple. The restoration of the broken unity of Adam still plays a role §§71, 78; see above), but the biblical legend is now overshadowed by theogonic myths of the Valentinian type. The sacramental union in the Bridal Chamber has its archetype in the union of the Savior with the previously barren Sophia[110]—also represented by the peculiar legends of Christ's association with Mary Magdalene[111]—and its fulfillment in the eschatological union of each gnostic's true self (the "image") with its corresponding " angel."[112] The theme of restoration of *man's* primeval unity is here almost swallowed up in the inflated myth of "devolution" and restoration of the precosmic Pleroma.

The actual ritual involved in the sacred marriage of the Valentinians cannot be determined with certainty. The heresiologists were quick to assume that physical sex relations were involved, and they may have been correct in some instances.[113] Yet the Gospel of Philip speaks disparagingly of actual cohabitation, even though that is an "image" of the true union "in the Aion."[114] Schenke has argued that the central act of the sacrament was a "holy kiss";[115] probably the kiss did have an important place.[116] Whatever the gnostics did in the marriage sacrament, it clearly distinguished them, in their opinion, from those who were merely baptized and anointed. It was the sacrament of the elite, the perfected (τέλειοι).[117]

The restoration of the androgynous Image (the undifferentiated "root" power)[118] is fundamental to Simonian gnosticism also,[119] and there is evidence from the late *Apophasis Megale* quoted by Hippolytus that it may have been dramatized in a baptismal ritual: "Thus, according to Simon, there is hidden in everyone potentially (δυνάμει) but not actually (ἐνέργεια) that blessed and incorruptible (power), which is the one who stands, stood, and will stand (ὁ ἑστώς, στάς, στησόμενος): 'stands' above in the unbegotten power, 'stood' below in the stream of waters, begotten in an image, 'will stand' above with the blessed, unlimited power, if he is shaped by the image (ἐξεικονίζεσθαι)"[120] Haenchen sees in the explanation of the second phase (στάς) only the general plight of the divine potency in man as it stands in "temporality, depicted in the image of the chaos-flood."[121] But the aorist participles point to a specific occasion of "having stood" and "being begotten in an image." The primary allusion is of course to the myth of the creation of man in Genesis 1,[122] but the clause, "If he is shaped by the image (ἐάν ἐξεικονισθή)" which is the condition for being able to "stand above with the

blessed, unlimited power," cannot be just a generalized interpretation of the Adam story. It must point to some concrete possibility for the inner self of each man to realize this potential by being "iconized." To receive the Image assures eschatological salvation: the "fruit" that is "iconized" will be "gathered into the treasury," that is, will transcend the differentiated state represented by the three pairs of emanated "powers" to be assimilated to the one "unbegotten and unlimited power."[123] This language is applied, according to *Refutatio* 6.18.1, to Simon himself. Moreover, the warning is issued that "whoever is not 'iconized' will perish with the world."[124] The verb "to be iconized" (ἐξεικονίζεσθαι) in fact appears to be a technical term in the *Apophasis Megale,* equivalent to "to be initiated."[125] Thus the "re-formation" in the image, equated with "being begotten" and occurring "in the stream of waters," suggests a cultic act like baptism.[126] On the other hand, when Hippolytus also accuses the Simonians of reveling in promiscuous sexuality, he is evidently referring to some kind of sacred union (ἱερὸς γάμος), for he says the practice is in imitation of Simon (and Helen). Interestingly, he reports that the rite is called "the holy of holies"—precisely the metaphor used for the Mystery of the Bridal Chamber in Gospel of Philip §76.[127] It is not unlikely, therefore, that the Simonian sect developed cultic practices analogous to the Valentinian mysteries.

The sacramental means of restoring the androgynous wholeness of the inner man, which we have found exemplified in the Gospel of Philip and the *Apophasis Megale,* presupposes a cultic community with a strong sense of corporate identity. In other gnostic circles, however, the same mythical configurations could be focused exclusively in the task of a subjective transformation of consciousness, which might lead not to sect formation but to radical isolation of the individual.[128] The latter trend is evident in the Gospel of Thomas and in the Encratite Christianity of eastern Syria, with which most scholars connect the Thomas traditions. The task of "making the two one," especially "the male and the female," is a prominent theme in the Gospel of Thomas,[129] and there is reason to believe that the associated imagery is drawn from baptismal liturgies, particularly the Syrian.[130] But the ideal of "singleness," expressed in the Coptic phrase ⲟⲩⲁ ⲟⲩⲱⲧ or the Greek loan word for "solitary" (μονοχός), has a double significance: celibacy and asocial isolation.

The solitary in the Gospel of Thomas is clearly one who is beyond sexuality; he is "like a little child" (logion 22), whose innocence of sexuality is portrayed in the removal of clothing without shame—like Adam before the Fall (logion 37, cf. logion 21).[131] The saying, "The solitaries are the [only] ones who will enter the bridal chamber" (logion 75) sounds like the warning in

Gospel of Philip §73 that only "free men and virgins" can enter the Bridal Chamber, yet in the Gospel of Thomas the bridal chamber seems only a metaphor, rather than a cultic anticipation, of "the kingdom."[132] "Male and female" are to be made "one," but they are by no means treated as equals. Rather, if the female is to become a "living spirit" and thus be saved, she must become male (logion 114).[133] Further, it is characteristic of the Gospel of Thomas that eschatological symbols are reinterpreted in subjective terms. The "new creation (κόσμος)" and the repose (ἀνάπαυσις) of the dead have already come if one but knew it (logion 51); "the Kingdom of the Father is spread upon the earth and men do not see it" (logion 113). Obtaining life is consistently said to depend upon obtaining "secret knowledge," which on the one hand means grasping the esoteric meaning of the sayings in this book (logion 1), but on the other hand and more profoundly, obtaining *self*-knowledge: "The Kingdom is within you and it is without you. If you know yourselves, then you will be known and you will know that you are the sons of the living Father. But if you do not know yourselves, then you are in poverty and you are poverty."[134] The emphasis on salvation by self-knowledge suggests that the terms "male and female" are used metaphorically in the Thomas sayings to represent aspects of the individual personality.[135] If so, then the process of "making the two one" and "making the female male" is a gnostic parallel to Philo's more philosophical use of the same metaphors to depict the progress of the wise man through practice of virtue and contemplative philosophy to a heightened self-consciousness that leads finally to the *visio dei* or at least the *visio verbi dei*.[136] If cultic acts play any part in this process, they go unmentioned in the Gospel of Thomas. Baptism is presumably presupposed, but only as initiation, the beginning of the transformation by gnosis.

There are some similar motifs in the apocryphal Acts which stem from Encratite circles. The virgin Thecla, for example, could be taken as the very model of a female who "makes herself male," represented in the story by her wish to cut her hair short and her donning of men's clothing,[137] thus becoming what the Gospel of Thomas would call a *monachos*—not only a celibate, but also one who must break all ties to home, city, and ordinary society, becoming a wanderer. In the Encratite Acts, the ascetic life is idealized as that of an itinerant, whose baptism liberates him from "the world," understood primarily as sexuality and society. So also in the Gospel of Thomas, "becoming a single one" involves a radical separation from settled life: hatred of family, including not only marriage but also recognition of parents;[138] perceiving the world as a "corpse";[139] and rejecting trade and commerce.[140] Thus in these

circles the union of male and female represents not a heightened or even a spiritualized libido, but a neutralization of sexuality, and therewith a renunciation of all ties which join the "unified" individual with society.[141]

V. ROLES OF WOMEN IN THE PAULINE CONGREGATIONS

The foregoing survey demonstrates that the myth of an eschatological restoration of man's original divine, androgynous image could serve a variety of ritual, subjective, and social functions. We return now to the Pauline letters to inquire whether any of these possibilities were already realized in the first-century congregations of the Pauline school. Were there any actual modifications of the normal social roles of women in those congregations?

Among the persons named in Paul's letters for particular messages or greetings, a fair number are women. Some of these, as E. A. Judge suggests, were evidently patronesses of Paul and his associates, at least in the sense of providing funds, housing, and the like:[142] Phoebe, the deaconness (διάκονος) of Cenchreae, who is actually called "leader" (προστάτις, Romans 16:2), the equivalent of *patrona;* Mary the mother of Rufus "and of me" (Romans 16:13); and those women who have "a church in their house" (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19, Prisca and her husband; Colossians 4:15, Nympha). From Acts 16:14–15, the name of Lydia, the well-to-do textile merchant, may be added to the list of *patronae.* Their support of the movement, however, is a testimony as much to the freer participation of women in the economic life of Greco-Roman society as to any specific homogenization of roles within Christianity. More important is the fact that some of the women mentioned by Paul had positions of leadership in local congregations or in the missionary activities of the Pauline school. Thus Phoebe is given the title of deaconness (Romans 16:2, here perhaps referring to a local office as in Philippians 1:1),[143] and the naming of "Apphia our sister" with Philemon and Archippus (Philemon 2) may suggest that she was a leader of the Colossian congregation. Further, the "laboring" of Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, and Persis (Romans 16:6, 12) probably implies evangelical or teaching activity, for the verbs "to labor" (κοπιᾶν and its cognates) are ordinarily used by Paul of the missionary labors of himself and others. The same is true of Euodia and Syntyche, whose disagreement is an object of Paul's concern in Philippians 4:2–3, for they have "shared the struggle with me (συνήθλησάν μοι) in the gospel." The place of the couple Prisca and Aquila in Paul's letters and in later tradition (Acts and the Pastorals) attests their extraordinary mobility and leadership—apparently they presided over house churches and

perhaps even catechetical schools in Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome and certainly Prisca is at least her husband's peer in this activity (four times out of six her name is mentioned before his: Acts 18:2, 18, 26; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19). Thus there are a number of signs that in the Pauline school women could enjoy a functional equality in leadership roles that would have been unusual in Greco-Roman society as a whole and quite astonishing in comparison with contemporary Judaism. When Marcion permitted women to administer baptism and to conduct other official functions—not the least scandalous of his practices in the eyes of the second-century Great Church[144] —he may have had better grounds than for his other innovations in thinking he was following the Pauline model.

In one of Paul's congregations the unification of male and female became a particular focus of identity and dissension—the church at Corinth. Although the situation is beclouded by the ambivalence of Paul's response, and a much-needed full discussion of the issue would far exceed the limits of the present essay, a few observations are possible, based on the phenomena we have surveyed, which may suggest directions for further study. There are several passages in First Corinthians in which the relation between male and female is the center of attention: a bold violation of the incest taboo, which Paul finds "arrogant" and "boastful" (5:1–13); patronage of prostitutes under the slogan "all is authorized" (6:12–20); the complex series of questions about marriage, divorce, and asceticism raised by the Corinthians's letter to Paul (chap. 7); the proper attire of "praying and prophesying" women (11:2–16); and the command for women to "be silent in the assembly" (14:33b–36). Both the situations and Paul's responses are sufficiently diverse that we should be wary of attempts to explain them all by a single "heresy" in the Corinthian church. Yet it would also be a mistake to treat each question in isolation, as if, for example, the prophesying women of 11:2–16 had nothing to do with the other pneumatic phenomena discussed throughout the letter.[145]

Paul's most extended discussion of the relation of male and female is in chapter 7. Formally the striking thing about that chapter is the number of monotonously parallel statements made about the obligations, respectively, of men and women: verses 2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 28, 32–34.[146] It looks as though Paul were laboring to express the male and female roles in almost precisely the same language. Even in 11:2–16, which contains an apparently unequivocal statement of male superiority in the order of creation, the same kind of rhetorical balance occurs at two points: verses 4–5, where both men and women "who pray or prophesy" with the wrong sort of head

attire are said to "dishonor the head," and verses 11–12, where the hierarchical summary of the creation story is qualified by a statement of mutual dependency "in the Lord." Thus Paul presupposes and approves in the Corinthian congregation an equivalence of role and a mutuality of relationship between the sexes in matters of marriages, divorce, and charismatic leadership of the church[147] to a degree that is virtually unparalleled in Jewish or pagan society of the time.[148]

Yet in 11:2–16 and in 14:33b–36 Paul seems primarily concerned to reassert the distinction between male and female and the inferiority of the woman to the man. These passages have evoked a large and disparate body of literature because they apparently contain two fundamental self-contradictions. (1) The "subordination" of women to men, based on the order of creation, runs counter not only to the equivalence of role that, as we just noted, Paul emphasizes and reemphasizes in this letter, but even to the explicit statement in chapter 11 itself that "in the Lord" the order of creation has been replaced by reciprocity (verses 11–12). (2) The command that women must "be silent in the church," in the context of regulation of charismatic forms of speech, flatly contradicts the assumption in 11:2–16 that women like men will "pray and prophesy" in the congregation. How do these apparent contradictions arise?

The structure of Paul's argument in 11:3–16 is not one of his most lucid patterns of logic. It begins with a programmatic assertion that seems to set up a chain of rank: the head of every man is Christ, of woman is man, of Christ is God. The statement is the basis for the subsequent argument, for "head" (κεφαλή) in the following verses must be a double entendre. Verses 4–5 speak in parallel statements about ways in which a male or female prophet, respectively, may "dishonor" his or her "head": the male, by "having [something hanging] down from the head," the woman, by having "her head uncovered." Verses 5b and 6 introduce an *ad hominem* argument by analogy: for the woman to have her head uncovered is "the same thing as if it were shaved or cropped." Verse 7 returns to the "principle" laid down in verse 3: the man is not obliged to cover his head, because he is "the image and glory of God" (εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ), while woman is only the glory of of man. Verses 8–9 continue the allusion to creation introduced by verse 7's reference to Genesis 1:27. If "on account of" (διὰ τούτο, verse 10) refers back to what precedes, as seems most natural, then the following phrase, "on account of the angels" (διὰ τούς ἀγγέλους), ought also to have some connection with creation. Verses 11–12 state the contrary of verses 8–9: "in the Lord" (ἐν κυρίῳ) there is no man apart from woman or woman apart from man.

Verse 12, by reversing the language of verse 8b and by adding the "Allmächtsformel" (τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ), relativizes the principle which has dominated the argument up to this point. (Compare Paul's use of similar language in 4:21b–23 to emphasize unity despite distinction, and in 15:23–29 to emphasize distinction and sequence leading up to eschatological unity.) Verse 13 takes up the *ad hominem* argument again by asking if it is proper (πρέπον) women to pray with "head uncovered" (ἀκατακάλυπτον). Verses 14–15 continue this line by returning to the analogy of the different "natural" hair styles for men and women. Finally, it is stated that the apostle and the "churches of God" (ἐκκλησίαι τοῦ θεοῦ) recognize no other "custom."

In this confusing passage a few significant elements are clear. Paul nowhere denies women the right to engage in charismatic leadership of worship. Furthermore, he does not advocate *functionally* inferior roles for women. On the contrary, the parenthetical statement in verses 8–9 can best be understood as an attempt to ward off that interpretation of what he is saying. What Paul is exercised about is solely the *symbols* that distinguish male from female. Furthermore, the proper symbolic attire is just as important in his eyes for the male prophet as for the female (verses 4, 14). If the passage places most emphasis on the female, that must be because in Corinth it is the charismatic women who are donning the attire of the opposite sex.

Attempts to guess why the symbolic dress of the prophetesses had become so important at Corinth have not been notoriously successful.[149] We may agree with Lösch and other recent interpreters that what was involved was not an "emancipation movement," touched off either by gnostic influence in Corinth or by Paul's radical statement in Galatians 3:28.[150] Nevertheless, the older suggestions of Lütgert and Schlatter that the pneumaticism at Corinth found a starting point in traditions which Paul himself or his school had communicated to them should not be too quickly rejected. Chapter 11 is concerned with the question of traditions (παραδόσεις) received by the Corinthians from Paul, and while verse 2 may be merely a *captatio benevolentiae,* he does not hesitate in verses 17–34 to scold the Corinthians for violating tradition. The argument about the veiling of prophetesses thus stands within the framework of praise for the "holding fast" of tradition. Second, I have argued that Galatians 3:28 does not represent merely radical rhetoric by Paul, but a tradition connected with baptism. Third, the "spiritualist" movement at Corinth seems to be intimately connected with a peculiar understanding of baptismal initiation into heavenly wisdom, which Paul is at pains in chapters 1–4 to correct.[151] Fourth, we have seen some evidence from later Encratite Christianity for the notion that women might be expected to "make them-

selves male" by adopting the dress and hair style of men.[152] From all this, while the precise ideology of the Corinthian pneumatics remains elusive, it is at least a plausible conjecture that the symbolic identification of male and female among them was a significant part of their "realized eschatology." And we find such a "realized eschatology" preeminently expressed in the baptismal traditions of the Pauline school—most clearly in the deutero-Pauline letters, but already presupposed in Galatians 3:27–8 and Romans 6. If Paul, on the other hand, in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 is concerned to insist on the continuing validity of the *symbolic* distinctions belonging to the humanity of the old Adam, that is in harmony with the "eschatological reservation" which he expresses throughout this letter. The Corinthian pneumatics are not "already," as they think, "enthroned" and "enriched," not already resurrected in the Spirit (4:8; chap. 15 passim) and therefore "equal to the angels" and thus beyond sexuality (cf. Luke 20:34–36). Yet in the present, in which "the form of this world is passing away," the eschatological Spirit is already at work, and *functional* distinctions which belong to that world may be disregarded, so long as the results lead to the "building up" of the community.[153] That is why, in all his discussion of the *charismata* in Corinth, Paul's prevailing concern is with *order.*[154]

That is even clearer in the other baffling passage, 14:33b–36. The entire context deals with ecstatic phenomena, prophecy and glossolalia, and Paul's principle is, "Let everything be done for building up" (verse 27), "for God is not a God of disorder but of peace" (verse 33). Within that context, Paul lays down rules for the orderly "speaking" (λαλεῖν), both in prophecy and in tongues, and the occasions on which the ecstatic must "be silent in the assembly" (σιγάτω ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ). The following universal admonition that "women are to keep silent in the assemblies" and "not . . . to speak," is *verbally* in complete harmony with that context. However, it stands outside the framework of normative principle cited above (verses 27, 33), and it appears flatly to contradict Paul's approval of prophecy by women in 11:2–16. The simplest solution is to assume with many modern scholars that the verses are an interpolation by a later conservative member of the Pauline school, representing the kind of reaction expressed in 1 Timothy 2:11–12.[155] If, on the other hand, one agrees with Windisch that the passage in 1 Timothy is an elaboration of 1 Corinthians 14:34b–36 and therefore presupposes its presence in the text from the beginning, then something like Windisch's solution to the contradiction would also have to be accepted: In his concern for order in the cultic assembly, Paul adds an afterthought which is expressed unfortunately in too absolute a fashion, obscuring the fact that the speech of these

women who want to enter into a discussion to "learn" cannot be the charismatic speech of the context.[156] But in that case the conservative reaction which was to dominate the later Pauline school begins already with Paul, insofar as women not sealed by the charismata of leadership are concerned, for ὑποτασσέσθωσαν here certainly means "let them be *sub*ordinate," not just "let them be orderly."[157]

In the later developments in the Pauline school the peculiar eschatological and social tensions that characterize Paul's position in the Corinthian correspondence tend to dissolve. On the one hand, the "realized eschatology" of the baptismal traditions, expressed in the language of cosmic myth, is far less restrained. On the other hand, the mythical language is linked up with a prosaic ethic of community order, upon which it has apparently little effect. A single example of this tendency will serve to conclude our survey.

The Letter to Colossians uses the mythical language of cosmic reconciliation to speak of human unity within the congregation. To an even greater extent this is true of the encyclical letter traditionally known as Ephesians. The author's central concern is with the unification of Jew and gentile. In the "baptismal reminder,"[158] 2:11–22, language which perhaps once spoke of the union of earth and heaven, "making the two one" (neuter, verse 14), is adapted to speak of the gentile mission.[159] But in the conventional catechetical material the emphasis is elsewhere. When the author of Ephesians takes up the pattern of "putting off the old man" and putting on the new" (4:17–24), he casts it also in the form of the "soteriological contrast" that reminds the gentiles of their preconversion life, as seen in conventional Hellenistic-Jewish apologetics.[160] The central fact about the "new man" here is not his recreated unity, but his morality. For this reason also the *Haustafel* occupies a prominent place in the parenesis of Ephesians (5:22–6:9), as it does in Colossians.

Only at two points the author has expanded the *Haustafel* scheme to include an allusion to the baptismal reunification of opposites, the one having to do with slaves (6:8) and the other with husbands and wives (5:22–33). In the latter place, the conventional admonitions "wives be subject to your husbands" and "husbands love your wives" (cf. Colossians 3:18 f.; 1 Peter 3:1, 7; 1 Clement 1:3) are reinforced by analogy with Christ's relationship to the church. These remarkable statements evidently presuppose some mythical or at least metaphorical conception of a marriage between the Redeemer and his community. Such a conception is attested by Paul, 2 Corinthians 11:2, as well as in Revelation 19:6–9 and 21:2, 9, where, as in Ephesians 5:22–33, the "presentation" of the bride as a pure (or purified) virgin is an essential

part of the imagery.[161] While the author of Ephesians uses the notion of Christ's marriage to the church merely as backing for the commonplace rule for ordinary marriage, the passage also contains a clear reference to baptism in verse 26.[162] This is hardly the author's invention, for it stands in tension with his parenetic use of the tradition: the marriage of Christ and the church can hardly have been made simultaneously the prototype of both marriage and baptism. Hence it is apparent that the author has taken up a tradition in which baptism is identified with the "purification" and "sanctification" of the bride-community for her "presentation" to Christ the bridegroom and has connected this tradition with the *Haustafel.*

Whether that implies that a ritual sacred union (ἱερὸς γάμος) of which baptism was only the preliminary purification was actually enacted in the Asian congregations is a question which can hardly be answered by the evidence at hand.[163] For our present purposes, it is sufficient to observe that the baptismal reunification formula's "no more male and female" has not produced any radical reassessment of the social roles of men and women in the congregation. The traditional parenesis has redirected the notion of reunification to refer entirely to the relation of the whole community to Christ, while the author of Ephesians uses it only to reinforce the conventional definitions of the masculine and feminine roles in marriage.

The conservative reaction was destined to prevail in the mainstream of the Pauline school. The author of the Pastorals rejects any leadership role by women in either teaching or liturgy, finding his warrant for woman's innate inferiority in a version of the Eden myth, known in still more extreme form in the pseudo-Clementines, in which the Fall was entirely Eve's fault. Paul also knows the story of Eve's seduction by Satan, "disguised as an angel of light," but while he uses Eve as the type of the whole congregation in danger of seduction by false teachers (2 Corinthians 11:2–6, 12–15), the author of First Timothy draws from the story a generalization about the eternal weakness of women. Their sole proper function, for him, is procreation—the function of marriage which Paul, in all his discussion of the relation of men and women in First Corinthians, never mentions.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

In late Hellenism, especially in the period immediately following the consolidation of Rome's imperial power, there were many pressures exerted on the traditional roles of men and women. As we have seen, the identification of what was properly masculine and properly feminine could no longer be

taken for granted, but became the object of controversy. The differentiation of male and female could therefore become an important symbol for the fundamental order of the world, while any modification of the role differences could become a potent symbol of social criticism or even of total rejection of the existing order. When early Christians in the area of the Pauline mission adapted the Adam-Androgyne myth to the eschatological sacrament of baptism, they thus produced a powerful and prolific set of images. If in baptism the Christian has put on again the image of the Creator, in whom "there is no male and female," then for him the old world has passed away and, behold! the new has come.

We have seen a variety of uses of the reunification language and conjectured a variety of social patterns which seemed to be associated therewith. Most clearly in gnostic circles, both Christian and non-Christian, the reunification of male and female, ritually enacted, produced an aura of novelty and esoteric consciousness. It became a sign of an elite, anticosmic sect. In Encratite circles, reunification was spiritualized and individualized to speak, apparently, of the transcendent self-consciousness of the gnostic. It became the sign not so much of a sect as of the radically isolated individual, who, by leaving behind the differentia of male and female, leaves behind the cosmos itself—empirically speaking, the world of settled society. In both cases the reunification of male and female became a symbol for "metaphysical rebellion," an act of "cosmic audacity" attacking the conventional picture of what was real and what was properly human.[164]

In a sense, every kind of "realized eschatology" is a metaphysical rebellion. I have suggested above that the Corinthian "spirituals" understood the baptismal initiation in some such way, so that the removal of the symbolic differentia of the sexes would have for them a value something like that which we see flowering later in gnostic and Encratite circles. This hypothesis accords rather well with the remarkable convergence of several studies of other aspects of the Corinthian situation from various viewpoints in recent years.[165] Moreover, it enables us to make some sense of the apparent self-contradictions in Paul's response. Paul recognized in the gnostic appropriation of the reunification symbols an implicit rejection of the *created* order and not only of its existing demonic distortion. Dissolving—or failing ever to understand—Paul's eschatological tension, the spirituals abandoned world and community for the sake of subjective transcendence. Against this "cosmic audacity," Paul insists on the preservation of the *symbols* of the present, differentiated order. Women remain women and men remain men and dress accordingly, even though "the end of the ages has come upon them." Yet

these symbols have lost their ultimate significance, for "the form of this world is passing away." Therefore Paul accepts and even insists upon the equality of role of man and woman in this community which is formed already by the Spirit that belongs to the end of days. The new order, the order of man in the image of God, was already taking form in the patterns of leadership of the new community. Yet the old order was to be allowed still its symbolic claims, for the Christian lived yet in the world, in the "land of unlikeness," until the time should come for the Son himself to submit to the Father, that God might be all in all.

The second generation of the Pauline school was not prepared to continue the equivalence of role accorded to women in the earlier mission. Perhaps Paul himself set in motion the conservative reaction. The language of baptismal reunification persisted for a time, more and more enveloped in a myth of cosmic reconciliation, but ironically it was used to reinforce a conventional stratification of family and congregation and eventually rejected altogether in the misogyny of the Pastorals. Only Marcion briefly revived the novel place of women in the church, yet here again he misunderstood his cherished Apostle and coupled the new order with a rebellion against the world's Creator as absolute as that of any gnostic.

Thus an extraordinary symbolization of the Christian sense of God's eschatological action in Christ proved too dangerously ambivalent for the emerging church. After a few meteoric attempts to appropriate its power, the declaration that in Christ there is no more male and female faded into innocuous metaphor, perhaps to await the coming of its proper moment.

Notes

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1. Maximus the Confessor, *Questiones ad Thalassium* 48 (Migne, *Patrologia graeca* 90, 436A). I am grateful to Prof. Jaroslav Pelikan for calling my attention to this passage.
2. Ibid. The other pairs of opposites mentioned by Maximus here are: "The sensible paradise and the inhabited world," "earth and heaven," "the sensible and the intelligible," "the created and the uncreated nature." Earlier in the same section (435C) he speaks of the church as "the union of the two peoples, that

of the gentiles and that of the Jews, having Christ as the bond" (σύνδεσμος; cf. Ephesians 2:14 f.).

3. Derwood C. Smith has collected a good many instances of the unification language from Greco-Roman sources in his Yale dissertation, *Jewish and Greek Traditions in Ephesians 2:11–12* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1970), 120–54. The most interesting discussion of the development and various usages of bisexual myths in Hellenism remains the monograph by Marie Delcourt, *Hermaphrodite: Mythes et rites de la bisexualité dans l'antiquité classique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1958). For an extraordinarily wide-ranging ethnographic survey of occurrences of bisexual motifs, see Hermann Baumann, *Das doppelte Geschlecht* (Berlin: E. Reimer, 1955), and for a phenomenological interpretation, Mircea Eliade, *Mephistopheles and the Androgyne* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1966), 78–124. Eliade believes that myths of the *coincidentia oppositorum* always represent "man's deep dissatisfaction with his actual situation" and "nostalgia for a lost Paradise," though the latter may be construed in many different ways, from primordial chaos to the perfect harmony and freedom sought by the yogi.
4. Edmund Leach, "Genesis as Myth," in *Myth and Cosmos,* ed. John Middleton (Garden City, N.Y.: Natural History Press, 1967), 4.
5. Tertullian *Ad nationes* 1.8.1; cf. *Apologeticum* 42. Cf. the similar argument by Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 1.4.2), who has to grant that Christianity is a νέον ἔθνος, but wants to show that it is no novelty, nor a sect "small, weak, or founded in a corner," but "the most populous of the nations and the most pious," with ancient roots. The "third race" motif first appears in Christian apologetics in the *Preaching of Peter* (see A. J. Malherbe, "The Apologetic Theology of the Preaching of Peter," *ResQ* 13 (1970): 220 f.
6. Ode 41:8, in J. H. Bernard, trans., *The Odes of Solomon,* Texts and Studies 8/3 (London: SPCK, 1912), 128.
7. Diogenes Laertius 1.33 (Thales); Lactantius *Divinae institutiones* 3.19 (Plato); cf. Plutarch *Marius* 46.1, who makes the saying Plato's last words, omitting the male/female pair in order to make a chiasm of the other two.
8. Henry Fischel, "Story and History: Observations on Greco-Roman Rhetoric and Pharisaism," in *American Oriental Society, Middle West Branch, Semi-Centennial Volume,* Asian Studies Research Institute, Oriental Series, no. 3, ed. Denis Sinor (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), 74f., nn. 81, 82. Cf. A. Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy and Its Development* (New York: Henry Holt, 1932), 75 ff.; Ismar Elbogen, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst,* 3d ed. (Leipzig: G. Feck, 1931), 90; Israel Abrahams, *A Companion to the Authorized Daily Prayer Book,* rev. ed. (New York: Hermon, 1966), 16. Elbogen and Abrahams also call attention to a Parsi parallel.
9. Tosefta, Berakot 7.18 (ed. Lieberman, 38; ed. Rengstorf, 52); Palestinian Talmud, Berakot 9.2; Babylonian Talmud, Menaḥot 43b also gives a variant in

which "slave" (עבד) replaces "boor" (בור), the form found in the prayer book, in the *Birkot ha-Shaḥar* that opens the daily service. In the latter, as in censored MSS of the Talmud, נוחרי replaces גוי.

10. Carl Schneider, *Kulturgeschichte des Hellenismus* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1967), 1:79.
11. Herbert Preisker, *Christentum und Ehe in der ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Berlin: Trowitsch & Sohn, 1927), 55–66; W. G. Kümmel, "Verlobung und Heirat bei Paulus (I Cor. 7:36–38)," in *Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann,* 2d ed. (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1957), 283–85.
12. Schneider, *Kulturgeschichte,* 1:81.
13. Schneider gives the example of the famous three daughters of Hermesianax of Tralles, who won prizes in the Isthmian, Pythian, Nemeian, and Epidaurian games each year between 47 and 41 (*Kulturgeschichte* 1:80). Charles Seltman, *Women in Antiquity,* 2d ed. (London: Thames & Hudson, 1956), emphasizes the legend of Atalanta, who became the type of the superior girl athlete (chap. 9).
14. Schneider, *Kulturgeschichte,* 1:102 f.
15. Trans. F. C. Grant, in *Hellenistic Religions* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953), 28–30; text in Wilhelm Dittenberger, *Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum,* 3d ed. (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1915–24), no. 985. See the discussion by A. D. Nock, "The Christian Sacramentum in Pliny and a Pagan Counterpart," *CR* 38 (1924): 58 f.; and *Conversion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 217. Note that Agdistis, a form of the Great Mother, was also regarded as androgynous; her priests are reported to have emasculated themselves (Delcourt, *Hermaphrodite,* 49).
16. Harold R. Willoughby, *Pagan Regeneration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), 38; Martin Nilsson, *Greek Folk Religion* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1961), 58; Erwin Rohde, *Psyche* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 1:221.
17. The intensity of the quest and the hope placed in the initiation are poignantly expressed, despite the farcical form of the romance, in the story of Lucius's regaining his human form through the offices of Lady Isis (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses,* bk. 11). See Franz Cumont, *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), 27: "Born outside of the narrow limits of the Roman city, they [namely, the Oriental cults] grew up frequently in hostility to it, and were international, consequently individual. . . . In place of the ancient social groups communities of initiates came into existence, who considered themselves brothers no matter where they came from." Seen from the viewpoint of the ruling groups, such associations were countercultural and potentially revolutionary—hence the periodic attempts to expel them from Rome.
18. Franz Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), 173 f.
19. Hugo Hepding, *Attis, seine Mythen und sein Kult,* Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten, no. 1 (Giessen: Ricker, 1903), 178 f., 187 f., proposed a

kind of adoption ritual, in which initiates became a new, transnational family (cf. Preisker, *Christentum und Ehe,* 43–51).

20. Delcourt, *Hermaphrodite,* chap. 1; see further below.
21. On the function of deliberate violation of order for the sake of restoring order, see Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970), chap. 10.
22. See Nock, *Conversion,* passim. Nock will use only the term "adhesion" of the relationship of initiate to the mystery cult, reserving "conversion" for the unique and exclusive allegiance expected of a proselyte to Judaism or Christianity or, in certain instances, a philosophical-mystical school (cf. Richard Reitzenstein, *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen* [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1956], 28 f. and appendix 8).
23. Henri Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1956), 69.
24. H. C. Baldry, *The Unity of Mankind in Greek Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 79 ff.
25. See Epictetus's description of the ideal Cynic (*Discourses* 3.22). Diogenes is credited with the aphorism ἐγὼ κοσμοπολίτης (Diogenes Laertius 6.63; cf. 6.72), which was, however, essentially a negative slogan both for the Cynics and for the Stoics who took up the notion and developed it into the elaborate picture of a universal "city of gods and men" (e.g., Chrysippus, in *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta,* III, 81–83; Epictetus *Discourses* 1.9; 2.10; etc.). The negative force is clear in the *chriae* about Crates (Diogenes Laertius 6.93) and Anaxagoras (Diogenes Laertius 2.7). Philo seems to give the notion a somewhat less individualistic nuance when he applies it to Adam (*Opif.* 142–44) (abbreviations of works of Philo are those of the Loeb edition). See Baldry, *Unity,* 108 ff.; Marrou, *History of Education,* 98.
26. Diogenes Laertius 6.12.
27. Ibid., 7.175.
28. See Max Pohlenz, *Die Stoa* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1948), 1:137, 315, 351 f.
29. Marrou, *History of Education,* 30. He devotes a chapter (pp. 26–35) to the importance of pederasty in shaping the old Greek forms of education.
30. Ibid., 39 ff.
31. E.g., in the so-called *Haustafel* structure of the Stoic parenesis (see Karl Weidinger, *Die Haustafeln* [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1928], 27–50).
32. Diogenes Laertius 7.33: like Crates, Zeno's Cynic teacher, and Crates's wife Hipparchia? (cf. Baldry, *Unity,* 155).
33. Pohlenz, *Stoa,* 1:140.
34. Diogenes Laertius 4.2.
35. Diogenes Laertius (6.98) says that "myriads" were told about her.
36. Text and English Translation (ET) in Cora E. Lutz, "Musonius Rufus, 'The Ro-

man Socrates,'" *Yale Classical Studies* 10 (1947): 38–43. Cf. Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 3.25.7: "Senserunt hoc adeo Stoici, qui et servis et mulieribus philosophandum esse dixerunt." Musonius bases his affirmation on a remarkably far-reaching statement of the natural equality of men and women: "Women as well as men . . . have received from the gods the gift of reason (λόγος)"; "the female has the same senses as the male"; "also both have the same parts of the body, and one has nothing more than the other" (! 39); both have a "natural inclination toward virtue" (p. 41). On the importance of the Greek medical tradition in providing a physical basis for the development of the concept of human unity, see Baldry, *Unity,* 38 f., 45–51.

37. *Discourses* 3.24.5, "like worthless women"; 3.24.53, "weeping, silly women"; cf. 2.4.8–11.
38. See J. N. Sevenster, *Paul and Seneca* (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 192–96.
39. Iamblichus, *The Pythagorean Life* 36.267.
40. See, e.g., the speech to the women of Croton put in the mouth of Pythagoras in Iamblichus *Pythagorean Life* 11.54–57. The Pythagorean ideal of φιλία did include friendship "of man towards woman" (Iamblichus *Pythagorean Life* 16.69; the parallel, §229, adds "or children"), but this seems not to imply a dissolution of ordinary roles, but an all-embracing order, from "cosmic elements" to doctrines of the school, in which the ideal is: Each in his own place. Hence E. R. Dodds's attempt to find in the admission of women further support for his interesting theory of a "shamanistic" origin of Pythagoreanism (*The Greeks and the Irrational* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968], 144; cf. 165, n. 59) is not terribly persuasive. However, it is interesting to note that the various incarnations of his soul which Empedocles, like Pythagoras, was said to have recalled included female bodies (Diogenes Laertius 8.77 = Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker,* fragment (fr.) 117; cf. Philostratus *Vita Apollonii* 1.5).
41. A.-J. Festugière, *Epicurus and His Gods,* trans. C. W. Chilton (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), 29 f.; Norman W. DeWitt, *Epicurus and His Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954), 95 f.
42. Seneca, *Ep.* 6.6, quoted by DeWitt, ibid., 103. Cf. Cicero *De finibus* 1.65; and Numenius, *apud* Eusebius *Praeparatio evangelica* 14.5. The importance of φιλία and οἰκειότης for the Epicureans is discussed by DeWitt (90–93, 100–105, 278 f., 282 f., 307–10, et passim); Festugière, chap. 3; G. K. Strodach, *The Philosophy of Epicurus* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1963), 67–71, 111, et passim; Baldry, *Unity,* 147–51. The organization of the community is reconstructed by DeWitt, "Organization and Structure of Epicurean Groups," *CP* 31 (1936): 205–11.
43. Diogenes Laertius 10.120, in the translation of Strodach, 111.
44. One of the principal arguments against the notion of divine providence is that the gods could not be models of αὐτάρκεια if they became concerned for men. "For troubles and anxieties and feelings of anger and partiality do not accord

with bliss, but always imply weakness and fear and dependence upon one's neighbors" (Diogenes Laertius 10.77, trans. R. D. Hicks [Loeb]).

45. Themistius *Orationes* 26 (H. Usener, *Epicurea* [Leipzig: Teubner, 1887], no. 551, 327). Opponents of the Epicureans were quick to seize on the antinomy: "So also Epicurus, when he wishes to do away with the natural fellowship (φυσικὴν κοινωνίαν) of men with one another, at the same time makes use of the very principle that he is doing away with" (Epictetus *Discourses* 2.20.6, trans. W. A. Oldfather [Loeb]) (cf. Lactantius *Divinae institutiones* 3.17.42; and see Baldry, *Unity,* 149).
46. Λάθρα βιώσας: Themistius *Orationes* 26.
47. Cf. Strodach, *Philosophy of Epicurus,* 67–71, 95; DeWitt, *Epicurus and His Philosophy,* 100 f.; Festugière, *Epicurus and His Gods,* 39–42.
48. Diogenes Laertius 10.118 f. μηδὲ καὶ γαμήσειν καὶ τεκνοποιήσειν τὸν σοφόν, though in "special circumstances" the sage may marry (cf. Epictetus *Discourses* 3.7.19 f.).
49. Diogenes Laertius 10.16–21.
50. Ibid. 10.118, quoting the Epitome of Diogenes.
51. Hecataeus of Abdera, *apud* Photius *Biblioteca* 244; quoted by John Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism,* Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series, no. 16 (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1972), 27 f.
52. For a useful survey, see L. M. Epstein, *Sex Laws and Customs in Judaism,* 2d ed. (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1967).
53. See, for example, Jesus ben Sira, chaps. 25–26. Moore echoes this attitude when he says, "For emancipated women there was in the ancient world only one calling" (G. F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962], 2:127). As a matter of fact Ben Sira 9:3–9 mentions three professions among the kinds of women to be avoided: ἑταίρα, ψαλλούση, and πόρνη. As we have seen, the picture was not in fact quite so bleak, at least in the Hellenistic world, for the woman in search of freedom.
54. Notably Prisca, who according to Acts 18:3 worked alongside her husband at tent making. An even better example would be Lydia (Acts 16:14 ff.) if she was Jewish, for successful trade in purple entailed considerable wealth. Lydia was at least associated with a Jewish group at Philippi; whether or not she was herself Jewish depends on whether σεβομένη τὸν θεόν is taken as a technical term or in the general sense of "a pious woman." On the importance of the patronesses for Paul, see below.
55. Harry J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1960), 188, and inscriptions nos. 523, 496, 166. The title is evidently honorific, probably bespeaking high status of the honoree and perhaps financial support of the community. Frey plausibly equates it with *patronus* and *patrona,* respectively (*Corpus inscriptionum iudaeorum,* l:xcv).
56. Mishnah, Soṭah 3:4.

57. Palestinian Talmud, Soṭah 3:4 (19a). The saying is attached here to a story of a *matrona* who asked R. Eliezer a difficult point of law. His response to her was, "The only 'wisdom' of a woman is that pertaining to her distaff" (cf. Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 66b). The function of the aphorisms in the tradition is difficult to make out. The attribution to Eliezer ben Hyrcanus is tenuous, of course, especially in view of the number of teachers named Eliezer in the tradition. There is a certain irony in the fact that Eliezer ben Hyrcanus was married to Imma Shalom, sister of Gamliel II and according to stories preserved about her, a well-educated and intellectually independent woman (see S. Mendelsohn, "Imma Shalom," *Jewish Encyclopedia,* 6:562).
58. Tosefta, Megilla 4–11; Babylonian Talmud, Megilla 23a; Moore, *Judaism,* 2:131.
59. See Henrietta Szold, "Beruriah," *Jewish Encyclopedia,* 3:109 f.; cf. Moore, *Judaism,* 2:129. The legend of her seduction by Meir's disciple and her subsequent suicide, told by Rashi in his commentary to Babylonian Talmud, Avoda Zara 18b, may very well be the fabrication of some tradent who was incensed by the traditional portrait of this strong-willed woman, for it serves to illustrate the saying, "Women are light-minded" (Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin, 80b). Moore also recalls the reports of maidservants in the Patriarch's household "who spoke biblical Hebrew and were able to enlighten professional scholars on rare words in the Scripture" (p. 128). Ben 'Azzai's statement that "a man ought to teach his daughter Torah," cited by Moore (ibid., n. 4), is less general when taken in its context: "that, if she drinks [the water of bitterness] she may know that the merit suspends (the punishment) for her" (Mishnah, Soṭah 3:4). It is interesting that Ben 'Azzai is known as the only Tanna to have been celibate (Babylonian Talmud, Yebamot 63b) and as one of the "four who entered Paradise," all of whom except for Akiba came to no good end (Babylonian Talmud, Ḥagiga l4b). Henry Fischel has argued that he was an Epicurean, taking "paradise" in the last-mentioned passage as the equivalent of κῆπος ("Epicurea Relating to the Near East" [unpublished paper]; see his forthcoming *Rabbinic Literature and Greco-Roman Philosophy,* Studia Post-Biblica, no. 21 [Leiden: Brill, 1973]). Be that as it may, Ben 'Azzai's reported attitude toward women has some similarity to the Epicurean and stands in notable contrast to the prevailing one in the rabbinic sources.
60. Schneider, *Kulturgeschichte,* 116 f.
61. Isaak Heinemann, *Philons griechische und jüdische Bildung,* 2d ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1962), 231–49; Richard A. Baer, Jr., *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 40.
62. Collected by Baer, ibid., 42, with references.
63. Heinemann, *Philons griechische und jüdische Bildung,* 239.
64. Ibid., 240–329. Heinemann shows too that Philo presupposes in several respects an actual jurisprudence more liberal toward women than his own ideal.

E. R. Goodenough, attempting to show that Philo's treatise *On the Special Laws* reflects actual juridical practice in Alexandria, goes even farther: "The influence of Egyptian legal equality of womanhood is everywhere apparent in a way a philosopher in his study would not have introduced it, but as social pressure of generations would have made itself felt" (*The Jurisprudence of the Jewish Courts in Egypt* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929], 99; for a summary of Jewish marriage laws as Goodenough reconstructs them, see 217–20).

65. "Philo extensively exploits female terminology as a vehicle for expressing his widespread depreciation of the created world. . . . The female, sense-perceptible, created world stands as a constant threat to man's existence" (Baer, *Philo's Use,* 44).
66. E.g., *Hyp.* 7.14. Philo himself was married, a fact only mentioned in a single fragment of all his extant writings, so far as I can find, which puts in the mouth of his wife an apothegm clearly suggesting his view of the proper relationship: "The virtue of her husband is sufficient ornament for the wife" (Mangey ed., 2:673; quoted by E. R. Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1962], 7 f.).
67. *Hyp*. 7.3: γυναῖκας ἀνδράσι δουλεύειν, πρὸς ὕβρεως μὲν οὐδεμιᾶς, πρὸς ευπείθειαν δ᾽ ἐν ἅπασι. Philo seems here to be quoting, in his summary of the laws of Moses, something like a *Haustafel;* note the close parallel in Josephus *Against Apion* 2.201: γυνὴ χείρων . . . ἀνδρὸς εἰς ἅπαντα. τοιγαροῦν ὑπακουέτω, μὴ πρὸς ὕβριν, ἀλλ᾽ ἵν᾽ ἄρχηται. The latter passage is not to be regarded as a Christian interpolation (Niese, followed by Thackeray in the Loeb edition) nor as dependent on Philo; a common Hellenistic-Jewish schema is evidently used in both places as well as in the NT *Haustafeln.*
68. A viewpoint not restricted to "sectarian" Judaism (Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, e.g., Testament of Issachar 2:3), Cynicism, and some Neopythagoreans, as Heinemann suggests (*Philons griechische und jüdische Bildung,* 265–69), but widespread both in Judaism and in the pagan moralists. E.g., Josephus *Against Apion* 2.199, *Jewish War* 2.160; Musonius Rufus, "On Sexual Indulgence," (Lutz, "Musonius Rufus," 87); for the Pythagoreans, see Iamblichus, *Pythagorean Life* 31. 209–11; cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 3.24; see further Preisker, *Ehe,* 19 ff. On the other hand, it is a mistake to take the oft-quoted saying of R. Ḥiyya, "All we can expect of them is that they bring up our children and keep us from sin" (Babylonian Talmud, Yebamot 63a) in this sense, much less to generalize from it to the attitude of all rabbinic Judaism. Also the marriage prayer of Tobit (8:5–8: οὐ διὰ πορνείαν . . . ἀλλ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀληθείας), considering the whole romance, is hardly intended to limit marriage to production of children (cf. Heinemann, *Philons griechische und jüdische Bildung,* 270, n. 3; *contra* Preisker, *Christentum und Ehe,* 71).
69. Josephus, while not so vehement as Philo, belongs here (*Against Apion* 2.199–203); his two divorces may have affected his attitude, but note the cavalier

way in which be mentions them: "being displeased at her behavior," etc. (*Life,* 415, 426). His third marriage, however, seems to have been satisfactory (427). Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs regard πορνεία as "the mother of all evils" (Testament of Simeon 5:3), and Testament of Ruben 5:1–6:5 warns consequently against any association with women, since they "are overcome with the spirit of πορνεία more than men" (5:3); cf. 4:6, 7–11; Testament of Judah 15:1–6; 17:1; 18:2; Testament of Issacher 2:1; 4:4; Testament of Joseph passim; Testament of Benjamin 8:2. To what extent this ascetic tendency has been heightened by Christian redaction is difficult to say with certainty. Like Philo (*QG* 1.43), Jesus ben Sira 25:24 blames woman for being the beginning of sin and the cause of all men's death—a fundamental view likewise of the Jewish-Christian Pseudo-Clementines (see Oscar Cullman, *Le problème littéraire et historique du roman pseudo-Clémentin,* Études d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses, no. 23 [Paris and Strasbourg, 1930], 196–201; Georg Strecker, *Das Judenchristentum in den Pseudoklementinen* [Berlin: Akademie, 1958], 154–62). The rabbis were hardly forerunners of feminine liberation—witness, for example, the attitude of Bet Hillel on grounds for divorce (Mishnah, Giṭṭim 9:10; Babylonian Talmud, Giṭṭim 90a; Sifre, Deut. 269 (ed. Finkelstein, 288]), but on the whole the Tannaitic and talmudic attitude toward women seldom approaches the hostility expressed by Philo. The several tales of the rabbis' shrewish wives (see Moore, *Judaism,* 2:126) do not imply such hostility; some of them at least belong to a common picture of the henpecked but suffering sage in Cynic *chriae* (so H. A. Fischel, "Studies in Cynicism and the Ancient Near East: The Transformation of a *Chria,*" in *Religions in Antiquity,* ed. J. Neusner [Leiden: Brill, 1967], 372–411).

70. The place of women among the Essenes remains a vexed question, since ancient external reports, the Qumran texts, and archeological evidence are all ambiguous. Pliny *Natural History* 5.15.73; Philo *Hyp.* 8.11.3, 14–17; and Josephus *Jewish War* 2.120 (cf. *Antiquities* 18.21) all agree that the Essenes did not marry but practiced ἐγκράτεια but Josephus (*Jewish War* 2.160 f.) speaks of "another order of Essene" who did marry—though solely for procreation. The Rule of the Community (1QS) is clearly a rule for an all-male, militarily oriented society, the "*men* of the lot of God" (1.9, 10; 2.2, 4 f.; 5.1 f., 13, 15, etc.). In the disciplinary section (6.24–7.25) there is no word about relations between men and women, about sexual offenses, or about *niddah.* Only male exposure is mentioned among the taboos (7.12 f.). Yet 1QSa explicitly includes both women and children (1.4, 6–8), specifies the age for marriage and sex (1.8–11), and probably, though the translation is disputed, provides for admission of wives to the lowest stage of adult participation in the meetings of the community (1.11). The Damascus Rule (CD) also provides for marriage and procreation of all those who "live in camps" (7.6–9 [A] = 19.3–5 [B], cf. 14.13 ff.; 16.10–12), but forbids sexual intercourse "in the city of the sanctuary"

(12.1 f.). CD 4.21–5.2 probably indicates that a man was expected to take only one wife during his lifetime (cf. Abel Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple* [Lund: Gleerup, 1965], 57–63). The main cemetery at Khirbet Qumran seems so far to have contained primarily male burials—only one skeleton has been certainly identified as female, and it was in a grave whose alignment differed from the prevailing north-south direction (T-7. See Roland de Vaux, "Fouilles de Khirbet Qumrân . . . ," *RB* 63 [1956]: 571 f.; cf. his preliminary report in *RB* 60 [1953]: 103, where, however, he says that "plusieurs femmes" were tentatively identified). Excavations in the extensions of this cemetery, however, have produced, to the west, four women and a child; to the north, mixed sexes; to the south, a woman and three children (*RB* 63 [1956]: 571 ff.). These facts could support Josephus's report of "two orders" of Essenes, or a hypothesis of successive phases of celibate and married Essenes (cf. F. M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961], 96–100), but hardly the reverse sequence (*contra* A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran* [New York: World Publishing Co., Meridian Books, 1962], 104, n. 3). Caution is required until excavations are complete. At the latest report only forty-four out of more than 1,200 graves had been excavated (see S. H. Steckoll, "Preliminary Excavation Report on the Qumran Cemetery," *RevQ* 6 [1967–69]: 323–44). Credence must be given to Josephus's statement that the Essenes did not abolish marriage and procreation in principle (*Jewish War* 2.120), for even in 1QS "fruitfulness of seed" (פרוט זרע, 4.7) is among the eschatological blessings promised those who follow the Spirit of Truth. The present asceticism, therefore, was evidently temporary and conditional. (Otherwise M. Jimenez, "Menções femininas nos textos de Qumran," *Revista de cultura biblica* 2 [1958]: 272 f., who finds the phrase so anomalous in the context that he thinks it may have crept in "almost by habit" or perhaps carries a metaphorical, "spiritual significance.") Cross, Isaksson, and others are undoubtedly correct in finding the basic reason for this temporary asceticism in the ideology of Holy War that permeates the sect's apocalyptic self-understanding. (Though John Strugnell, "Flavius Josephus and the Essenes: Antiquities XVIII.18–22," *JBL* 77 [1958]: 110, is certainly correct that the view that women are unreliable and sources of trouble, which Josephus [and Philo] give as the reasons for the Essenes's celibacy, was merely a radicalization of a common view in the wisdom literature—as we have seen—yet I remain convinced that this view as stated tells us more about Philo and Josephus than about the primary orientation of the Essenes.) Thus War Scroll (1QM) 7.3 f., "And no young boy and no woman shall enter their camps when they leave Jerusalem to go into battle," is clearly an extension of the rule for continence of soldiers in Holy War (Deuteronomy 23:10 f.; cf. 2 Samuel 11:9–13); Dupont-Sommer, *Essene Writings,* 180 is probably correct in seeing in the addition of the boy an allusion to the pederasty common in Hellenistic armies; (for a different view

see B. Jongeling, *Le Rouleau de la guerre des manuscrits de Qumran* [Assen: Van Gorcum, 1962], 194; J. van der Ploeg, *Le Rouleau de la guerre* [Leiden: Brill, 1959], 112). On the whole question, see Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry,* 45–65, though his ingenious suggestion that the נער זעטוט is a technical term for the twenty- to twenty-five-year age group, and that marriage and procreation at Qumran were restricted to that precise group (after Deuteronomy 20:7; cf. 1QM 10.2–6), is far-fetched.

71. *Vit. cont.* 83–87. The men and women, separated by a wall in the regular sabbath meetings (30–33), eat together thereafter at the sacred banquet (54–55), men on the right and women on the left (68–69). The "sacred vigil" after dinner begins with men and women singing and dancing in separate choirs, until "having drunk as in the Bacchic rites of the strong wine of God's love they mix and both together become a single choir (γίνονται χορὸς εἷς ἐξ ἀμφοῖν), a copy of the choir set up of old beside the Red Sea" (85, trans. F. H. Colson [Loeb]).
72. Epictetus *Discourses* 3.1.24–45; cf. 1.16.9–14; Paul, 1 Corinthians 11:14 ff.; pseudo-Phocylides, 212; cf. Philo *Mos.* 1.54; also Euphrates' slander of Apollonius and the latter's reply, Epistle 8. Plutarch's comment on mourning customs is instructive. In Greece, he says, "when any misfortune comes, the women cut off their hair and the men let it grow," the conscious *reversal* of what is "customary" (συνηθές) (*Moralia* 267B, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt [Loeb]).
73. Ἄλλος γυναικὸς κόσμος, ἄλλος ἀρρένων (J. M. Edmonds, *The Fragments of Attic Comedy* [Leiden: Brill, 1961], fr. 1294). Though Edmonds takes κόσμος here to mean merely "garb," see Schneider, *Kulturgeschichte,* 1:104, n. 4.
74.

Galatians 3:28	1 Corinthians 12:13	Colossians 3:10 f.
εἰς Χρ. ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε	εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν,	ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον [ἄνθρωπον] τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον . . . κατὰ εἰκόνα . . .
οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλλην,	εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι εἴτε Ἕλληες	οὐκ ἔνι Ἕλλην καὶ Ἰουδαῖος.
οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος	εἴτε δοῦλοι εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι,	
οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ		περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία,
πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἰς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ	πάντες ἓν πνεῦμα ἐποτίσθημεν	βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, ἀλλὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός.

Ephesians 6:8: εἴτε δοῦλος εἴτε ἐλεύθερος. Ignatius Smyrnaeans 1:2: εἴτε ἐν Ἰουδαίοις εἴτε ἐν ἔθνεσιν, ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι τῆς ἐκκλησίας αὐτοῦ. Perhaps there is a vestige of the formula also in Gospel of Philip (hereafter: Gosp Phil) §49

75. The two expressions are equivalent, for the masculine εἷς of Galatians 3:28 implies Χριστός or νέος ἄνθρωπος (Ulrich Wilckens, *Weisheit und Torheit* [Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1959], 13, n. 2; Robert Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ* [Berlin: Töpelmann, 1967], 20).
76. Eduard Lohse recognizes that Colossians 3:11 breaks into the context and "undoubtedly has been adopted from the tradition" (*Colossians and Philemon,* Hermeneia [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971], 143, n. 70; German original, 207, n. 2). For a similar observation on 1 Corinthians 12:13, see Hans Lietzmann, *An die Korinther,* 2d ed. (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1923), 64.
77. The use of καί instead of ουδέ to join the third pair could of course be merely a stylistic variation, as in Gosp Phil 104, 13–15; 128, 23–27. However, since the notion of reunification in baptism, as we shall see, is clearly connected with the tradition of the Image of God, Galatians 3:28 certainly alludes to ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς, Genesis 1:27, Septuagint. Hans Windisch finds the allusion "unverkennbar" ("Sinn und Geltung des apostolischen 'mulier taceat in ecclesia,'" *Christliche Welt* 44 [1930], col. 423).
78. Therefore the quotation may begin with, "You are all sons of God," certainly appropriate in a baptismal liturgy in which the baptized person would eventually respond, "Abba! Father!" (4:6; cf. Romans 8:15). However, since there is no parallel to this element in Colossians 3 or 1 Corinthians 12, we cannot be sure whether the pronouncement of sonship was regularly connected with the declaration of unity.
79. Besides the contemporary philosophers who have described "performative" language (beginning with J. L. Austin, elaborated by Donald Evans, *The Logic of Self-Involvement* [New York: Herder & Herder, 1969], pt. 1), a growing number of anthropologists recognize the formative power of ritual. E.g., Mary Douglas emphasizes the ability of ritual not only to reinforce and "frame" perception and memory, but also to change them, thus not merely reflecting social reality but actually creating it (*Purity and Danger,* 78–86).
80. The phrase is Clifford Geertz's, who proposes to define religion as "a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, persuasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic" ("Religion as a Cultural System," in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion,* ed. Michael Banton [New York: Frederick R. Praeger, 1966], 4). Note that here the social scientist approaches, from a different perspective, the question of the relationship between "indicative and imperative" that has exercised Pauline scholarship for so many years. See especially Rudolf Bultmann, "Das Problem der Ethik bei

Paulus," *ZNW* 23 (1924): 123–40, reprinted in *Exegetica,* 36–54; Erich Dinkler, "Zum Problem der Ethik bei Paulus," *ZTK* 49 (1952): 167–200; Victor P. Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville, Tenn.; Abingdon Press, 1968), 224–27; and, still fundamental, Hans von Soden, "Sakrament und Ethik bei Paulus," in *Rudolf Otto-Festgruss,* 1931, reprinted in *Das Paulusbild in der neueren deutschen Forschung,* ed. K. H. Rengstorf (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964), 338–79; abridged ET in *The Writings of St. Paul,* ed. W. Meeks (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), 257–68. Two recent Yale dissertations have analyzed the attitudinal functions of Pauline parenetic language, adopting some methods of the analytic philosophers of language, in several respects providing a needed corrective to the existentialist interpretation introduced by Bultmann: Robert Webber, *The Concept of Rejoicing in Paul* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1971); and Richard Davis, *Remembering and Acting: A Study of the Moral Life in I Thessalonians* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1971). If I speak of the "objectivity" of the new state here as a social construction (see Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967], 47–128), I do not intend a reductionist equation of that question with the theological question about the transcendent reality of God's action. I only wish to bracket the theological issue for the moment in order to address the sociological ones.

81. Leander E. Keck has emphasized this neglect in an excellent paper read before the Biblical Literature Section of the American Academy of Religion, October 29, 1971, "On the Ethos of Early Christians."
82. Disrobing before baptism is explicitly mentioned or presupposed in the earliest complete baptismal rituals known to us, as well as in the earliest paintings of baptism in catacomb art. See Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition,* sec. 21 in the editions by both Dix and Botte; cf. the ancient Syrian liturgy reconstructed by A. F. J. Klijn from the Syriac "Life of John" and other sources: "An Early Christian Baptismal Liturgy," in *Charis kai Sophia. Festschrift Karl Rengstorf* . . . (Leiden: Brill, 1964), 216–28. See also Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Garments of Shame," *History of Religions* 5 (1965): 224–30. We do not know how early special (white) robes were provided for the newly baptized, first attested in the fifth century (for references, see Klijn, p. 227). For examples of paintings of baptism, see *Atlas of the Early Christian World,* ed. F. van der Meer and Christine Mohrmann (New York: Nelson, 1958), plates 48, 396, 397. Christ is also depicted nude at his baptism, e.g., in the mosaic of the Baptistery of the Arians in Ravenna (ibid., pl. 412).
83. For example, the parenetic use is attested already in Philo *Som.* 1.224 f.; cf. Acts of Thomas 58 and the Teachings of Sylvanus (CG VII, *4.* 105, 13–17). In reference to the "Coptic Gnostic Library" (CG) of Nag Hammadi, I follow the abbreviated form suggested by J. M. Robinson. See the lists in David M. Scholer, *Nag Hammadi Bibliography 1948–1969* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 109–15. Mixed with

the imagery of investiture, Testament of Levi 8:2; mixed with the imagery of arming for the eschatological holy war (cf. Wisdom 5:18–20, of God, based on Isa. 59:17), 1 Thessalonians 5:8; Romans 13:12; Ephesians 6:10–17. Luke T. Johnson has called my attention to an unpublished dissertation by Dom Ambrose Wathen, O.S.B., "To Clothe with a Quality as with a Garment" (St. Joseph Abbey, St. Benedict, Louisiana, 1967), but I have not had access to it. P. W. van der Horst offers an interesting collection of parallels to the phrase "putting off the . . . man" ("Observations on a Pauline Expression," *NTS* 19 [1972/73]: 181–87), but his attempt to explain Pauline usage on the basis of a *chria* about the skeptic Pyrrho misses the point by failing to see that in Paul "taking off " cannot be separated from "putting on."

84. Philostratus, for example, tells of the remarkable transformation of a young man from whom Apollonius expelled a demon: "and he gave up his dainty dress and summery garments and the rest of his sybaritic way of life, and he fell in love with the austerity of philosophers, and donned their cloak, and stripping off his old self modelled his life in the future upon that of Apollonius" (*Vita Apollonii* 4.20, trans. F. C. Conybeare [Loeb]). Cf. Acts of Thomas 58 (Lipsius-Bonnet, vol. 2, pt. 2, p. 175).
85. E.g., Apuleius's account of the vesting of Lucius at the conclusion of his initiation into the mysteries of Isis, so that he was "adorned like the sun" (*Metamorphoses* 11.24).
86. Baumann, *Doppelte Geschlecht,* 45–59, has collected and classified a vast number of examples, mainly from "primitive" societies, with emphasis on the religious function of symbolic change of sex: "Der kultische Geschlechtswandel ist in erster Linie ein Mittel, eine spezifische Abweichung von der Norm, hier der heterosexuellen Geschlechtseigenarten, als Ausdruck einer gesteigerten magischreligiösen Wirkungsmächtigkeit zu sehen" (p. 39). For examples in classical Greece and Hellenism, see Delcourt, *Hermaphrodite.* See also Eliade, *Mephistopheles and the Androgyne,* 78–124.
87. See, besides the works mentioned in the previous note, Ernst Ludwig Dietrich, "Der Urmensch als Androgyn," *ZKG* 58 (1939): 297–345.
88. Babylonian Talmud, Megilla 9a: זכר ונקה בראו ולא תבו בראם; Mekilta, *Pisḥa* 14: זכר ונקוביו בראו, which Lauterbach translates, "A male with corresponding female parts created He him" (1:111 f.); the reading in the Palestinian Talmud is perhaps conflate or corrupt: זכר ונקוביו בראם, "male with female parts be created them." Cf. John Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), appendix 3. The reading is not preserved, so far as I can find, in any extant Septuagint manuscript. Bowker, 142 ff., finds *zakar uneqabauw* [sic] in both Targums ps-Jonathan and Onkelos at Gen. 5:2 and translates "male with female parts," though admitting that *naqab* may mean simply "female." But Sperber's edition of Onkelos attests only נוקבא, "female," as do the editions of ps-Jonathan available to me.

89. Genesis Rabba 8.1, cf. 17.6. In Leviticus Rabba 14, the saying is attributed, with slight variants, to Resh Leqish. Compare the language of Plato *Symposium* 189c–191d.
90. "Two faces": Babylonian Talmud, Erubin 18a, Berakot 61a (R. Jeremiah ben Eleazar); Genesis Rabba 8.1; Tanhuma "B," ed. Buber, 3:33 (*Tazria'*) (R. Samuel ben Naḥman); Leviticus Rabba 14 (Resh Leqish); cf. Zohar 2, 55a. "Androgynos": Genesis Rabba 8.1 (R. Jeremiah ben Eleazar); Leviticus Rabba 14 (R. Samuel ben Naḥman). Use of *androgynos* alone would not prove Platonic influence, though the word is used in this special way in *Symposium* 189e, for it was a technical term in rabbinic writings for a hermaphrodite. But the peculiar *du prosopin* and its variants (spellings vary in the editions; διπρόσωπον, is doubtless a learned correction—the word is extremely rare even in Greek sources) can most readily be explained as an echo of Plato's πρόσωπα δύ᾽ (*Symposium* 189e). Also the interpretation of the צלע of Genesis 2:21 as "side" and thence "body" (גב) recalls the phrase νῶτον καὶ πλευρὰς κύκλῳ ἔχον (ibid.). (Cf. Dietrich, "Urmensch," p. 313.) The story is alluded to in *Abot de Rabbi Nathan,* chap. 1 (Schechter, p. 8; ET, Goldin, p. 15), and in Midrash on Psalms at 139.5; it is elaborated in the Zohar, 2, 55a; 3, 44b; cf. 1, 91b.
91. The attributions conflict, but all point to the school at Tiberias of the late third and early fourth centuries. However, the story is presupposed by a saying attributed to "Rab and Samuel" (Babylonian Talmud, Erubin 18a; Berakot 61a), which suggests that the tradition may have been brought by Rab to Babylonia early in the third century.
92. Philo himself speaks very disparagingly of the Platonic dialogue itself (*Vit. cont.* 57–63), but he presupposes the interpretation of Adam as bisexual and Eve as "half of his body" in *QG* 1.25 and *Opif.* 151 f., even though he has little use for it in his own allegory (cf. Baer, *Male and Female,* 83 f.). Baer thinks *Opif.* 136–70 was drawn from a source, in which case the attestation would be still earlier.
93. The 2:1 dominance of homosexuals over heterosexuals in the original tale, enhanced by Aristophanes' witty comments suggesting the qualitative superiority of homosexual love, made the story repugnant to Philo (*Vit. cont.* 59–63).
94. Cf. Babylonian Talmud, Ketubot 8a, where the question is raised in the context of the benedictions proper for the wedding service. The monogamous implication is already clear in Philo *QG* 1.25; in medieval Jewish mysticism it is spelled out in the notion of the "marriage made in heaven": every soul is made bisexual. Divided at birth, each half is enabled to find its complement if it leads a righteous life (Zohar, 1, 91b).
95. In Hebrew sources a pun is involved: the כטנות עור take the place of כטנות אור (see Genesis Rabba 20.12 and cf. Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* [New York: Schocken Books, 1965), 175]. The identification of the "garments of skin" with the body is known already to Philo (*QG* 1.53); it was

very frequently exploited in gnostic dualism (Clement of Alexandria *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 55.1; and *Stromateis* 3.95. 2 [Cassianus]; Irenaeus *Adversus haereses* [ed. Harvey] 1.1.10; Tertullian *De resurrectione* 7). Origen seems to have been attracted to the notion but did not fully embrace it (see *Contra Celsum* 4.40 and Henry Chadwick's note in his edition, p. 216, n. 5). In Apocalypse of Moses 20:1–3, Eve bemoans the loss of "the glory with which I was clothed."

96. Lines 76–99 (Acts of Thomas, chaps. 112 f.) (cf. Jacob Jervell, *Imago Dei* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960], 168; Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion,* 2d ed. [Boston: Beacon Press, 1963], 122 f.).
97. Moses was "clothed with the image (צלמא) which Adam lost in the Garden of Eden" (*Memar Marqah* 5.4). Cf. the very similar Jewish tradition preserved in Deuteronomy Rabba 11.3; Yalkut ha-Makiri on Proverbs 31:29 (ed. E. Grünhut, p. 102b) and on Psalms 49:21 and 68:13 (ed. Buber, 1:270, 330). The image is more often symbolized by a crown in the case of Moses, because of Exodus 34:30 (see W. Meeks, "Moses as God and King," in *Religions in Antiquity,* 361–65, and further references there. See also Raphael Loewe, "The Divine Garment and the Shi'ur Qomah," *HTR* 58 [1965]: 153–60; and Gershom Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* [New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1960], 58 f.).
98. E.g., 1 Enoch 62:15, "garments of glory," cf. Jervell, *Imago Dei,* 45. In this connection Otto Betz's proposal to connect the "glory of Adam" (1QS 4.23; Damascus Rule 3.20) with the "glorious crown and garment of honor in everlasting light," is attractive, though his attempt to find in the Qumran texts evidence for a "proselyte baptism" which will be "von der Proselytentaufe der Endzeit übertroffen" is unconvincing ("Die Proselytentaufe der Qumransekte und die Taufe im Neuen Testament," *RevQ* 1 [1958]: 220 f.).
99. E.g., from the group of prayers recited on the riverbank at baptism, "I worship, laud and praise Manda d̲-Hiia lord of healings, the being whom the Life summoned and bade him heal the congregation of souls, divesting the congregation of souls of (their) darkness and clothing them with light; raising (them) and showing them that a great restoration of life exists, a place where the spirits and souls of our forefathers sit clothed in radiance and covered with light" (*The Canonical Prayerbook of the Mandaeans* [henceforth: *CP*], ed. Ethel S. Drower (Leiden: Brill, 1959), no. 9, p. 8). The significance of investiture in Mandaean baptism, and its original position *after* immersion, as in early Christian ritual, is discussed by E. Segelberg, *Maṣbuta: Studies in the Ritual of Mandaean Baptism* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1958), 115–30. In the *Masiqta* ritual for the dying, the apotropaic function of the robe of light as well as its symbolism of the heavenly self are particularly vivid: "When this soul of N. casteth off her bodily garment, she shall put on the dress of life and become a facsimile of the Great Life in light" (*CP,* no. 51, p. 47. Cf. no. 49, pp. 43 f., and see further Jonas, *Gnostic Religion,* 122 f.).

100. E.g., Odes of Solomon 25:8 (a baptismal hymn): "And I was clothed with the covering of thy Spirit, and thou didst remove from me my raiment of skin" (trans. Bernard). Bernard cites a very similar phrase from Jerome, *Epistula ad Fabiolum,* and Moses bar Kepha: "The white robes show that the baptized . . . will put on the glory which Adam wore before he transgressed the commandment" (*Odes and Psalms,* 108). The imagery of the biblical creation and Exodus stories permeate the old Syrian baptismal liturgies; see Bernard, *Odes and Psalms,* 32–34, et passim. See further the ritual reconstructed by Klijn (in the article cited above, n. 82). Cf. Narsai's Homily 21: "He [sc. the priest] recasts bodies in Baptism; . . . he purifies the image of men (R. H. Connolly, *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai,* Texts and Studies, no. 8, pt. 1 [London: SPCK, 1909], 48 ff.; cf. 46 ff.). In the West the restoration of the image in baptism is a common conception (e.g., Tertullian *De baptismo* 5, who however distinguishes the restored "likeness" from the original "image"), but the clothing imagery plays little role.

101. Gosp Phil §101 (123, 21–25) identifies the baptismal "living water" itself with the body of "the living man." Mr. Ron Hock has suggested to me that this positive evaluation of baptism may belong to an early stratum of the Gosp Phil collection, with §§90, 43, 59, 75, in contrast with other material that depreciates baptism in favor of chrism and especially the Bridal Chamber. As he observes, the Paraphrase of Shem, which goes much further and rejects baptism as the work of the Demon, parodies the above notion by the statement, "The water is an insignificant body" (ἐλάχιστον σῶμα, CG VII, *1.* 37, 14f). Gosp Phil §24 (105, 19–23) speaks of heavenly garments put on "by water and fire" (=baptism and chrism), which unlike earthly garments are better than those who put them on. Gosp Phil §106 (124, 22–31) and 27b (106, 15 f.) develop the apotropaic function of the garb of "perfect light" for the ascent of the soul (cf., besides the Mandaean texts cited in n. 99, pseudo-Clementine *Hom.* 17.16). Similar imagery is used of Christ's descent and ascent in the Gospel of Truth, 20, 29–38. (In references to Gosp Phil I have retained the numeration of the Labib photographic edition, since that is followed by the editions accessible to most readers. To obtain the "official" page numbers, simply subtract 48; e.g., 123, 21–25 [Labib]= 75, 21–25 [official]).

102. E.g., the Marcosians, according to Irenaeus *Adversus haereses* 1.18.2= Epiphanius *Haereses* 34.16.4–5; Naasenes, Hippolytus *Refutatio* 5.7.7–15; Apocryphon of John, BGU 8502, 27, 20–25 (ed. Till)=CG III, *1.* 7, 23–28, 5; cf. CG II, *1.* 5, 5–14 (ed. Krause and Labib); Gosp Phil, passim (see below); Simonians, Hippolytus *Refutatio* 6.18 (see below). Also the soul, before the Fall, was "virgin and masculofeminine" according to the Exegesis on the Soul, CG II, *6.* 127, 24. Cf. Jervell, *Imago,* 161–65. As Delcourt observes, the lists of antinomies or paradoxes that are so common in gnostic literature (e.g., Hippolytus *Refutatio* 6.17.3; The Thunder . . . , CG VI, *2.* 13, 16–14, 5//CG II, *5.* 114, 7–

15; Right Ginza 5, 1 [Lidzbarski, p. 151, lines 11 ff.]) might remind one of Heraclitus's description of the ultimate reality (Diels, *Fragmente,* fr. 67), but while the philosopher gives no special place to sexual metaphors, "these obsess the gnostics" (Delcourt, *Hermaphrodite,* 119). On androgyny in the Hypostasis of the Archons (CG II, *4)* see R. A. Bullard, *The Hypostasis of the Archons* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1970), 60 f.

103. Gosp Phil §71 (116, 22–26) trans. R. McL. Wilson, *The Gospel of Philip* (London: Mowbray, 1962). Schenke, Till, and Wilson agree on emending the masculine suffixes in line 25 to feminine (in brackets above), but such a solecism twice in one line seems to me perhaps deliberate. The writer may have reasoned pedantically that the feminine pronoun is no longer appropriate for the female who has become worthy to "enter" (ϩⲱⲕ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ): a double entendre? cf. Gospel of Thomas 22 [85, 35]) having "made herself male" (Gospel of Thomas 114 [99, 24–26]). A fuller and more general version of the same saying is found in §78, with the further statement, "Because of this Christ came, in order that he might remove the separation which was from the beginning, and again unite the two; and that he might give life to those who died in the separation, and unite them" (Wilson).
104. *Adversus haereses* 1.21.3 (Harvey 1.14.2) = Epiphanius *Haereses* 34.20.1.
105. *Adversus haereses* 1.13.3 (Harvey 1.7.2) Epiphanius *Haereses* 34.2.6–11.
106. Δεῖ ἡμᾶς εἰς τὸ ἕν καταστῆναι . . . ἵνα ἔσῃ ὃ ἐγὼ καὶ ἐγὼ ὃ σύ . . . κατὰ πάντα, ἑνοῦσθαι αὐτῷ προθυμουμένη, ἵνα σὺν αὐτῷ κατέλθῃ εἰς τὸ ἕν (ibid.). Cf. Gosp Phil 117, 8; 118, 12–17; 118, 19f.; 124, 6.8; 133, 31; cf. Exegesis on the Soul 132, 35, which speaks of becoming "a single life." The description in Exegesis on the Soul 132, 2–35 of the soul's preparation of a νυμφών where she awaits the heavenly Bridegroom is particularly close to Irenaeus's parody.
107. Cf. Gosp Phil 133, 33 f. (as reconstructed by Till); cf. 115, 4–9; 118, 5–9; 119, 6; 134, 4 f.
108. In Irenaeus's source, *Charis* descends and the "bride" prophesies. In Gosp Phil the receiving of the Spirit is still associated primarily with baptism, but in the Exegesis on the Soul the "life-giving spirit" is identified with the "seed" received in the (symbolic) marriage. Further similarities and differences between the Marcosian formula and Gosp Phil are outlined by Hans-Georg Gaffron, *Studien zum koptischen Philippusevangelium* (Bonn: Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 1969), 213 f.
109. §68 (115, 27–30), though §76 (117, 14–118, 4) speaks of only three (see R. M. Grant, "The Mystery of Marriage in the Gospel of Philip," *VC* 15 [1961]: 129–40; Eric Segelberg, "The Coptic-Gnostic Gospel of Philip and Its Sacramental System," *Numen* 7 [1960]: 189–200; H.-M. Schenke [and Johannes Leipoldt], *Koptisch-gnostische Schriften aus den Papyrus-Codices von Nag-Hamadi,* Theologische Forschung, 20 [Hamburg-Bergstadt: Reich, 1960], 35–38;

Nathan D. Mitchell, O.S.B., "The Coptic Gnostic Gospel of Philip and Its Sacramental System" [M.A. thesis, Indiana University, 1971]; and especially the Bonn dissertation by Gaffron [see previous note]).

110. Gosp Phil §55 (111, 30–32); cf. Irenaeus *Adversus haereses* 1.1–8 (1.8–71 Harvey); *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 43–65; Schenke, *Koptisch-gnostische Schriften,* 35–38.
111. Gosp Phil §55: "[Sophia] is the mother of the angels, and the consort (κοινωνός) of Christ is Mary Magdalene." Κοινωνία in Gosp Phil means sexual intercourse (cf. 109, 10: Till translates *Geschlechtsverkehr),* though probably not literally (see below). Christ not only loved Mary, he frequently kissed her, thus presumably making her pregnant (as the Savior, in the Valentinian scheme, made the barren lower Sophia pregnant), for "the perfect (τέλειος) become pregnant by a kiss and give birth. Therefore we also kiss one another and receive pregnancy by the grace (χάρις) that is mutual" (107, 1–6). Gaffron insists that these passages reflect an altogether different cycle of tradition, speaking of the *lower* Sophia and the lower Christ, and that this "pregnancy" of the τέλειος has no connection with the Bridal Chamber (*Studien,* 214–16), but I find his reasoning quite unconvincing. Especially puzzling is his argument that the metaphors of "pregnancy" and "birth" would signify individuation and hence contradict the Bridal Chamber's central theme of unification. Paragraph 67, the keystone of Gaffron's own description of the Bridal Chamber, speaks directly of the gnostic's being "reborn through the image." This is no contradiction of the notion of the gnostic's becoming "pregnant," since Gaffron himself insists that the "angel" who unites with the "image," i.e., the self, in the Bridal Chamber is only a "projection" of the self—so that those who unite and that which is "reborn" through that union are ultimately identical, and Gaffron's rhetorical question, "With what should the image united with its angel become pregnant?" is readily answered: "With its own true (heavenly) self."
112. 106, 10–14; 113, 23–25; cf. 126, 33–127, 5. See Grant, "Mystery of Marriage," 131–33, 136.
113. Grant thinks this likely (ibid., 139). Gosp Phil §42 (109, 5–12) redefines adultery as "κοινωνία between those who are not alike," i.e., between pneumatics and nongnostics (cf. §113); nothing is said about relations between two pneumatics. But see Gaffron, *Studien,* 216 f.
114. §§60, 103, 126. Clement of Alexandria *Stromateis* 3.29, describes the Valentinian "marriage" as "spiritual" (cf. Karl Müller, "Die Forderung der Ehelosigkeit für alle Getauften in der alten Kirche," in *Aus der akademischen Arbeit* [Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1930], 70).
115. Schenke, *Koptisch-gnostische Schriften,* 38; *contra* Grant, "Mystery of Marriage," 139.
116. Cf. §31 and §55 (111, 36). Compare Hippolytus's *Apostolic Tradition,* where, as

in Gosp Phil, only those are admitted to the kiss of peace who have received both baptism and chrismation. The catholic rite, however, keeps men and women separate for the kiss (18.3–4; 22.3, 6, ed. Dix; in Botte's edition, 40, 54). See further Gaffron, *Studien,* 213–16, who decides that the ritual kiss was practiced by the gnostics of Gosp Phil in some other context than the Bridal Chamber.

117. "There is no bridal chamber (παστός) for the beasts, nor for slaves, nor for women who are defiled; rather it is for freemen (ἐλεύθερος) and virgins (παρθένος)" (§73; the exclusions recall the "three reasons for gratitude," above). Paragraph 110 defines the ἐλεύθερος as "he who possesses knowledge of the truth" (125, 15 f.) (cf. Grant, "Mystery of Marriage," 138. See also §§42, 113, 127; cf. p. 115, lines 25–27). In another Nag Hammadi text, "The Second Logos of the Great Seth" (CG VII, *2),* a heavenly wedding "before the foundation of the world" becomes the paradigm for unity in an organized gnostic group, but without any mention of a *sacrament* of marriage, according to Joseph Gibbons, *The Second Logos of the Great Seth* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1973), 273–86.
118. Hippolytus *Refutatio* 6.18.2, 4.
119. Cf. Jervell, *Imago,* 161 f.; Hans Jonas takes Simonianism as the classic example of the "feminine group" of the Syrian-Egyptian (i.e., emanation-and-fall) type of gnostic myth (*Gnosis und spätantiker Geist,* 3d ed. [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964], 353–58; cf. *Gnostic Religion,* 103–11). The differentiation and reunion of the male and female elements in man is portrayed in the legend of Simon's consort, Helen, which was evidently fully developed before the time of Justin Martyr (see Ernst Haenchen, "Gab es eine vorchristliche Gnosis?" in *Gott und Mensch* [Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1965], 289–91, 297 f.; but note the sharp criticisms by K. Beyschlag, "Zur Simon-Magus-Frage," *ZTG* 68 [1971]: 395–426. Further criticism of Haenchen's reconstruction by Roland Bergmeier, "Quellen vorchristlicher Gnosis," in *Tradition und Glaube,* ed. Gert Jeremias et al. [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971], 200–220, has not yet been accessible to me). We now have a striking parallel to the legend in the myth of the soul's abuse, transformation, and joining to her heavenly "bridegroom" in the Nag Hammadi "Exegesis on the Soul."
120. Hippolytus *Refutatio* 6.17.1.
121. *Gott und Mensch,* 280.
122. Cf. the continuation of the account in *Refutatio* 16.17.3 and cf. 6.14, where the εἰκών is identified with the "Spirit hovering over the face of the waters."
123. *Refutatio* 6.9.10; 6.12.3. The system of six "powers" arranged in pairs, all comprehended by the superior, single power that is identified with the Image and Spirit of Genesis 1, is strikingly reminiscent of the Logos and the six powers in

parts of Philo's allegory (see E. R. Goodenough, *By Light, Light* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935], 11–47).

124. *Refutatio* 6.14.6; 6.12.4. Haenchen points out the similar view of the Peratae, according to Hippolytus 5.17.10 (only τὸ ἐξεικονισμένον τέλειον γένος ὁμοούσιον will be saved) (*Gott und Mensch,* 271).

125. Thus ἐξεικονισμένοι is certainly equivalent to τέλειοι, "initiates," in the statement, πρὸς διδασκαλίαν ἀρκεῖ τοῖς ἐξεικονισμένοις τὸ λεχθέν (*Refutatio* 6.10.2). "Having become perfect" (γενόμενος τέλειος) parallels ἐξεικονισθῇ in 6.18.1 (cf. Haenchen, *Gott und Mensch,* 271). Compare the Valentinian notion of "formation" by the Bridal Chamber: children of "the woman" (Sophia) are "incomplete and infants and senseless and weak and without form," but "when we have received form (μορφωθέντας) from the Saviour, we have become children of a husband and a bride chamber" (*Excerpta ex Theodoto* 68, ed. Casey).

126. Haenchen himself points to the mythical notion of receiving a heavenly *Lichtkleid* as the equivalent of ἐξεικονίζεται in *Refutatio* 6.9.10 (*Gott und Mensch,* 270 ff.), but he does not consider the possibility of a cultic act. Gilles Quispel cites very interesting parallels in a kabbalistic rite of "putting on the name" while standing in water, described by Gershom Scholem, and putting on a divine image in a magic papyrus, and suggests some connection with early Christian baptism, which he does not elaborate (*Gnosis als Weltreligion* [Zürich: Origo, 1951], 55 ff.). If the Simonians did practice an initiatory baptism, it would help to explain the peculiar report in pseudo-Clementine *Hom.* 2, 23 f. that Simon was one of the disciples of John the Baptist.

127. *Refutatio* 6.19.5.

128. Haenchen thinks these two tendencies resulted within Valentinianism in two distinct kinds of systems, one mythical and sacramental, the other more "spiritual," antisacramental ("Literatur zum Codex Jung," *TRu* 30 [1964]: 74–82; cf. Jonas, *Gnostic Religion,* 174–79).

129. Best known is logion 22, "When you make the two one (ⲡⲥⲛⲁⲩ ⲟⲩⲁ), and when you make the inside as the outside and the outside as the inside . . . in order to make the male and the female into a single one (ⲙⲡⲓⲟⲩⲁ ⲟⲩⲱⲧ) . . . you shall enter [the kingdom]," variant forms of which are known from Clement of Alexandria *Stromateis* 3.13.92 (citing the Gospel of the Egyptians and Julius Cassianus), 2 Clement 12:2; Acts of Peter 38; Acts of Philip 140 (the latter two without mention of "male and female"). Cf. logion 106, "When you make the two one, you shall become sons of man," logion 1lb, "On the day when you were one, you became two. But when you have become two, what will you do?" and logion 4, "Many who are first shall become last and they shall become a single one." The metaphor of making "the inside as the outside" in logion 22 may perhaps be connected with the peculiar no-

tion found in the Exegesis on the Soul that the "womb of the soul" is on the outside "like the φυσικόν of the male" until purified by baptism, when it is "turned inward" (CG II, *6.* 131, 13–132, 2).

130. J. Z. Smith, "The Garments of Shame," shows that the main elements of logion 37, undressing, being naked without shame, treading upon the garments, and being as little children, all point to an origin of this saying "within archaic Christian baptismal practices and attendant interpretation of Genesis 1–3" (p. 218).

131. J. Z. Smith compares homilies of Theodore of Mopsuestia, who contrasts nudity at baptism, when shame is still felt, with an eschatological nudity without shame. Logion 21 is admittedly difficult to interpret, but the most plausible explanation is that clothing here, too, represents the physical body by which the gnostic is connected temporarily to the world—"the field" ("field" also may have sexual connotations, as frequently). The notion that baptism restores the initiate to the virginal innocence of Adam, who had "no understanding of the begetting of children," is implicit in a number of Christian Encratite texts (see Erik Peterson, "Einige Bemerkungen zum Hamburger Papyrus . . . ," in *Frühkirche, Judentum und Gnosis* [Rome, Freiburg, Vienna: Herder, 1959], 194–96, who collects numerous texts in which an epiphany of Jesus at baptism in the form of a παιδίον, νεανίσκος, or the like is recounted).

132. Note the parallel in logion 49, "Blessed are the solitary (μοναχός) and elect [or, "blessed and elect are the solitary"] for you shall find the Kingdom, . . . because you come from it (and) you shall go there again" (trans. Guillaumont et al.). The gnostic conception of "the kingdom" here is reinforced by the following logion, "We have come from the Light, where the Light has originated through itself. It [stood] and it revealed itself in their image."

133. The phrase "become a living spirit" (ϣⲱⲡⲉ ... ⲛⲟⲩⲡ̅ⲛ̅ⲁ̅ ⲉ̅ϥⲟⲛϩ̅) is perhaps an allusion to Gen. 2:7 (ⲁϥϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲛ̅ⲁ̅ⲉ ⲡⲓⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲉⲟⲩϣⲩⲭⲏ ⲉⲥⲟⲛϩ), and possibly at the same time a pun on "Eve." In this case the analogy with Gosp Phil §71 would be complete. *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 81 also speaks of the female "seed" becoming male when it is "formed" (μορφοθέν). The Second Logos of the Great Seth warns against becoming female, "lest you give birth to κακία" (CG VII, *2.* 65, 22–26).

134. Logion 3. The first part of this saying depends on a midrash on Deuteronomy 30:1–14, a favorite in Wisdom circles (see Job 28:12–22; Greek Baruch 3:29–4:1; Babylonian Talmud, Erubin 55a; Temurah 16a; Baba Meṣia 59b; Jesus ben Sira 51:26; Romans 10:6–10; M. Jack Suggs, "'The Word Is Near You': Romans 10:6–10 within the Purpose of the Letter," in *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox,* ed. W. R. Farmer et al. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967], 311; and *Wisdom, Christology and Law in Matthew's Gospel* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970], 102). See also

logia 67, 70, 111; cf. E. Haenchen, *Die Botschaft des Thomas-Evangeliums* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1961), 39–49.

135. Compare C. G. Jung's interpretation of gnostic and alchemical myths as symbols of the process of individuation, which involves, in the case of a man, the bringing to consciousness of the "female" side of the psyche (which Jung calls the *anima*) and achieving a harmonious union between it and the conscious, "masculine" ego (the valences are reversed in the case of a woman and her "animus"). To stay with language closer to the historical context of our texts, however, Nathan Mitchell ("Sacramental System," 109) has pointed out in his thesis that "Makarius tended to consider the soul as itself an εἰκών of the Spirit. Hence the soul's return to paradise consisted in its being once more united with Spirit (clothed with the light). There is a double movement here: the soul's return involves not only a reclothing with Spirit, but also a rediscovery of the soul's authentic εἰκών. Baptism reintegrates soul and Spirit according to man's true εἰκών and also overcomes the 'sinful' condition of 'fleshness' (more precisely, of sexuality . . .)" (p. 75). Mitchell cites especially Homilies 30.3 and 38.1 (ed. Dorries, 242, 271) and compares Gosp Phil §66.
136. See especially *Abr.* 99–102 and the comments by E. R. Goodenough, who, to be sure, extrapolates somewhat from what Philo explicitly says, in *By Light, Light,* 139–45. Philo is more direct in *QE* 1.8: "Progress is indeed nothing else than the giving up of the female gender by changing into the male, since the female gender is material, passive, corporeal, and sense-perceptible, while the male is active, rational, incorporeal and more akin to mind and thought" (trans. Marcus [Loeb]).
137. Acts of Paul and Thecla, chaps. 25, 40 (Lipsius-Bonnet, 1:253, 266). Recall also the allegory in the Shepherd of Hermas, *Vis.* 3.8.4, where the second virtue, Continence (Ἐγκράτεια) is represented by a woman "who is girded and *looks like a man.*"
138. Logion 16: to the apocalyptic saying about division of families (cf. Luke 12:52 f.//Matthew 10:35) is added "and they shall stand as μοναχοί"; two variants of the saying about hatred of father and mother (cf. Luke 14:26 f.//Matthew 10:37 f.) appear in logion 55 and 101, the latter with an addition, unfortunately fragmentary, that contrasts the physical mother with "my true mother" who "gave me life." Whoever recognizes parents "shall be called the son of a harlot" (logion 105). "Wretched is the body which depends upon a body, and wretched is the soul which depends upon these two" (logion 87, cf. 112). Note also logion 99 (Jesus' mother and brothers: cf. Mark 3:31–35 par.).
139. Logia 56, 80.
140. Note the "moral" of the Supper parable (logion 64): "Tradesmen and merchants shall not enter the places of my father." The excuses offered by the

invited guests (contrast Matthew 22:5//Luke 14:18–20) underline this theme—though they may also be connected midrashically with the excuses for withdrawal from Holy War (Deuteronomy 20:5–7). (On the importance of the Holy War tradition in Eastern Syrian Encratism, see A. Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient,* CSCO, no. 184 [Louvain: Secretariat du CSCO, 1958], 1:13, 93 f.) See also logion 95 (cf. Matthew 5:42//Luke 6:30). Logia 78, 81, and 110 associate wealth and political power and call for the renunciation of both. However, wealth is also used positively as a metaphor for the spiritual world in Gospel of Thomas, logia 3, 29, 76, 85. Opposition to trade (ἐμπορία) was also characteristic of the Essenes, according to Philo (*Prob.* 78; cf. *Hyp.* 11.4, 8f.) and Josephus (*Jewish War* 2.127: they engage only in barter, not purchase). Note the "three nets of Belial" in Damascus Rule 4.15–17: זנות, הון, טמא המקדש—"fornication, *possessions,* defilement of the Sanctuary." Commerce had an unsavory connotation also for some rabbis. For example, a midrash in Sifre on Deuteronomy §315 (ed. Finkelstein, 358) interprets Deuteronomy 32:12 to mean that in the age to come "there will be among you no one engaged in *pragmateia* at all." On the other hand, the Mandaeans, whose contempt for the Christian Encratite monks of eastern Syria was boundless, regarded trades and crafts as gifts of Manda d̲-Hiia and a fit metaphor for the latter's "sale" of salvation to them: *CP* no. 90 (Drower, 93), a baptismal hymn containing also an anti-Christian vow. On the positive use of the metaphor "merchandise" in Mandaean and Manichean texts, see Geo Widengren, *Mesopotamian Elements in Manichaeism,* Uppsala Universitets Årskrift 3 (Uppsala, 1946), 82–95. (His misuse of the English word "customer" is confusing; he means "customs officer," "collector of duties.") It may well be that these contrasting attitudes toward commerce are in part a function of the socioeconomic status of the respective groups in Mesopotamia. See Ramsay MacMullen's interesting suggestion that in the late Empire ἀναχώρησις, the desperate flight of individuals from a hopeless economic situation in Egypt, in many cases provided the fertile soil for Coptic-Christian eremitism (*Enemies of the Roman Order* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966], 235 ff.). On ascetic wandering, see Hans von Campenhausen, "Die asketische Heimatlosigkeit im altkirchlichen und frühmittelalterlichen Mönchtum," in *Tradition und Leben,* 290–317 (ET, *Tradition and Life in the Church* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968], 231–51).

141. As Delcourt points out, for Greco-Roman writers bisexuality generally meant *as*exuality, as in Ovid's description of Hermaphrodite as "forma duplex, nec femina . . . nec puer . . . *neutrumque* et utrumque videntur" (*Hermaphrodite,* 80–82).

142. Judge, "The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community," *JRH* 1 (1960/61): 125–37. Whether their patronage included also, as Judge claims, their spon-

soring Christianity to the circle of their social dependents (*clientelae)* is not so clear from New Testament evidence.

143. The term here is evidently not used in the sense of an itinerant missionary, on which see Dieter Georgi, *Die Gegner des Paulus im 2. Korintherbrief* (Neukirchen, 1964), 31–39. But it may not be a title at all, but only a general reference to one who "serves" the church as my colleague, Abraham J. Malherbe, suggests).
144. Epiphanius *Haereses* 42.3.4; if Tertullian *De praescriptione* 41, refers to Marcion, as Harnack supposed, Marcionite women could also *docere, contendere, exorcismos agere, curationes repromittere* (see Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott* [1924; reprint ed., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1960], 147).
145. This is the principal fault of the very informative essay by Stefan Lösch, "Christliche Frauen in Corinth," *TQ* 127 (1947): 216–61.
146. See now Robin Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," *JAAR* 40 (1972): 283–303. This article appeared too late for me to include a discussion of it in the present essay, but I am very pleased to see that our interpretations of several key points in 1 Corinthians coincide.
147. As Hans Windisch observes ("Sinn und Geltung," col. 415), praying and prophesying are not private, but congregational roles of great importance. Perhaps, he suggests, they are mentioned "beispielshaft," for if the pneumatic gifts of praying and prophesying are given to women, why not also healing, teaching, glossolalia, and interpretation?
148. This is not to deny that in certain religious associations of the mystery type women play a prominent role, as Professor Dieter Georgi has stressed in discussing a version of this paper delivered at Harvard. But the point here is that men and women in Corinth fill the *same* roles.
149. In addition to the standard commentaries, see especially the articles by Lösch and Windisch just cited; F. J. Leenhardt, "La place de la femme dans l'église d'après le Nouveau Testament," *ETR* 23 (1948): 3–50; Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry.* Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., gives a good review of the most important other literature in "A Feature of Qumran Angelology and the Angels of I Cor xi. 10," *NTS* 4 (1957/58): 48–58.
150. Lösch, "Christliche Frauen," 225–30.
151. That much, at least, remains of Ulrich Wilckens's attempt to reconstruct the "gnostic" movement at Corinth (*Weisheit und Torheit)*, despite the penetrating criticisms of Helmut Koester (*Gnomon* 33 [1961]: 590–95) and Robert Funk (*Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God* [New York: Harper & Row, 1966], 277–305).
152. See above, and cf. Acts of Thomas 1:13, where a bride saved by Thomas's preaching from the awful fate of marriage now refuses to wear a veil. In the

latter passage, however, the picture is complicated by the notion of the believer's marriage to Christ, "the true man," of which there is no trace in 1 Corinthians 11 (*pace* Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry,* 169).

153. Professor Robin Scroggs has suggested "that Paul wanted to eliminate the *inequality* between the sexes, while the gnostics wanted to eliminate the *distinctions* between the sexes" (in a letter of April 15, 1972; emphasis his). It also appears from this passage, if we are to take 11:7 at face value, that Paul himself did not—or did not always—accept the androgynous interpretation of Genesis 1:27 which, we have concluded, lay behind the baptismal language of Galatians 3:28—further reason for regarding that tradition as not of Paul's coinage.

154. "Nicht auf die Verhülling, auf die allerdings die Bezeichnung des Haares als 'Umwurf' hindeutet, sondern auf die Einhaltung der Ordnung kommt es dem Apostel an" (Harder, *Paulus und das Gebet,* 157, cited by Lösch, "Christliche Frauen," 236). Cf. Annie Jaubert, "Le voile des femmes (I Cor. xi. 2–16)," *NTS* 18 (1972): 427. Plutarch offers as one explanation of mourning practices in which men cover their heads and women uncover theirs (or, in Greece, men let their hair grow while women cut theirs short) that "the unusual [τὸ μὴ συνηθές] is proper in mourning" (*Moralia* 267B, tr. Babbitt). That is also the explanation for the instances collected by Lösch of women uncovering and loosening their hair for certain cultic rites. "Liminal" situations, including death, birth, and initiation par excellence, demand *inversion of the ordinary.* (This may also be one of the reasons for the similar prescriptions for women being baptized in Hippolytus *Apostolic Tradition* 21.5 [Dix], though that may also be related to Jewish prescriptions for ritual baths, including proselyte baptism, that nothing must "interpose" between the skin and the water, not even braided hair [Babylonian Talmud, Erubin 4b].)

155. E.g., Hans Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 290; earlier Weiss, Schmiedel, Bousset. The hypothesis of an interpolation is supported to some extent by the transposition of verses 34–35 by some authorities of the "Western" text tradition to a place after verse 40, even though this probably means only, as Windisch suggests, that copyists have recognized that the verses interrupt the continuity from verse 33a to verse 37. The appeal to the νόμος in verse 34b is also surprising for Paul in such a context. Walter Schmithals solves the problem by means of his partition theory, apportioning chaps. 11 and 14 to different letters (*Die Gnosis in Korinth,* 2d ed. [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965], 231).

156. Windisch, "Sinn und Geltung," cols. 417–20.

157. *Contra* Leenhardt, "La place de la femme," 25.

158. Smith, *Jewish and Greek Traditions,* 188; N. A. Dahl, "Anamnesis," *ST* 1 (1947): 80 f. The pattern is the "soteriological contrast" between "once" (before con-

version) and "now" (N. A. Dahl, "Formgeschichtliche Beobachtungen zur Christusverkündigung in der Gemeindepredigt," in *Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann* [Berlin: Töpelmann, 1957], 5 f.). G. Schille, "Liturgisches Gut in Epheserbrief" (diss., University of Göttingen, 1953), 3–9, tries to isolate a hymn quoted in verses 14–18, but his observations hardly prove more than that this is carefully composed prose. Moreover, he fails to note the essential factor, that the passage is a midrash-like composition on Isaiah 57:18 f. with the help of Isaiah 52:7 (see Smith, *Jewish and Greek Traditions,* 8–43).

159. Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser,* 2d ed. (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1958), 124.

160. Cf. J. Gnilka, "Paränetische Traditionen im Epheserbrief," in *Mélanges bibliques en hommage au R. P. Béda Rigaux* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1970), 402.

161. In the New Testament form of the tradition, evidently the Adam-Eve legends (in which God presents Eve to Adam) as well as the Old Testament tradition of the Sinai covenant as the marriage of Israel to God (with Moses, in some aggadic versions, presenting the bride) have had a constitutive role. It remains an open question whether in addition gnostic conceptions of an archetypal union of male and female deities, which were to become so prominent in later gnosticism, may already have influenced the version known to the author of Ephesians.

162. The allusion to baptism is unmistakable and generally recognized by commentators. Cf. 1 Corinthians 6:11; Hebrews 10:22; Titus 3:5; Acts 22:16; Revelation 1:5 *varia lectio;* Justin *Apology* 1.61 f.; *Dialogue* 13.1; 18.1 f. Moreover, Schlier is very likely correct in seeing in ἐν ῥήματι a reference to the baptismal formula or the proclamation of the name of Jesus over the baptisand (*Epheser,* 257).

163. Those scholars who use the phrase *hieros gamos* in connection with Ephesians 5 seem generally to have a very loose, metaphorical sense in mind, not a specific reference to a *ritual procedure,* which is the ordinary meaning of the phrase in the history of religions. See Schlier's excursus, "Hieros Gamos," *Epheser,* 265–76; R. A. Batey ("Jewish Gnosticism and the 'hieros gamos' of Eph V: 21–23," *NTS* 10 [1963/64]: 121–27, and "The *mia sarx* Union of Christ and the Church," *NTS* 13 [1966/67]: 270–81) argues for a specific Jewish-gnostic milieu similar to that represented by Justin's *Baruch,* but the imprecision of his analogies and the lack of controlled exegesis represent a step backward from Schlier's work. Most recently J. Paul Sampley, *And the Two Shall Become One Flesh* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1972) has worked out the Old Testament and aggadic background of Ephesians 5:22–33 with great care. He particularly emphasizes the importance of Ezekiel 16 and of the "theological" interpretation of Song of Songs in forming the picture of the "hieros gamos" of YHWH and Israel.

164. The quoted phrases are those of J. Z. Smith, "Birth Upside Down or Right Side Up?" *History of Religions* 9 (1970): 281–303, who describes an analogous pattern of spatial reversal. As he observes, "left and right" are often associated with "male and female." Cf. Baumann, *Das doppelte Geschlecht,* 124.
165. N. A. Dahl can speak of "a fairly wide consensus" ("Paul and the Church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 1:10–4:21," in *Christian History and Interpretation,* ed. W. R. Farmer et al. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967], 333, n. 1.

THE MAN FROM HEAVEN IN JOHANNINE SECTARIANISM

The uniqueness of the Fourth Gospel in early Christian literature consists above all in the special patterns of language which it uses to describe Jesus Christ. Fundamental among these patterns is the description of Jesus as the one who has descended from heaven and, at the end of his mission which constitutes a *krisis* for the whole world, reascends to the Father. Not the least of Rudolf Bultmann's enduring contributions to Johannine studies was his recognition and insistence that any attempt to solve the "Johannine puzzle" must begin with this picture of the descending/ascending redeemer. Moreover, he saw that it is not simply a question of explaining the *concept* "pre-existence," but rather of perceiving the origin and function of a *myth*. The solution could not be found, therefore, by comparisons with philosophical developments in the hellenistic schools, such as the long-fa-

vored *logos spermatikos* of the Stoics, or its adaptation by middle Platonists or Alexandrian Jews. Myths have a logic of their own, which is not identical with the logic of the philosophers.[1]

Nevertheless, Bultmann's own proposed solution has not commanded general assent. To be sure, his observation that the closest extant analogies to the Johannine myth are to be found in the literature of gnostic movements stands firm and has been reinforced by more recent discoveries. The problem comes in assessing the very important differences between the typical gnostic myths and that of John, and therefore the direction of the relationship between the two patterns. Perhaps the most important difference, which Bultmann did not fail to notice, is the fact that in gnostic myths most comparable with the Johannine pattern the redeemer's descent and ascent parallel the fate and hope of the human essence (soul, pneuma, seed, or the like), while in the Fourth Gospel there is no such *analogia entis* between redeemer and redeemed. Bultmann's hypothesis is that the typical gnostic myth was deliberately modified by the fourth evangelist, effectively "demythologizing" it. This hypothesis, plausible as it is, ran into difficulties of two sorts: (1) It required the support of very complex additional hypotheses about the literary sources of John, about the relationship between the Johannine Christians and the disciples of John the Baptist, and about the latter's role in the origins of the Mandean sect. None of these hypotheses has received support from further specialized investigations.[2] (2) The *typical* gnostic myth with which Bultmann compared the Johannine pattern is an abstraction, obscuring the variety of actual gnostic myths in extant texts.[3] Furthermore, Bultmann's synthetic myth is heavily dependent on the terminology of the Fourth Gospel; there is hardly any single document other than John in which all the elements of the "gnostic redeemer myth" listed by Bultmann in his 1925 article are integrally displayed.[4]

A number of scholars have proposed to stand Bultmann's hypothesis on its head: Johannine christology was not an adaptation of gnostic myth, they would say, but a step *towards* gnosticism. Older forms of this proposal, supported only by pointing to the lateness of the Mandean and Manichean sources used by Bultmann, are not adequate. While no extant document of definite pre-Christian date may present a descending/ascending redeemer of the gnostic type, sufficiently strong inferences may be derived from later sources to make an argument from silence highly precarious.[5] More weighty are studies which use the logic and literary form of the Johannine christological discourses to suggest a historical location somewhere between primitive Christianity and emerging gnosticism. For example, Siegfried Schulz's study

of the Son of Man passages in John, despite the occasional artificiality of his "themageschichtliche Analyse," is able to show frequently that the re-interpretation of a basic substratum of *apocalyptic* motifs serves as the center for "Ankristallisationen von gnostisch-hellenistischen Elementen."[6] Helmut Koester locates the Johannine farewell discourses at "a crucial place in the development of the genre 'Revelation'" which would lead to such theophany-type revelations as the Apocryphon of John.[7] M. Jack Suggs has very plausibly argued that the identification of Christ with Sophia by Matthew, in contrast to Q, and by Paul, in contrast to his opponents in Corinth (so also Koester, against Wilckens), created a peculiar symbolic dialectic that paved the way for the developed gnostic Sophia-myths.[8] What he says could be applied *mutatis mutandis* to John.

It is now commonly agreed that the Jewish Wisdom myth in some form lies behind both the Johannine christology and the gnostic soul and savior myths.[9] The question is whether both the Johannine and the gnostic myths are independent variants of the Jewish, or whether one has influenced the other. The present essay will not attempt a direct answer to that question by re-examining the possible antecedents of John's symbolism, but will only explore the function of the mythical pattern within the Johannine literature. Such a study may have its own contribution to make to the question of inter-group influence.

The problem has been treated too one-sidedly as a problem in the history of ideas. Mythical language tends to be reduced to theological categories, and *historical* judgments are then made on the basis of the presumed *logical* priority of one or other of these categories. Where this has occurred, Bultmann's insight, that the language of myth has a special logic, has been ignored. The Bultmann-Jonas theory of myth as the objectivation of the religious person's sense of his relationship to self and world was a significant step towards a more appropriate hermeneutic for mythical language. Yet, as Jonas later observed, the categories of existential philosophy that seemed to fit the *gnostic* myths so well are by no means a universal key.[10] And even Bultmann tends to reduce the function of myth in John to theological categories; that is shown by his obsessive attempt to discover a rational sequence in the Johannine discourses and narratives by the incredibly complex rearrangement-hypotheses in his commentary. We have not yet learned to let the symbolic language of Johannine literature speak in its own way. It is symptomatic of the impasse in NT hermeneutics that we have as yet no adequate monograph on the Johannine symbolism as such.[11]

Bultmann's starting point was the observation that the symbolic picture of Jesus as the man who descended and ascended constituted a *puzzle* within

the Fourth Gospel. It seemed to identify Jesus as a revealer come from the heavenly world, and therefore able to communicate what he had "seen and heard" in that world—but his promise to do so was never fulfilled in the Gospel. He revealed only *that* he is the revealer.[12] Bultmann's solution involves the argument that this pattern ordinarily, in the gnostic milieu posited for the Johannine group, depicted a "revealer." The pattern as such therefore did not have to make sense within the literary structure of the gospel; it made sense in the extrinsic historical setting. The only thing necessary for John was to show that Jesus *was* the one and only one to whom the well-known pattern ought to be applied. If we are not satisfied with Bultmann's reconstruction of the historical situation in which the puzzle could be explained, then we are forced to ask his initial question all over again: In what situation does a literary puzzle provide an appropriate means of communication?

The problem may be best approached by complicating it: this pattern is not the only puzzling thing about the Fourth Gospel. The major literary problem of John is its combination of remarkable stylistic unity and thematic coherence with glaringly bad transitions between episodes at many points. The countless displacement, source, and redaction theories that litter the graveyards of Johannine research are voluble testimony to this difficulty. Many of the elements of the unitary style are probably not specific to a single author, but belong to the Johannine "school," for they are frequently found distributed between portions of the gospel which, on other grounds, we would attribute to "source," "evangelist," and "redactor." On the other hand, not all the *aporiae* in the present form of the gospel can be attributed to clumsy redaction; most of them evidently were acceptable to the evangelist, despite his ability to produce large, impressively unified literary compositions (the trial and crucifixion scenario, as the most notable example). There are a number of examples not only of double entendre which are progressively clarified by repetition and modification, but also of self-contradiction that are manifestly deliberate ("I do not judge . . . yet if I do judge . . . ," 8:15). Above all there are parallel, slightly varying formulations of similar thematic complexes, ranging from double Amen-sayings side by side within one didactic dialogue ("Unless one is born from above [ἄνωθεν] he cannot *see* the kingdom of God" // "Unless one is born *of water and spirit* he cannot *enter* the kingdom of God," 3:3,5)[13] to whole compositions that seem to be alternate interpretations of the same group of themes belonging to different stages of the history of redaction of the gospel (ch. 14 // chs. 15–16).[14]

We may find a clue to the proper understanding of these peculiar relationships in the attempt of some contemporary anthropologists to get at the func-

tion of myths in the societies that create them by means of close analysis of their *structure.* For example, the distinguished English scholar Edmund Leach proposes that the way in which myths work may be understood by analogies drawn from the study of electronic communications. If a message is to be conveyed in the face of pervasive distractions—"noise," or, in the case of myth, the overwhelming complexity of the total social matrix—then the communicator must resort to "redundance." He must repeat the signal as many times as possible, in *different* ways. From the repeated impact of varying signals, the basic *structure* which they have in common gets through. It is, therefore, only by paying attention to the underlying structure of the components in a system of myths that an interpreter can "hear" what the myths are "saying," or, to put it another way, can discover the function which the myths have within the group in which they are at home.[15]

It is astonishing that attempts to solve the Johannine puzzle have almost totally ignored the question of what *social* function the myths may have had.[16] No one, of course, is in a position to write an empirical sociology of Johannine Christianity. Nevertheless, it has become abundantly clear that the Johannine literature is the product not of a lone genius but of a community or group of communities that evidently persisted with some consistent identity over a considerable span of time. We know at least a few things about its history—all from direct allusions in the documents themselves. The group had to distinguish itself over against the sect of John the Baptist and even more passionately over against a rather strong Jewish community, with which highly ambivalent relationships had existed. It suffered defections, conflicts of leadership, and schisms. I shall argue that one function of the "symbolic universe" communicated in this remarkable body of literature was to make sense of all these aspects of the group's history. More precisely, there must have been a continuing dialectic between the group's historical experience and the symbolic world which served both to explain that experience and to motivate and form the reaction of group members to the experience.

In the following pages an attempt is made to discern the function which the motif "ascent and descent" serves, first, within the literary structure of the Fourth Gospel, then, by analogy, within the structure of the Johannine community and its relationships to its environment.

PART I

At the outset it may be as important to indicate what is *not* said about the descent and ascent of Jesus as what is said. For example, the descent from

heaven is not described in John, but everywhere presupposed as a *fait accompli.* The prologue offers no real exception, for it is not really a "Prolog im Himmel," though the standpoint of the poem's narrator is, in a sense, *sub specie aeternitatis.* The story of Jesus in the gospel is all played out on earth, despite the frequent indicators that he really belongs elsewhere. Consequently, those stories which describe the commissioning of an envoy, his arming for the journey, and the dangers of the descent itself are not parallels, for the center of attention in them is different. In this general category could be included not only many of the Mandean myths of the descent of the messengers of light, but also the more ancient myths of the descent of gods or heroes into the underworld: Inanu, Demeter, Heracles, Orpheus, etc. The references to descent and ascent are introduced into the middle of things in John, as explanations of something else. *The motif belongs exclusively to discourse, not to narrative.* A description of a descent or ascent, in narrative form, can identify the actor as a hero, by describing the dangers he overcomes. Or it can serve the quite different function of an occasion for a cosmography: the geography of Hades, for example. In John, neither use of the motif is present. It is used exclusively to identify Jesus—but not as a hero. It depicts him rather, as a detailed analysis of specific passages will show, as the Stranger *par excellence.*

The pair of verbs ἀναβαίνειν/καταβαίνειν, "ascend/descend," appears in John for the first time[17] in the perplexing promise made to Nathanael in 1:51: "Amen, amen I say to you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." This traditional logion[18] depends on a midrash on Gen 28:12,[19] from which the participles, in just this peculiar order, are drawn.[20] As Eduard Schwartz noticed in his famous article on the "aporiae" in the Fourth Gospel, the saying has the form of a solemn prophecy which, because of its place at the beginning of the book, demands some fulfillment in the subsequent narrative.[21] This is all the more so if, as Schulz argues, the logion's purpose is to use the Bethel midrash to "correct" the traditional prophecy of the parousia which is found in similar form in the Synoptics (Mark 14:62 par.; cf. 13:26; Luke 17:22; Mark 16:7 par.) in the direction of a "realized eschatology."[22] Yet there is certainly no explicit fulfillment in John; as Windisch notes, there are no angelophanies in the Fourth Gospel.[23] Nevertheless, to suppose that the evangelist has merely extracted the prophecy from a source in which there *were* angelophanies (Windisch) is a solution of embarrassment, while the more common explanation, that the "ascending and descending" angels are merely a "symbol" of the union of the celestial and terrestrial worlds,[24] evades the exegete's responsibility to deal with the specific way in which the author handles sym-

bols. This larger question is one which can only be approached after we have gathered more information about the over-all structure of our theme. At the moment it is enough to notice that the prophecy in its present context does two things: (1) It introduces the title "Son of Man," thus completing the series of titles whose announcement is evidently one of the major functions of the whole section vss. 29–51.[25] (2) It introduces the *pattern* of ascending and descending. If angels play no further role in John, perhaps it is precisely this *pattern* which is to be remembered from the saying. In any case, it is a mistake to focus upon the question, what are the angels supposed to be doing for the Son of Man?[26] It may not be entirely accidental that the next time the Son of Man title appears in the gospel is also the next time the verb-pair "ascend/descend" appears, 3:13, where we are told that ascending and descending are the exclusive properties of the Son of Man. There is a curiously close connection throughout the gospel between this title and the descent/ascent language.[27] Moreover, while the promise of the vision of "greater things" is made in 1:51 to Nathanael, "the real Israelite,"[28] it is "the teacher of *Israel,*" Nicodemus, who in 3:11–13 is told that he cannot or will not see certain superior things.[29]

In the dialogue with Nicodemus the evangelist has brought together a number of disparate traditional motifs[30] which have to be understood in terms of their place in the rather loose structure of the dialogue as a whole.[31] In vss. 11–14, the third Amen-saying of the section is followed by three statements that are merely juxtaposed without any clear connecting links. Within this small collection the descent/ascent of Jesus seems to serve as the warrant for the esoteric revelation which he brings. Only he can tell about "heavenly things," because only he has descended from heaven—and no one else has ascended. As Odeberg showed, the *exclusivity* of the revelation by the Son of Man must be construed as a polemic, not against claims of other gnostic revealers (since they, too, would claim to have "descended"), but against the claim of prophets or seers to have received revelations by means of "heavenly journeys," as for example in apocalyptic or in the *merkabah* speculation, or in the traditions of the theophanies to Moses and the Patriarchs.[32] Note that this statement clarifies the ambiguous meaning of the previous two Amen-sayings, for the unusual formulation "to see the kingdom of God" in vs. 3 can only refer to a *Himmelsreise* tradition.[33] The more traditional-sounding saying of vs. 5, asserting that only one born of water and spirit can *enter* the kingdom, is thus re-interpreted to refer to an *ascent to heaven,*[34] while vs. 13 shows that ἄνωθεν has to mean "from above" and that "the one born from above/from the spirit" can only be the Son of Man, Jesus.

This interpretation is confirmed by vss. 31–36, which provide a reprise of the themes of the dialogue, for there, "the one coming from above" (ὁ ἄνωθεν ἐρχόμενος) is "the one coming from heaven" (ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐρχόμενος) and as the one "above all"—even above John the Baptist—is obviously Jesus alone. Whether the general formulations in vss. 3, 5, and especially 8, leave room for reference *secondarily* to the community of believers is a very important question which must be discussed in another context below. Initially, vs. 13 provides a fair summary of the whole dialogue: Jesus alone has access to heavenly secrets. On the surface, then, the descent/ascent motif serves here as a warrant for the truth of those secrets. Careful analysis of the form of the dialogue, however, will show that the revelation-warrant language is here being used for a special purpose.

Nicodemus plays a well-known role: that of the rather stupid disciple whose maladroit questions provide the occasion (a) for the reader to feel superior and (b) for the sage who is questioned to deliver a discourse. The genre is widespread in the Greco-Roman world,[35] though perhaps the closest parallels to the present dialogue are to be found in the dialogues between the seer and the *angelus interpres* in apocalypses and in the gnostic revelations such as the Apocryphon of John or the Pistis Sophia. In such contexts, one frequently meets the cliché, "You do not understand earthly things, and you seek to know heavenly ones?" This may serve to mock a student who seeks to know something beyond his powers,[36] or to rebuke an attempt to ascend to heaven.[37] Only the use of the Johannine term "believe" (πιστεύειν) distinguishes vs. 12 from this commonplace. Precisely because the riposte is a cliché, whose function is always to administer a more-or-less serious warning or rebuke—that is, to put the would-be learner in his place—the difficulty in deciding just what are the "earthly things" (ἐπίγεια) which Jesus has told Nicodemus is not so important as most commentators have believed. The point of vs. 12 is not at all the contrast between earthly and heavenly information, but the contrast between the questioner and the one who possesses the information.

The first and primary message of the dialogue is thus simply that Jesus is incomprehensible to Nicodemus. They belong to two different worlds, and, despite Nicodemus' initial good intentions (vs. 2), Jesus' world seems quite opaque to him. It becomes important then to discover just what or whom Nicodemus represents, that his obtuseness should be depicted so paradigmatically by the evangelist. Of course, the specific designations "ruler of the Jews" (vs. 2; 7:50) and "the teacher of Israel" (3:10) provide a solid starting point. His two subsequent appearances in the gospel are as fraught with am-

biguity as this one; this ambiguity is doubtless an important and deliberate part of the portrait of this obscure figure. Nevertheless, there is a consistent analogy between the narratives about Nicodemus and certain statements about the Jews in John which gives us important clues about his function in the gospel and also about the extraordinarily subtle way in which certain themes are elaborated in this gospel.

First, he comes to Jesus "by night," a detail hardly necessary to the story, but also not merely a random bit of color, for the evangelist takes pains to remind his readers of it later on, in a note which in fact *characterizes* Nicodemus as "the one who came to him previously [or, "at first"] by night" (19:39). This casts a certain suspicion over him, because of what is said in the dialogue itself about the division between people who come to the light and those who remain in darkness (3:19–21). Nicodemus does *come* to the light, but he is depicted as one who does not perceive that light very clearly, and who is hesitant and unable to make the decisive step from darkness to light.

Nicodemus' opening statement to Jesus is, in effect, a declaration of faith. He believes that Jesus has "come from God," and the basis for that belief is the *signs* which Jesus has performed. Nicodemus' case is, therefore, rather closely parallel to that of the blind man healed by Jesus in ch. 9, who on the same grounds, viz., Jesus' signs (especially, of course, the one performed to his own benefit; but also in general, e.g., 9:16), declares that Jesus is "a prophet," not a sinner, but "from God" (9:16–17, 30–33). Like that man, Nicodemus confesses a faith in Jesus which, if imperfect, at least corresponds to an acceptable first stage of faith as viewed by the Johannine community.[38] Also like the "enlightened" blind man, Nicodemus will defend Jesus before the authorities (7:50f.). But unlike him, Nicodemus will not go so far as to master the "fear of the Pharisees" [or, "of the Jews"] and risk being expelled from the synagogue (9:22, 34; 12:42). And unlike him, he is unable to comprehend the identity of the Son of Man (9:35f.; 3:13ff.). When he appears for the third and last time—in a distinctly Johannine addition to the Joseph of Arimathea tradition (19:39)—it is to bury Jesus. His ludicrous "one hundred pounds" of embalming spices indicate clearly enough that he has not understood the "lifting up" of the Son of Man.[39]

Nicodemus thus becomes the representative of those Jews mentioned in 2:23f., who "believed in [Jesus'] name because they saw the signs which he did," but to whom Jesus would not "entrust himself" because of his suprahuman knowledge of their hearts. The theme of Jews who have begun to believe in Jesus but whose faith is not to be trusted is further developed in 8:30–59, a dialogue that depicts them in such dark tones—potential Christ-

killers and sons of Cain or the Devil—that the shabby treatment of Nicodemus in ch. 3 seems mild by comparison. More attention must be given to ch. 8 below, for in that context occurs the most sharply dualistic statement of the above/below theme in the Fourth Gospel. It is already apparent, however, that the theme is closely connected with the trauma of the Johannine Christians' separation from the synagogue.[40]

The final portion of ch. 3 (vss. 31–36) is so closely related to the themes of the Nicodemus dialogue that many commentators have proposed that in some original form of the gospel these verses stood immediately after vs. 21. Such rearrangement hypotheses result from failure to perceive one of the most striking characteristics of the evangelist's literary procedure: the elucidation of themes by progressive repetition.[41] In part this procedure was probably forced upon the author by the nature of the traditional material he was using, which had evidently produced, within the Johannine community, a number of stylized didactic units, in the form of the "revelation discourse," on overlapping themes. Alternative formulations produced by the community did not always perfectly coincide. The variant formulations could be simply juxtaposed, and that in fact is most frequently the case in the *Sammelliteratur* of sects which make use of the revelation discourse form, whether apocalyptic or gnostic.[42] That can happen also in the Fourth Gospel, but characteristically the variants are interspersed with narrative episodes or other kinds of material, with connectives and restatements by the evangelist. The result is not only a dramatic effect produced by the connection between discourse and narrative, but also a certain distance for the reader from the ambiguous and paradoxical statements, so that the internal tensions of the material begin to work in a progressive, didactic spiral.[43] John 3.31–36 is a splendid example. As the composition of the evangelist, it brings together in his own language the principal themes of the Nicodemus dialogue, which was composed in part from pre-Johannine material. A number of ambiguities from the dialogue are here cleared up. For example, as we noticed above, ἄνωθεν in vs. 31 can only mean "from above." Moreover, implications which, in our analysis above, were suggested by the *structure* of the dialogue are here stated explicitly. Thus, while the traditional style of the dialogue suggested that the one "from above" would communicate supraterrestrial *knowledge,* the net effect of the dialogue was only and purely to indicate *his own* superiority to the questioner—and to any "earthly" person. That is precisely what is now said in vs. 31: "He who comes from above *is* above all." Vs. 32 is exactly parallel with vs. 11, but in the third person singular rather than the communal, confessional first plural. The empty "revelation form" persists:

"what he has seen and heard, this he testifies," but the subsequent verses (33–36) make it even plainer than do vss. 11–21 that the question is not whether one is able to receive the special information which the heavenly messenger brings, but whether one will accept the messenger himself. The evangelist will later develop this further, in a classic example of his deliberate and didactic use of self-contradiction. In 5:31–41 Jesus is made to insist that he does not testify to himself; in 8:12–20 he takes up the same theme, in response to a "Jewish" accusation, with the remarkable concession:

> *Even if I testify about myself, my testimony is true . . .*
> *I do not judge anyone,*
> *but even if I judge, my judgment is true. . . .*

The total "testimony" of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, the sole object of his mission in "the world" (18:37), is in fact about himself, and the presentation of that self-testimony is depicted as the *krisis* of the world. But the Johannine "self-contradiction" forces the reader to think of Jesus' self-testimony in distinction from a false kind of self-testimony (that identified with the arrogance of the false prophet in Deut. 18:22, the seeking of *doxa* from men: 5:44).[44] Because this *krisis* of faith or unfaith is the major point of the dialogue, both the dialogue (vss. 16–21) and the evangelist's summary (vss. 35–36) conclude with a statement about it in connection with the sending of the "beloved" son.

But why should the summary be separated from the dialogue it summarizes by an apparently irrelevant discussion of the relationship of Jesus to John the Baptist? The transition from vs. 30 to vs. 31 makes the reason rather plain. Because Jesus, being "from above," is "above all," John "must diminish" in comparison with him. There is no escaping the conclusion that, for the evangelist, John and his movement belong among those who are "of the earth" (vs. 31). By placing his summary immediately after this self-testimony of John, therefore, the evangelist makes a statement which is functionally the equivalent of the "Q" saying, "among those born of women none is greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he" (Luke 7:28 // Matt 11:11).

Thus the dialogue with Nicodemus and its postscript connected with John the Baptist constitute a virtual *parody* of a revelation discourse. What is "revealed" is that Jesus is *incomprehensible,* even to "the teacher of Israel" who holds an initially positive belief in him—within the context of Jewish piety—and even to the Baptist who has been his primary human witness (5:32–35). The forms of speech which would ordinarily provide warrants for a particu-

lar body of information or instruction here are used in such a way that they serve solely to emphasize Jesus' strangeness.

Yet it is not quite accurate to say with Bultmann that Jesus reveals only that he is the revealer. He reveals rather that he is an enigma. But he also reveals some positive content of the Johannine christology; i.e., the dialogue is the vehicle for introducing into John's literary schema several significant christological themes: (1) the ironic "exaltation" (= crucifixion) pun,[45] (2) the mystery of the origin and destiny of the spirit-born ("from whence he comes and where he goes," πόθεν ἔρχεται καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγει, vs. 8),[46] and (3) the explicit identification of the Son of Man with "the one who descended" (ὁ καταβάς) (vs. 13).[47] As we have seen, these themes become clear only as their progressive development is traced through the gospel. The form of the dialogue itself is such that the reader without special prior information would be as puzzled as Nicodemus. Only a reader who is thoroughly familiar with the whole Fourth Gospel or else acquainted by some non-literary means with its symbolism and developing themes (perhaps because he belongs to a community in which such language is constantly used) can possibly understand its double entendre and its abrupt transitions. For the outsider—even for an interested inquirer (like Nicodemus)—the dialogue is opaque.

II

Space does not permit an analysis of the other occurrences in John of the ascent/descent motif in the same detail that we have devoted to the Nicodemus dialogue. It can readily be seen, however, that wherever the motif occurs, it is in a context where the primary point of the story is the inability of the men of "this world," pre-eminently "the Jews," to understand and accept Jesus.

This is quite clear in the "midrash" in ch. 6 on the "bread from heaven."[48] This discourse is linked to the traditional feeding and sea-crossing stories by a question from the crowd to which Jesus responds, as he responded to Nicodemus, with an Amen-saying totally unrelated to the question. If Nicodemus came to Jesus because he saw signs, the crowd comes, Jesus tells them, because they *failed* to see signs—a failure that is confirmed, in typical Johannine fashion, by their own words in vs. 30. The irony in vss. 30–31 is very heavy, for precisely the "sign" which they request—one analogous to the manna which Moses gave—has already been provided, for "the men who saw" (vs. 14).[49] The crowd which crosses the lake—though the evange-

list does not distinguish it from "those who see" (οἱ ἰδόντες) in vs. 14—does not see and cannot believe (vss. 36, 40). The irony is now carried yet farther by the identification of the "bread from heaven" not with the bread of the miracle but with "the Son of Man." The theme is announced by the positive half of Jesus' Amen-saying (vs. 27), which introduces the motifs that, by a complex series of interweavings with the biblical texts cited in vss. 31 and 45, provide organization of the entire discourse, reaching its summation in vs. 58.[50] That organization, insofar as it relates to our theme, can be made plain by a simple outline of the discourse's progression: (1) "Work for the food that remains for eternal life, which the Son of Man gives" (vss. 27, 58). (2) "Work" means "believe" in the one whom God has sent (vs. 29, cf. 36–40, 45–47). (3) The "food" that the Son of Man gives is "bread which descends from heaven" (vss. 31–33), which God, not Moses, gives. (4) That bread is identical with the Son of Man himself, for he *is* "the one who descended from heaven" (ὁ καταβὰς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ)—as we learned in ch. 3 (vss. 35, 38, 48–51).[51] (5) The "murmurings" of the Jews produce an even more pointed statement: the bread of life is the very flesh of the Son of Man (vss. 5lb–58).[52]

The descent of Jesus from heaven is of course unacceptable to "the Jews," for they say: "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then does he say, 'I have descended from heaven'?" (vs. 42). Quite analogously, in the following dialogue with those disciples who are disturbed by the notion of "eating the flesh of the Son of Man," the ascent of the Son of Man "where he was before" offers "a still greater offense."[53] In the chapter as a whole, the movement is from a concept familiar to Jews (something which comes down from heaven is given by the hand of a prophet), but doubted in the specific instance of Jesus, to their total alienation by his outrageous claim to be *himself* that which comes down from heaven—and returns thither. We may perhaps compare the movement we observed earlier, from the promise to Nathanael of something like Jacob's Bethel vision ("angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man") to the statement to Nicodemus that only the Son of Man (not angels, and not *merkabah* visionaries) ascends and descends.

In one sense what is happening in the Johannine dialogues is the combination of familiar patterns from Jewish tradition—above all the picture of the apostolic prophet, that of the heavenly Wisdom that seeks a home among men only to be rejected, and, perhaps, that of the angel who bears Yahweh's name[54]—in such a way that the basic relationships are exaggerated to the point of virtual absurdity. Thus while the tradition of the apostolic prophet includes the performance of signs to authenticate his commission,[55] the

signs in John place their observers in a situation where more and more is demanded of them until they are forced to accept or to reject an unlimited claim, as is the case with Nicodemus and the witnesses of the bread miracle. Basic to the common definition of the apostolic prophet was the understanding that he did not speak his own words but the words of him who commissioned him, and that is a prominent motif in the Fourth Gospel.[56] This notion could be underlined by the mythical picture of the apostle's assumption to heaven to receive the secret message,[57] and that was doubtless a point of contact for the development of the Johannine picture of Jesus' descent and ascent, in connection with the Wisdom myths. But as we have already seen, the secret message which Jesus brings is virtually reduced to the statement of the descent and ascent, and of the relationship to God which that pattern implies. The content of his prophetic *martyria* is progressively more clearly identified with his knowledge of his own origin and destiny, which demonstrates his unique relationship to the Father.

The pattern, descent and ascent, becomes the cipher for Jesus' unique self-knowledge as well as for his foreignness to the men of this world. His testimony is true *because* he alone knows "where I came from and where I am going" (8:14). The evangelist has carefully laid the groundwork for this statement. In 3:8 he introduced the motif, with the statement to Nicodemus that of both the Spirit and of the one born of the spirit (= "from above") "you do not know where he comes from and where he goes." The Jerusalemites at the feast of Tabernacles think they know where Jesus is from: his Galilean origin precludes his being the Prophet or the Christ (7:37–52).[58] Moreover, simply the fact that, as they think, "We know where he is from," means he cannot be the Christ, for "the Christ—when he comes, no one knows where he is from" (7:27). This is a choice example of the evangelist's irony, for not only does the dialogue itself tell the reader that the Jews do not really know where Jesus is from (7:28–29: he is from God), but in a later dialogue he has them precisely reverse the basis for their rejection, in the process admitting that they do not now where he is from: "We know that God spoke to Moses, but this man—we do not know where he is from" (9:29). Pilate also asks Jesus, "Where are you from?" (19:9) and receives no answer. The descent and ascent of the Son of Man thus becomes not only the key to his identity and identification, but the primary content of his esoteric knowledge which *distinguishes* him from the men who belong to "this world."

In this manner the descent, as a "coming into the world," is clearly identified as the judgment of the world (9:39, but adumbrated already in 3:14–21). With that an element of the prologue becomes clear. It is commonly recog-

nized that 1:10 and 11 are parallel and that the Wisdom myth, particularly in the form seen most clearly in 1 Enoch 42, provides the essential background. Commentators are divided on the question whether "his own" (οἱ ἴδιοι) in vs. 11 are the Jews or mankind.[59] From the dialogues which we have analyzed it should be apparent that the Jews are meant—precisely as the representatives of the disbelieving world. Only recognition of this essential part of the Johannine symbolism reveals the full pathos of the prologue. Vs. 10 expresses the central theme of the common Jewish version of the Wisdom myth: Wisdom sought a home among men, in the world which was made through her, but found no acceptance—except, most Jewish versions would add, finally in Israel, through the revelation at Sinai. It is precisely that exception that is rejected by vs. 11: those who accepted—and there were some who accepted (vs. 12)[60]—are *not* "his own," the Jews, but some yet-to-be-defined group whose extraordinary status, belonging neither to "the world" (ὁ κόσμος) nor to "his own," is miraculous (vs. 13).

If the "descent" of the Son of Man, his "coming into the world," is construed in the early dialogues of John as the *krisis* of the world, the dramatic structure of the second half of the book identifies the judgment rather with his *ascent,* his "being lifted up." The remarkable sentence in 13:1–5, the elegant periodic structure of which contrasts with the usual Johannine style[61] and which formally divides the gospel in half, speaks in two solemn clauses of Jesus' descent and ascent. The turning-point has come because Jesus knows:

"that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father,"

and

"that he had come from God and was going to God."

Naturally more and more emphasis is placed on the ascent as the book progresses, and it becomes apparent that descent and ascent are not treated in precisely symmetrical fashion. The ascent is more complex, for more independent motifs have been bound together in the Johannine picture of Jesus' leaving the world than in the picture of his coming into it.

One constituent of the ascent bundle of metaphors is the pun on "being lifted up" which was introduced in 3:14. A great deal of confusion has surrounded the linguistic nature of the double entendre, and from the supposed Aramaic original impossible conclusions have been reached about the provenance of the Fourth Gospel.[62] These problems are of no concern here, for the pun was evidently a common one, in Greek as well as in Semitic languages,

and it could be expressed with a variety of verbs.[63] What is of interest is the way in which the fourth evangelist introduces this jarring bit of gallows-humor and progressively unfolds its implications. For as Kittel noted, the merging of assumption with hanging produces a deliberately jarring, incongruous metaphor, and the literary development clearly indicates that it is intended to call attention to itself, not merely to make use of a common idiom.[64] Characteristically, the first statement of the motif (3:14) leaves it unexplained. Whether the brief typological statement, comparing the Son of Man's "elevation" with the elevation of the bronze serpent by Moses, is created by the evangelist or, more likely, a pre-formed bit of tradition, he inserts it here to interpret his own very important christological rule, "No one has ascended into heaven except him who descended, the Son of Man" (vs. 13). That ascension is *not* like the *Himmelsreise* of the *merkabah* mystics or of Moses, but is like the exposure of the bronze snake. But what does that mean precisely? The reader is not told explicitly that "to be lifted up" (ὑψωθῆναι) means crucifixion until 12:32 so that some commentators can insist that 3:14 does not even have crucifixion in mind.[65] But 3:14 is only the first statement of the thrice-repeated saying of Jesus which "signified what sort of death he was to die" (12:33) and which was "fulfilled" when the Jews demanded a Roman execution (18:32). Once the reader is aware of this further explication, he finds sufficient hints already in ch. 3 that the death of the Son of Man is his exaltation. There is a formal parallelism, not often noticed, between vss. 14–15 and vs. 16, a parallelism created by clauses which, assuming vs. 14 to be traditional, are clearly the work of the evangelist:

So (οὕτως) must the Son of Man be lifted up,
that (ἵνα) whoever believes in him may have eternal life.
For God so (οὕτως γὰρ) loved the world,
That he gave his only Son,
that (ἵνα) whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

The "giving" of the Son that believers in him may have life is equivalent to his "being lifted up" for the same end. If, on one hand, one recognizes the allusion in vs. 16 to the binding of Isaac (Genesis 22)[66]—and it would be easy to pass over it—or, on the other hand, if one is aware already of the "lifted up"/"crucified" pun—and one needs to be acquainted with the whole Johannine language of symbols to be certain of it—then this equivalence is immediately plain. Thus again we meet in John language that has many more nuances for an initiated reader than for an outsider.

The second occurrence of the "lifted up" language (8:28) adds an impor-

tant new motif: the *identity* of the Son of Man—"I am," (ἐγώ εἰμι)—will be revealed by the elevation, and until then the direct question of the Jews, "Who are you?" (vs. 25) must remain unanswered. How, concretely, this promise is fulfilled is not absolutely certain, though the extraordinary emphasis placed upon the trilingual placard on the cross in John 19:17–22 suggests that it may be taken as one aspect of the evangelist's dramatization of this final self-revelation.[67] Be that as it may, the identity of Jesus here, as in the other examples of the ascent/descent motif which we have examined, is bound up with the pattern of his coming from heaven and going back there.

The final occurrence of the "lifted up" theme, which finally makes the double entendre explicit for the dull reader (12:33), also adds a new dimension: Jesus' elevation will result in his drawing all men (πάντας) to himself (vs. 32). The disbelieving response evoked by this statement (vss. 34–36) warns us against too hasty a conclusion that with this *pantas* the sharp division of mankind and narrowing of the circle of believers that has characterized the function of the ascent/ descent motif everywhere else in the gospel is here replaced by a universalism. Rather, the saying is to be understood in the light of 12:23–26: in death the "grain" ceases to be "alone." "This means that Jesus' death has been understood in its significance as creating the community of the Church."[68] Those he draws to himself are those who believe, the exceptional ones who "receive" him (1:12; 3:33), who accept his unearthly strangeness and are thus drawn into becoming an unearthly community with him.

The ascension theme in John is thus fraught with opportunity for misunderstanding. Remarkably, the evangelist makes this possibility into an occasion for advancing his didactic purpose, by introducing into the fictional narrative transparent misunderstandings by Jesus' dialogue partners, both opponents and disciples. Thus in 7:33–36, when Jesus tells "the Jews" that he will be with them only "a little time" more before going to the one who sent him, where they can neither find him nor follow him, they say, "Where is he about to go that we shall not find him? He is not about to go to the diaspora of the Greeks and teach the Greeks, is he?" Later the reader will learn that the appearance of "Greeks" from the diaspora is indeed the signal for Jesus that "the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified," i.e., "lifted up," to "draw all men" to himself (12:20–36). Meanwhile, the prediction to "the Jews" has been made a second time (8:21), and this time their "misunderstanding" recognizes that Jesus' "departure" means his death: "He will not kill himself, will he?" (8:22). There is a certain truth in their sarcasm, for this is a pejorative way of saying what the evangelist puts positively in Jesus'

words, "No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (10:18). The Jews' statement represents the view of the voluntary death "from below" (ἐκ τῶν κάτω); Jesus' statement, the view "from above" (ἐκ τῶν ἄνω) (8:23).

Not only "the Jews" misunderstand, but also the disciples. The farewell discourses begin with a statement of the glorification/ascension theme, followed by precisely the same prediction which offended the Jews, even though he addresses this group as "children": "You will seek me and, *just as I said to the Jews,* 'Where I am going you cannot come,' now I tell you also" (13:33). However, Peter's response (vs. 36)[69] is not a third-person aside like that of the Jews (7:35; 8:22), but a direct question, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus' reply now replaces the neutral "come" (ἐλθεῖν) by "follow," "be a disciple," (ἀκολουθῆσαι) "follow," "be a disciple," and adds the all-important qualification, "not . . . now, but . . . afterward" (vs. 36). Peter's further question and affirmation make it clear that it is now understood that "to go/follow" means "to lay down one's life." Note that the evangelist has constructed this whole dialogue in order to provide a new setting for the traditional logion predicting Peter's denial (vs. 38), so that the denial is now reinterpreted in the light of the descent/ascent motif that separates Jesus from all earthly men, even the disciples. On the other hand, the descent/ascent motif has received a further nuance, for the *future* ascent of *the disciples* is promised.

The following dialogue (14:1–5) takes up another side of the same theme, with a new interlocutor, Thomas. Now the purpose of Jesus' departure *for* the disciples is adumbrated: He goes to prepare "dwellings" (μοναί), "a place" for the disciples.[70] Thomas' "ignorant" question then permits a reply that shifts the terms of the metaphor to a more abstract level: "I am the way" (vs. 6). "Following Jesus" does not mean, as the reply to Peter had suggested immediately before, merely imitating him or accepting a similar fate; it is to go *by means of him.* Stylistically, this shift recalls the "illogic" of ch. 10, in which Jesus himself is both the good shepherd who comes by means of the door and the door by means of which the sheep go in and out.

The "yet a little while" (ἔτι μικρόν) saying is repeated yet once more, but with significant variations, in 14:19: "the world" replaces "the Jews" as those who will not be able to see Jesus, and now a distinction is made, in contrast with 13:33, between the world that will *not* be able to see and the disciples who *will* see him. The "I shall come" of vs. 18 is hardly a reference to the parousia in the conventional sense, as vss. 22–23 make plain: Jesus and the Father (being one) will make their dwelling (μονή) with the believers, unseen by the world. Note that this conception of the mutual "dwelling" "cor-

rects" the commonplace notion of an ascent to heaven after death which was suggested by vss. 2–3, though of course the two are not mutually exclusive.[71]

These themes are repeated in ch. 16 with minor variations. The statement of 16:5b, "None of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'" which flatly contradicts 13:36 and 14:5, is surprising and lends support to the hypothesis that chs. 15–16 are an independent formulation of the "farewell discourse" parallel to 13:31–14:31. That would also explain the curious statement in vss. 29–30, appropriate at the end of a discourse comprising chs. 15–16, but mystifying after the rather clear statements of ch. 14. Variants of the theme "you will not see me; you will see me" are found in vss. 10, 16. The principal new motif, in comparison with ch. 14, is the close connection between Jesus' departure and the coming of the Paraclete (vss. 7–15).

One of the primary purposes of both versions of the farewell discourse is reflection on the purpose of Jesus' departure from the world *as it affects the chosen community.* These chapters provide a poignant expression of the group's negative identity, their fear of being "orphans" (ὀρφανοί) in the world (14:18). They no longer belong to this world (17:14–15), yet they are "not yet" permitted to "follow" Jesus on his ascent. Hence the farewell discourses assemble their reflections on the purpose of the separation: "a place" is being prepared with the Father; Jesus and the Father will come and make their "dwelling" with them; the Paraclete, whose functions parallel those of the descending/ascending Son of Man, will come to them; the Paraclete's work, through them, constitutes a certain continuing mission in the world (cf. ch. 17).

Ch. 17 as a whole is only intelligible within the descent/ascent framework, for it is the summary "de-briefing" of the messenger who, like the prince in the Hymn of the Pearl (vs. 100), has accomplished his work in the lower regions and is returning: "I have glorified you on the earth; I have completed the work which you gave me to do" (vs. 4); "I am no longer in the world, . . . but I am coming to you" (vs. 11). The trial and crucifixion narratives are remarkably empty of this motif, save for Pilate's unanswered question, "Where are you from?" (19:9) and the ambiguous "again/from above" (ἄνωθεν) in 19:11. It is rather the drama of these scenes, totally reconstructed by the evangelist,[72] which as a whole completes the theme, while on the other hand the development of the "elevation" and "glorification" themes by the evangelist places the traditional passion narratives in quite a new interpretive context. More difficult to explain is the final definite reference to the ascension: "Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to the father . . . I

am ascending to my father and your father, my God and your God" (20:17). We can only observe that, since the fourth evangelist's dramatic compression of exaltation and crucifixion motifs into one has left the traditional Easter appearances in a kind of limbo, this strange statement imparts to that limbo a sacred liminality.[73] Jesus is no longer in the world, but not yet ascended; he belongs to the intermediate zone that violates these categories and renders him untouchable. Yet even here the promise of further intimacy with the disciples is promised in the words "my father and your father, my God and your God," which is fulfilled in the subsequent appearance to the disciples (20:19–23) and especially in the invitation to Thomas to touch the wounds (20:27). Perhaps by this time it should not surprise us that the evangelist's final use of the theme is in the form of an enigma, and that it paves the way to the concluding statements of the gospel, first about the disciples' faith and task, then about those who are to believe and obtain life *by means of this book* (20:30–31).

III

Many well-known commentaries, particularly those in English, treat the descent/ascent motif in John, if they discuss it at all, as a symbol of unity. It is supposed to represent the union of heaven and earth, the spiritual and the physical, eternity and history, God and man.[74] Our analysis of the function of this motif and its related components within the literary structure of the Gospel suggests an interpretation diametrically opposed: in every instance the motif points to contrast, foreignness, division, judgment. Only within that dominant structure of estrangement and difference is developed the counterpoint of unity—between God and Christ, between God, Christ, and the small group of the faithful.

The dualistic tendency of the motif in John can be seen most sharply in the elliptical use of the adverbs "above" and "below" in 8:23:

You are from below (ἐκ τῶν κάτω)
I am from above (ἐκ τῶν ἄνω).
You are from this world,
I am not from this world.

The Jews who have just been told by Jesus that they will die in their sins, and who have just "misunderstood" Jesus' saying about going away, are now told that they *cannot* believe or understand, *because* they are "from the lower

world." This sounds like a typical expression of gnostic self-consciousness, in which the separation between those who can understand and those who cannot is an ontological one, explained by a myth of their origin, as in the Hypostasis of the Archons:

> *for the psychics (ψυχικός) will not be able*
> *to reach the pneumatic (πνευματικός),*
> *because they are from below,*
> *but he is from above.*[75]

That mythical picture is reinforced by the following dialogue, for even those Jews who respond to Jesus' speech with belief (8:30) are quickly provoked by his further pronouncements into hostility, because they are not "children of God" but children of the devil (via their father Cain, the devil's son).[76] "He who is from God (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ) hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear, because you are not from God."

Yet the Fourth Gospel never provides us with the myth which explains how some men could be from below and others from above. Indeed, since being "from above" is in John the exclusive property of "the Son of Man" (3:13!), it is difficult to see how *any* man could respond to his words with the kind of faith required here. The most significant difference between the Johannine use of the descent/ ascent motif and the use in gnostic literature is precisely the fact that the disciples of Jesus, those who do "hear" his words, are *not* ever identified as those *pneumatikoi* who, like himself, have "come down from heaven." They *are* identified as those who are "not of this world" (οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου) (15:19; 17:14ff.). As those who are from God, they can be contrasted with the "false spirits" (false prophets) who are from the world (ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου) (1 John 4:1–6). But this status is a *conferred* one, not an ontological one: "I chose you out of the world" (15:19); "I manifested your [God's] name to the men whom you gave me out of the world" (17:6); "they are not of the world, *as I am not* of the world" (17:14). Thus we have in the Johannine literature a thoroughly dualistic picture: a small group of believers isolated over against "the world" that belongs intrinsically to "the things below," i.e., to darkness and the devil. Yet that picture is never rationalized by a comprehensive myth, as in gnosticism, or by a theory of predestination, as later in the western catholic tradition.

So long as we approach the Johannine literature as a chapter in the history of *ideas,* it will defy our understanding. Its metaphors are irrational, disorganized, and incomplete. But if we pose our questions in the form, What

functions did this particular system of metaphors have for the group that developed it? then even its self-contradictions and its disjunctures may be seen to be *means of communication.*

This point can be illustrated by our attempt to understand the function of the ascent/descent motif within the Fourth Gospel. The unbiased reader feels quite sympathetic with poor Nicodemus and the "believing" Jews with whom, it seems, Jesus is playing some kind of language-game whose rules neither they nor we could possibly know. What we are up against is the self-referring quality of the whole gospel, the closed system of metaphors, which confronts the reader in a fashion somewhat like the way a Semitist once explained to me how to learn Aramaic: "Once you know *all* the Semitic languages," he said, "learning any one of them is easy." The reader cannot understand any part of the Fourth Gospel until he understands the whole. Thus the reader has an experience rather like that of the dialogue partners of Jesus: either he will find the whole business so convoluted, obscure, and maddeningly arrogant that he will reject it in anger, or he will find it so fascinating that he will stick with it until the progressive reiteration of themes brings, on some level of consciousness at least, a degree of clarity. While an appeal to the reader's subjective experience may appear highly unscientific, I have tried to show that such an experience is grounded in the stylistic structure of the whole document. This is the way its language, composed of an enormous variety of materials, from the standpoint of the history of traditions, has been organized, partly by design, i.e., by the actual composition by the evangelist, and partly by pre-redactional collocation of the different ways of talking in the life of the community. *The book functions for its readers in precisely the same way that the epiphany of its hero functions within its narratives and dialogues.*

While this function of the book is undoubtedly the hallmark of some one author's genius, it is unthinkable apart from a particular kind of religious community, in the same way (though not perhaps to the same extent) that the pesher on Habakkuk is unthinkable without the Qumran sect, and the convoluted and overlapping myths of the Mandean *Ginza* unaccountable without the perduring Nazoreans. Unfortunately we have no independent information about the organization of the Johannine group, and even the Johannine literature gives little description of the community and hardly any statements that are directly "ecclesiological." Nevertheless, the structural characteristics of the literature permit certain deductions.

The observation that the book functions in the same way that its Jesus functions can be elaborated. As we have seen, the depiction of Jesus as the man "who comes down from heaven" marks him as the alien from all men of

the world. Though the Jews are "his own," when he comes to them they reject him, thus revealing themselves as not his own after all but his enemies; not from God, but from the devil, from "below," from "this world." The story describes the progressive alienation of Jesus from the Jews. But something else is happening, for there are some few who do respond to Jesus' signs and words, and these, while they also frequently "misunderstand," are progressively enlightened and drawn into intense intimacy with Jesus, until they, like him, are not "of this world." Now their becoming detached from the world is, in the Gospel, identical with their being detached from Judaism. Those figures who want to "believe" in Jesus but to remain within the Jewish community and the Jewish piety are damned with the most devastatingly dualistic epithets. There can be no question, as Louis Martyn has shown, that the actual trauma of the Johannine community's separation from the synagogue and its continuing hostile relationships with the synagogue come clearly to expression here.[77] But something more is to be seen: coming to faith in Jesus is for the Johannine group a change in social location. Mere belief without joining the Johannine community, without making the decisive break with "the world," particularly the world of Judaism, is a diabolic "lie."

Thus, despite the absence of "ecclesiology" from the Fourth Gospel, this book could be called an etiology of the Johannine group. In telling the story of the Son of Man who came down from heaven and then re-ascended after choosing a few of his own out of the world, the book defines and vindicates the existence of the community that evidently sees itself as unique, alien from its world, under attack, misunderstood, but living in unity with Christ and through him with God. It could hardly be regarded as a missionary tract,[78] for we may imagine that only a very rare outsider would get past the barrier of its closed metaphorical system. It is a book for insiders, for if one already belonged to the Johannine community, then we may presume that the manifold bits of tradition that have taken distinctive form in the Johannine circle would be familiar, the "cross-references" in the book—so frequently anachronistic within the fictional sequence of events—would be immediately recognizable, the double entendre which produces mystified and stupid questions from the fictional dialogue partners (and from many modern commentators) would be acknowledged by a knowing and superior smile. One of the primary functions of the book, therefore, must have been to provide a reinforcement for the community's social identity, which appears to have been largely negative. It provided a symbolic universe which gave religious legitimacy, a theodicy, to the group's actual isolation from the larger society.

The sociology of religion has not yet developed theoretical categories ade-

quate for describing the formation of a "sect" of the sort we are discovering in the Johannine group,[79] but the discipline of the "sociology of knowledge," particularly in the form proposed by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann,[80] provides categories which help us to understand how a figure like the Johannine Jesus, through the medium of a book like the Johannine Gospel, could bring about a change of world. For one's "world" in the sociology of knowledge is understood as the symbolic universe within which one functions, which has "objectivity" because it is constantly reinforced by the structures of the society to which it is specific. Faith in Jesus, in the Fourth Gospel, means a removal from "the world," because it means transfer to a community which has totalistic and exclusive claims. The Fourth Gospel not only describes, in etiological fashion, the birth of that community; it also provides reinforcement of the community's isolation. The language patterns we have been describing have the effect, for the insider who accepts them, of demolishing the logic of the world, particularly the world of Judaism, and progressively emphasizing the sectarian consciousness. If one "believes" what is said in this book, he is quite literally taken out of the ordinary world of social reality. Contrariwise, this can hardly happen unless one stands already within the counter-cultural group or at least in some ambivalent relationship between it and the larger society.

I do not mean to say that the symbolic universe suggested by the Johannine literature is *only* the reflex or projection of the group's social situation. On the contrary, the Johannine dialogues suggest quite clearly that the order of development must have been dialectical: the christological claims of the Johannine Christians resulted in their becoming alienated, and finally expelled, from the synagogue; that alienation in turn is "explained" by a further development of the christological motifs (i.e., the fate of the community projected onto the story of Jesus); these developed christological motifs in turn drive the group into further isolation. It is a case of continual, harmonic reinforcement between social experience and ideology.[81]

The dialectic we have suggested would surely continue, producing a more and more isolated and estranged group until some disruption occurred. The Johannine letters show a progression of that sort: tighter internal discipline, more hostility towards "the world" and everything "in the world," schism occasioned by a docetic group, whose denial that Jesus could have "come in the flesh" would seem a fairly logical deduction from the symbols we have analyzed.

The analysis undertaken here does not answer the question of the relation between the Johannine christology and gnostic myths, but it provides clues

which may be helpful in pursuing that problem. The Fourth Gospel is content to leave unanswered the question how there could exist in "this world" some persons who, by some pre-established harmony, could respond to the Stranger from the world above and thus become, like him, men "not of this world." But that enigma cries out for some master myth to explain it. Both pressures from outsiders and internal questioning would assure that the cry did not long remain unheeded; the legitimation of the sect's counter-cultural stance would lead to the projection of some myth explaining that members of the group had an origin different from that of ordinary men. In gnosticism it was the Sophia myth that provided the basic images for that projection—the same Sophia myth which provided important elements of the descent and ascent of the Son of Man in John. As the archetype of the soul-to-be-redeemed, Sophia recovers her normal feminine guise, making possible the elaborate sexual imagery that in the gnostic myths describes the relations between Christ or Logos and Sophia or the soul. In the Fourth Gospel there is no trace of the usual feminine Sophia; she has become entirely the masculine Logos, the Son of Man. But the Fourth Gospel does introduce the motif of Christ's union with the believers, which comes at times quite close to sexual metaphor.[82] Thus once the Fourth Gospel had identified Christ-Wisdom with the masculine Logos, and once the social dynamics of the anti-worldly sect were in motion, all the forces were present for the production of a myth of the Valentinian type. We cannot say that it happened that way, or that the Johannine literature was the only place where ingredients were brought into the necessary creative association.[83] But these conjectures suggest that it is at least as plausible that the Johannine christology helped to create some gnostic myths as that gnostic myths helped create the Johannine christology. A satisfactory answer may be achieved only when studies of gnosticism also begin to ask not only about ideational structure and antecedents, but also about social functions.[84]

Notes

1. See R. Bultmann, "Die Bedeutung der neuerschlossenen mandäischen und manichäischen Quellen für das Verständnis des Johannesevangeliums," *ZNW* 24 (1925): 100–146 (reprinted in *Exegetica* [Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1967], 55–104), and especially his criticism of Ernst Percy in "Johanneische Schriften und Gnosis," *OLZ* 43 (1940): 150–75 (*Exegetica,* 230–54), and C. H. Dodd in *NTS* 1 (1954–55): 77–91 (ET: *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 27 [1963]: 9–22). Dodd's focus upon "the logos-doctrine" as the *tertium comparationis* between John and the Hermetica and Philo was particularly vulnerable to this objection.

2. For example, K. Rudolph's careful investigation of the Mandean materials convinced him that "Johannes der Täufer und seine Jüngerschaft haben nach dem Befund der uns zugänglichen Quellen keine Beziehung zu den Mandäern gehabt" (*Die Mandäer, Vol. I: Prolegomena,* FRLANT, n.s., 56 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960], 80). Both E. Käsemann ("Aufbau und Anliegen des johanneischen Prologs," in *Libertas Christiana: Friedrich Delekat zum 65. Geburtstag* [Munich: Kaiser, 1957], 75–99 [reprinted in *Exegetische Versuche and Besinnungen* 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), 155–80; ET: *New Testament Questions for Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 138–67]) and E. Haenchen ("Probleme des johanneischen 'Prologs,'" *ZTK* 60 [1963]: 305–34 [reprinted in *Gott und Mensch* (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1965), 114–43]) reject the hypothesis of a *Redenquelle.* See also D. M. Smith, Jr., *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965).
3. Cf. C. Colpe, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule,* FRLANT, n.s., 60 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961), especially 186–208. See also A. D. Nock, "Gnosticism," *HTR* 57 (1964): 255–79.
4. This is even clearer in his article "Johannesevangelium," *RGG*^{3} 3.840–50.
5. E. Haenchen has established a high probability that the essential gnostic features of Simon Magus were developed in the Simonian sect prior to any Christian influence ("Gab es eine vorchristliche Gnosis?" *ZTK* 49 [1952]: 316–49; reprinted in *Gott und Mensch,* 265–98). The question of the date and interpretation of the *Hymn of the Pearl* is more difficult; see most recently C. Colpe, "Die Thomaspsalmen als chronologischer Fixpunkt in der Geschichte der orientalischen Gnosis," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 7 (1964): 77–93, and the survey by K. Rudolph, "Gnosis und Gnostizismus, ein Forschungsbericht," *ThRu* 34 (1969): 214–21. The Nag Hammadi documents prove that Christian gnostics did borrow and adapt mythical elements from non-Christian gnostics —and vice versa—at a later period. While these sources cannot directly prove anything about first century gnosis, careful analysis of them is providing cumulative evidence that myths of descending/ascending revealers flourished without any Christian influence. See, e.g., G. W. MacRae, "The Coptic Gnostic Apocalypse of Adam," *HeyJ* 6 (1965): 27–35, and F. Wisse, "The Redeemer Figure in the Paraphrase of Shem," *NovT* 12 (1970): 130–40. Finally, it is impossible to dismiss the question whether the NT itself may not provide the earliest documentation of pre-Christian gnosticism, depending upon one's evaluation, for example, of the opponents of Paul in Galatia, Corinth, and Colossae, and of the sources of mythical elements found in liturgical traditions that are quoted in Pauline and deutero-Pauline letters. There remain, however, many vexed questions in this area.
6. *Untersuchungen zur Menschensohn-Christologie im Johannesevangelium* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957), 179.
7. "One Jesus and Four Primitive Gospels," *HTR* 61 (1968), 240; reprinted in *Tra-*

jectories through Early Christianity, ed. J. M. Robinson and H. Koester (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 197.

8. *Wisdom, Christology, and Law in Matthew's Gospel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 10, n. 14; 42, n. 18; 53, n. 41; and especially 58, n. 49.
9. G. W. MacRae ("The Jewish Background of the Gnostic Sophia Myth," *NovT* 12 [1970]: 86–101) seems to me correct against U. Wilckens (*Weisheit und Torheit,* Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, 26 [Tübingen: Mohr, 1959]) that it was precisely the *Jewish* form of the Wisdom myth that was used by the Gnostics—at least those that may be usefully compared with the Fourth Gospel. On the other hand, I doubt the propriety of speaking of a *single* Jewish Wisdom myth or one single Wisdom movement. "Wisdom" as the ideology of a royal bureaucracy was obviously different from the "Wisdom" cultivated in an apocalyptic conventicle, for example.
10. *The Gnostic Religion,* rev. ed. (Boston: Beacon, 1963), 320–21. The Bultmann-Jonas concept of "objectivation" is significantly parallel to the notion of "projection," particularly as the latter has been re-defined by C. G. Jung. The reaction of Bultmann and other kerygmatic theologians to the "psychologism" of earlier theological Liberalism has blocked off what might have been a fruitful area of interaction, particularly in view of the Jung school's profound interest in gnosticism. However, Jung's discussion of the motif of descent and ascent as it occurs in medieval alchemy (*Mysterium Coniunctionis,* 2d ed. [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970], 217–24) offers little that is directly useful for our present discussion.
11. The analysis by E. Schweizer in his early work *Ego Eimi* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1939, Part IV) is abstruse and rather artificial. The perennial attempts to discover OT typologies in John have usually demonstrated more the ingenuity of eisegesis than the grammar of Johannine symbols. E. Stemberger's recent *La symbolique du bien et du mal selon saint Jean* (Paris: Seuil, 1970), violating the impressive canons in his own introduction, reduces the symbols to a puzzle picture where the categories of moral theology are to be discovered.
12. "Die Bedeutung der neuerschlossenen mandäischen und manichäischen Quellen," 102 (= *Exegetica,* 57).
13. On this form, see K. Berger, *Die Amen-Worte Jesu,* BZNW, 39 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1970), 95–117.
14. See J. Becker, "Die Abschiedsreden Jesu im Johannesevangelium," *ZNW* 61 (1970): 215–52.
15. "Genesis as Myth," *Discovery* (London) n.s. 23 (1962): 30–35; reprinted in *Myth and Cosmos* (ed. John Middleton; Garden City, N.Y.: Natural History Press, 1967), 1–13. This "structural" approach is now associated especially with the theories of the French social anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (see, e.g, the latter's *Structural Anthropology* [New York: Basic Books, 1963], especially chs. II

and XI), but Leach has brought *structuralisme* into connection with the functionalist and empirical traditions of English and American social anthropology. See his fascinating appreciation and critique in *Claude Lévi-Strauss* ("Modern Masters," ed. F. Kermode; New York: Viking, 1970). Among other recent examples of the social-structural analysis of myth-systems which I have found suggestive for developing my own method are: V. W. Turner, "Colour Classification of Ndembu Ritual," *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion,* ed. M. Banton, ASA Monographs, 3 (New York: Praeger, 1966), 47–84; J. Z. Smith, "Birth Upside Down or Right Side Up?" *HR* 9 (1969–70): 281–303; W. D. O'Flaherty, "Asceticism and Sexuality in the Mythology of Siva," *HR* 8 (1968–69): 300–337; 9 (1969–70): 1–41.

16. Two partial exceptions are A. Kragerud's proposals to see certain of the symbols, particularly the "beloved disciple," as a covert self-justification of a charismatic sect of Christianity (*Der Lieblingsjünger im Johannesevangelium* [Oslo: Osloer Universitätsverlag, 1959]) and E. Käsemann's attempts to explicate the argument between Diotrephes and the Elder ("Ketzer und Zeuge," *ZTK* 48 [1951]: 292–311; reprinted in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen* 1, 168–87) and the "naive docetism" of the Gospel (*Jesu letzter Wille* [Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1967]) within "conventicle piety" in conflict with "early catholicism." Kragerud's thesis, however, is undercut by highly arbitrary exegesis at points; Käsemann's by the imposition of categories from post-Reformation church history on the first-century phenomena (see my review in *USQR* 24 [1969]: 414–20). More important, J. L. Martyn has made a major contribution toward locating the kind of milieu in which the anti-Jewish polemic of one stratum of the Johannine materials was formed (*History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* [New York: Harper and Row, 1968]). His position is reinforced by the investigation, from quite a different perspective, of H. Leroy, *Rätsel und Missverständnis,* BBB, 30 (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1968). I became acquainted with Leroy's careful and provocative monograph only after I had completed the present essay; hence I shall forego the detailed *Auseinandersetzung* with him which would be appropriate at points where our analyses run parallel. While our methods are different (but not, I believe, incompatible) and the passages and motifs he examines only partially overlap those treated here, I am delighted to find a remarkable convergence of my results with his. On the basis of a wide-ranging survey of the *riddle* in folklore and literature (pp. 13–45), Leroy describes the form of the Johannine dialogue-with-misunderstanding as a "verborgenes Rätsel," which presupposes a tight-knit community with a "Sondersprache" unintelligible to outsiders. In order to "know the truth," one must join this community—probably a cluster of small congregations—hear its preaching, be instructed in its catechesis, and participate in its ritual.
17. The descending (καταβαῖνον) of the spirit (1:32–33) is from the traditional

baptism pericope which the evangelist has deliberately omitted, substituting only a report by John of the Spirit's descent.

18. R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John, I–XII* AB, 29 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), 88–91; Schulz, *Menschensohn-Christologie,* 98; K. Berger, *Amen-Worte,* 113. Whether *all* double-Amen sayings in John are traditional logia or rephrasing of such, as Berger claims, is open to question.
19. C. F. Burney, *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1922), 115–16; H. Odeberg, *The Fourth Gospel* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1929), 33–42; C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 244–45; B. W. Bacon, *The Gospel of the Hellenists* (New York: Henry Holt, 1933), 158–59; G. Quispel, "Nathanael und der Menschensohn (Joh 1_{51})," *ZNW* 47 (1956): 281–83; N. A. Dahl, *Das Volk Gottes,* 2d ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963), 170; "The Johannine Church and History," *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation,* ed. W. Klassen and G. F. Snyder (New York: Harper, 1962), 136; Schulz, *Menschensohn-Christologie,* 96–103.
20. From the Heb. text or its equivalent, as Burney points out. The LXX has finite verbs and, of course, removes the ambiguity of the *bô,* "on him"/"on it," which is the starting point of the midrash. (The latter point is ignored by the interpretations of Quispel [see previous note] and J. Jeremias, "Die Berufung des Nathanael [Jo 1, 45–51]," *Angelos* 3 [1930]: 2–5).
21. "Aporien im vierten Evangelium," *Nachrichten der Göttingischen Gelehrten Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften* (1908), 517.
22. *Menschensohn-Christologie,* 99–103.
23. "Angelophanien um den Menschensohn auf Erden," *ZNW* 30 (1931): 215–33, esp. 226–27.
24. W. Bauer, *Das Johannesevangelium,* 3d rev. ed., HNT, 6; (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1933), 42; Odeberg, *Fourth Gospel,* 37; Bacon, *Gospel of the Hellenists,* 158–59.
25. Windisch, "Angelophanien," 215–19.
26. As Jeremias does, "Berufung des Nathanael."
27. Cf. Bacon, *Gospel of the Hellenists,* 325; E. M. Sidebottom, "The Ascent and Descent of the Son of Man in the Gospel of St. John," *ATR* 2 (1957): 115–22.
28. R. Kieffer is certainly correct in his observation that ἀληθῶς, as usual in John, modifies the predicate (cf. R. Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes,* Meyer, 2, 16th ed. ([Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959], 73, n. 6), but his translation "voici véritablement un 'voyant Dieu'," which appeals, I assume, to Philo's allegory of the name Israel, is an overinterpretation (*Au delà des recensions?,* Coniectanea biblica, NT ser., 3 [Lund: Gleerup, 1968], 153).
29. The sacral name Israel is extremely rare in John, elsewhere only 1:31 (where it is rather clearly an introduction to the manifestation of Jesus to the "real Is-

raelite" in 1:48–51) and in 12:13 (which like 1:50 is a confession of Jesus as King of Israel). Cf. W. Meeks, *The Prophet-King,* NovTSup, 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 82–83.

30. Cf. Schulz's analysis, *Menschensohn-Christologie,* 104–9.
31. The attempt to reconstruct a written source from which the evangelist may have drawn here (Bultmann, *Evangelium des Johannes,* 91–121; H. Becker, *Die Reden des Johannesevangeliums und der Stil der gnostischen Offenbarungsrede,* FRLANT, n.s., 50 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956], 94–96) produces more difficulties than it solves.
32. Odeberg, *Fourth Gospel,* 72, 89; Bultmann, *Evangelium des Johannes,* 107, n. 5; Meeks, *Prophet-King,* passim; *contra* Sidebottom ("Ascent and Descent," 119–22), who sees no polemic at all here.
33. Cf. Wis. 10:10, where we are told that Sophia "showed him [sc. Jacob] the kingdom of God and gave him knowledge of holy things." This passage proves that, at this significantly early date, Jacob's vision at Bethel was understood as a vision of the *merkabah* (see Dahl, "Johannine Church," 136 and n. 20). On the significance of the fact that the typical form of early Jewish mysticism was associated with *royal* imagery ("basileomorphism": Graetz), see G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1961), 54–57.
34. Cf. K. Berger, *Amen-Worte,* 103.
35. Cf. the observations by H. A. Fischel, "Greco-Roman Rhetoric and the Study of Midrash," a paper read to the Biblical Literature Section, American Academy of Religion, October 25, 1970, as yet unpublished.
36. Formally, the closest parallel is 4 Ezra 4:1–11, 20–21. Compare the story of Thales, who fell into a pit while looking at the stars. To his plea for help an old woman retorted: σὺ γάρ, ὦ Θαλῆ, τὰ ἐν ποσὶν οὐ δυνάμενος ἰδεῖν τὰ ἐπὶ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ οἴει γνώσεσθαι; (Diogenes Laertius 1.34). Similarly, Alexander the Great, giving a moral blow to Nectanebus while the latter was trying to teach him astrology, said: τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς μὴ ἐπιστάμενος τὰ ἐν οὐρανῷ ἐκζητεῖς (Ps.-Callisthenes, *Life of Alexander,* 1.14). Cf. Wis. 9:16 and Ignatius Trallians 5:1–2, as well as Cicero, *De Rep.,* 1.30: Quod est ante pedes nemo spectat, caeli scrutantur plagas.
37. So Alexander's attempt to ascend to heaven is rebuked: Ἀλέξανδρε, τὰ ἐπίγεια μὴ γινώσκων, πῶς τὰ οὐρανὰ (οὐράνια) καταλαβεῖν ἐπιζητεῖς; ὑπόστρεψον οὖν διὰ τάχους ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν (Ps.-Callisthenes, 2.41; MSS Leiden and Paris Supp. 113; not in the oldest recension). And in Seneca's satire of Claudius' would-be apotheosis (*Apocolocyntosis* 8.3), one of the gods says to Hercules: "Quid in cubiculo suo faciat nescit, et iam caeli scrutatar plagas!" (So 0. Weinreich, *Senecas Apocolocyntosis* [1923], 140; Waltz's text reads *nescio* for *nescit,* but that would spoil the point of the quip. "Caeli scrutatur plagas" is an oftquoted line from Ennius, *Iphigenia;* see the Cicero quotation in n. 36).
38. This is not the place to raise again the vexed question of "sign faith" in the *Redaktionsgeschichte* of John. I believe that the difference between the view-

point of the "signs source" and that of the evangelist is not so great as Bultmann (*Evangelium des Johannes,* passim) and Haenchen ("Johanneische Probleme," *ZTK* 56 [1959]: 19–54; reprinted in *Gott und Mensch,* 78–113), and others have maintained. See the paper by P. Meyer, "Seeing, Signs, and Sources in the Fourth Gospel" (read to the Gospels Section, American Academy of Religion, October 18, 1968, unfortunately unpublished), for a different view. R. Fortna's source analysis (*The Gospel of Signs,* SNTS Monograph Series, 11 [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969]) has moved the discussion towards a solid footing, though at times the assumption of divergent theologies seems to enter his *Quellenscheidung* decisions as an *a priori.* His summary evaluation is a model of clarity and precision ("Source and Redaction in the Fourth Gospel's Portrayal of Jesus' Signs," *JBL* 89 [1970]: 151–66). For a survey of recent literature on the subject and a defense of Haenchen's position, see J. M. Robinson, "The Johannine Trajectory," *Trajectories,* 238–56.

39. Suggested by P. Meyer, in private communication.
40. In this respect I am in full accord with Martyn, *History and Theology,* though I doubt whether the separation can be identified specifically with the *Birkat ha-Minim* promulgated at Yavneh, and whether that decree itself can be dated so precisely. Cf. the criticism by Stemberger, *Symbolique,* 106, n. 3.
41. E. Hoskyns, who speaks of the Fourth Gospel's "self-contained allusiveness," has seen this more clearly than any other commentator I know (*The Fourth Gospel,* 2d rev. ed. [London: Faber and Faber, 1947], 67).
42. D. M. Smith, Jr. makes this point effectively against Bultmann's rearrangement hypotheses (*Composition and Order,* 178).
43. I am grateful for suggestions made by Jan Wojcik, a graduate student in comparative literature at Yale, who has compared the Johannine style with the didactic dramaturgy of Berthold Brecht.
44. See Meeks, *Prophet-King,* 47–57, 303–4.
45. See below, pp. 69–70.
46. See below, p. 68.
47. Presupposed in the midrashic dialogue of ch. 6: below pp. 66–67.
48. P. Borgen (*Bread from Heaven,* NovTSup, 10 [Leiden: Brill, 1965]) has demonstrated the midrashic character of the discourse and has shown that a number of motifs incorporated in it were already familiar in Alexandrian Judaism and attested somewhat later in haggadah from Palestinian sources. A number of details of his reconstruction are unconvincing, but his work is fundamental for the understanding of this passage.
49. Fortna guesses that vs. 14 is the evangelist's rewriting of the source's conclusion to the feeding miracle, which already contained the acclamation of Jesus as a prophet (*Gospel of Signs,* 61). If so, it is "not impossible," as he puts it with due caution, that the identification of the feeding with the manna tradition was also pre-Johannine.

50. Vss. 27 and 58 form an *inclusio;* my chief criticism of Borgen's analysis is that he fails to see this because of his fixation on the scripture text so loosely cited in vs. 31. Consequently his work seemed vulnerable to G. Richter's ingenious attempt to show that vss. 51–58, by Borgen's own method, ought to be regarded as a later addition ("Zur Formgeschichte und literarischen Einheit von Joh 6_{31-58}," *ZNW* 60 [1969]: 21–55). The literary unity of vss. 27–58 seems to me assured, whatever theological self-contradictions it may contain. Though it is a saying of Jesus rather than a scripture text that provides the starting point of the "midrash" (and we should therefore recognize that the form of explication may have had a wider application in rhetoric than only the exposition of sacred texts), that saying already has the manna tradition in mind, for the manna's propensity to "perish" was a part of the biblical story (Exod. 16:19–21), as was the death of the wilderness generation that fed on it.
51. If G. Vermes' ingenious reading of Targum Neofiti on Exod. 16:15, "He [viz., Moses] is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat," is correct, then we have a striking parallel in the Moses haggadah. See "He is the Bread," *Neotestamentica et semitica,* ed. E. E. Ellis and M. Wilcox (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1969), 256–63. However, I am inclined to believe with Prof. Schreiber (ibid., 258, n. 7) that the antecedent משה is a simple scribal error for משהו "what it was."
52. The fact that both the "murmuring" and the giving of "flesh" are motifs found in the biblical manna story (note especially Exod. 16:8 and compare John 6:51b with Num. 11:18 καὶ δώσει κύριος ὑμῖν κρέα φαγεῖν) reinforce my conviction that vss. 5lb–58 are an integral part of the midrashic discourse that begins with vs. 27, but further analysis of the connection would lead us too far from the present topic. Even more difficult is the question whether vss. 60–71 belong to the same stage of redaction as vss. 27–59. Logically, of course, the "offense" occasioned by the notion of eating the *flesh,* which here upsets "some of the disciples," comes later in the development of the tradition than the notion of descending from heaven, which offends "the Jews." But historically both offenses would have been repeated many times, so we can draw no necessary conclusions about the stages of redaction. In any case, vss. 60–71 are closely connected with the preceding discourse in their present form. At whatever stage they were added to the bread dialogue, they clearly presuppose it and are built upon it.
53. Schulz, *Menschensohn-Christologie,* 117, n. 5.
54. It appears to me more and more likely that the combination of these figures, perhaps also the connection with the title Son of Man, had been prepared for by *merkabah*-exegesis in mystical Jewish sources. The "angel of the face," the image of Israel in heaven (Gen. R. 68:12), the "human face" on the beasts of the *merkabah* (Ezekiel 1 and 10), and the "one like a son of man" of Dan 7:13 could readily be identified. However, the problem cannot be pursued here.

55. A fundamental element in the Moses haggadah, beginning in the biblical accounts; see my *Prophet-King,* 162–64, 302–3.
56. 7:16, 18; 8:26; 12:49; 14:24; cf. 4:34; 5:19, 30; 6:38–39; 9:4; 10:37–38; 17:4; see *Prophet-King,* 301–11.
57. See W. Meeks, "Moses as God and King," *Religions in Antiquity,* ed. J. Neusner, Studies in the History of Religions, 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 354–71. Recently C. Colpe has suggested that the *Himmelsreise* tradition flourishes only in religions that include the figure of the "shaman" ("Die 'Himmelsreise der Seele' ausserhalb und innerhalb der Gnosis," *Le origini dello gnosticismo,* ed. U. Bianchi, Studies of the History of Religions, 12 (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 429–47.
58. W. Meeks, "Galilee and Judea in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 85 (1966): 159–69.
59. Bultmann, following Merx, insists that "Der Satz: Er kam in sein Eigentum . . . [mag] bedeuten, was er wolle; eines aber bedeutet er nicht, nämlich: er kam zu den Juden . . . " *(Evangelium des Johannes,* 37, n. 7). Brown, however, says, "The reference is clearly to the people of Israel" (*Gospel according to John I–XII,* (10). Dodd, despite his platonizing interpretation of the prologue as a whole, recognizes the specific referent here as "the Jews" *(Interpretation,* 402); R. H. Lightfoot (*St. John's Gospel: A Commentary* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1956], 83) does not. Barrett and MacGregor in their commentaries adopt mediating positions.
60. Haenchen's argument that vss. 12–13 are the work of a later redactor who has not fully understood vs. 11 ("Probleme des johanneischen 'Prologs,'" 329; *Gott und Mensch,* 138–39) is unconvincing. His view that vs. 12b describes, in "becoming children of God," a "higher status" than mere faith, a notion found in the Johannine epistles, but not in the Gospel, is an overinterpretation. The paradox of vss. 11–12 is one of the fundamental themes of the Gospel as a whole.
61. Cf. F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament,* tr. R. W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), §464.
62. A. Schlatter's observation that Syr *zqp,* "raise," "set up," came to be used in the sense of "impale" or "crucify" was used by Emmanuel Hirsch to argue that the Johannine *Grundschrift* was written in Antioch. G. Kittel ("אזדקף = ὑψωθῆναι = gekreuzigt werden: Zur angeblichen antiochenischen Herkunft des Vierten Evangeliums," *ZNW* 35 [1926]: 282–85) exposed the fallacies in that argument, while showing that the pun was *possible* in any Aramaic dialect. It was perhaps least likely in Syr, where, as Joseph A. Fitzmyer kindly informs me, *zqp* could hardly be found with the meaning "elevate." In Mandean it could be used in the sense of "ascend (to the Abiding Dwelling)" (*GL* 83:10; see E. S. Drower and R. Macuch, *A Mandaic Dictionary* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1963], 169–70). However, the pun is equally possible in Greek.
63. Although I know no example in a source antedating John, the fact that Artemidorus, in his late second century collection of dream interpretations,

mentions various omens of a dream of crucifixion that depend upon such a pun assures us that it must have belonged to the folklore of the eastern Mediterranean for some time. A crucifixion dream is a good omen for a poor man, "for the crucified is exalted (ὑψηλός)"; for a slave it portends freedom, "for those crucified are not subordinate (ἀνυπότακτοι)"; and a dream of crucifixion in the city "signifies a government position (ἀρχή) corresponding to the place where the cross stood" *(Oneirokritikon,* 2.53). The somewhat later Alexander novel by Ps.-Callisthenes tells how Alexander traps the assassins of Darius by his oath to "make them exalted above all men (περιφανεστάτους . . . πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις)," which he does—by crucifying them (*Life of Alexander,* 2.21). A haggadic midrash on Exod. 30:12 explains Moses' intercession for Israel by a parable in which a king is persuaded by an advisor to change his impetuous condemnation of his only son to beheading (שאו את ראשו) ("lift up his head") to a command to promote him (ירוממו את ראשו) (*Pesikta Rabbati,* 10).

64. Kittel, "אזדקף," 285.
65. Odeberg, *Fourth Gospel,* 111; Schulz, *Menschensohn-Christologie,* 106, thinks the pre-Johannine logion was an unambiguous reference to exaltation.
66. C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: SPCK, 1955), 180; Brown, *Gospel According to John I–XII,* 147; N. A. Dahl, "The Atonement—An Adequate Reward for the Akedah? (Ro 8:32)," *Neotestamentica et Semitica,* 15–29, esp. 28, n. 64.
67. See *Prophet-King,* 78–80.
68. E. Schweizer, *Lordship and Discipleship,* SBT, 28 (London: SCM, 1960), 86.
69. With good reason, many commentators regard vss. 34–35 as an interpolation. See J. Becker, "Abschiedsreden," 220, and the references there.
70. The striking resemblance of this saying to the speech of Hibil-Ziwa to the children of Adam in the Mandean *GL* (ed. Lidzbarski, 442, ll.28–30, and 443, ll.5–6) has often been noted. The Mandean *šᵉkīnātā* is the equivalent of μοναί.
71. See the very suggestive discussion of this point by Martyn, *History and Theology,* 138–40.
72. See *Prophet-King,* 61–78.
73. On the notion of the liminal, neither one thing nor the other, neither here not there, as a category of the sacred, see J. Z. Smith, "Birth Upside Down," and "A Place on Which to Stand: Symbols and Social Change," *Worship* 44 (1970): 457–74.
74. Though not many in this century would put it in such Hegelian language as J. N. Sanders, "To accomplish the Father's loving purpose, the Logos became man, so uniting flesh and spirit, and making possible the gift of holy spirit [sic] to men" (*A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John,* Harper's NT Commentaries [New York: Harper, 1968], 19).
75. CG II, *4.* 87 [135], 17–20; tr. R. A. Bullard, *The Hypostasis of the Archons,* PTS, 10

(Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970), 21. Cf. the statement of Norea to the Great Archon, 92 [140], 25–26: "I am not from you, [but] I came from above."

76. See N. A. Dahl, "Der Erstgeborene Satans und der Vater des Teufels (Polyk. 7_1 und Joh 8_{44})," *Apophoreta,* ed. W. Eltester, BZNW, 30 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1964), 70–84. For an exploration of the background of the "children of Abraham" motif in this chapter and an ingenious attempt to reconstruct a conflict between the Johannine community and a more conservative Jewish-Christian group, see the 1971 AAR student Prize Essay by my student Bruce Schein, "'The Seed of Abraham' John 8:31–59," AAR/SBL Annual Meeting, October 31, 1971.
77. *History and Theology,* passim.
78. Against a large number of scholars, including K. Bornhäuser, D. Oehler, J. A. T. Robinson, W. C. van Unnik, and C. H. Dodd, I thus find myself in agreement with R. E. Brown that John's distinctive emphases "are directed to crises within the believing Church rather than to the conversion of non-believers" (*Gospel according to John I–XII,* lxxviii).
79. I am using "sect" here in a somewhat different sense from the classic definitions by Weber, Troeltsch, and Niebuhr. On the special problems of an adequate definition, see P. Berger, "The Sociological Study of Sectarianism," *Social Research* 21 (1954): 467–85; also his *The Sacred Canopy* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), 196, n. 22. Eventually the work of social psychologists on the formation and functioning of counter-cultural groups may provide useful models for the historian; see the survey by T. F. Pettigrew, "Social Evaluation Theory: Convergences and Applications," *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation 1967,* ed. D. Levine (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 241–311.
80. *The Social Construction of Reality* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966); see also P. Berger, *Sacred Canopy,* chs. 1, 2. Also extremely helpful is the definition proposed by C. Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion,* ed. M. Banton (New York: Praeger, 1966), 1–66.
81. This is something like the interaction between scripture text, group organization, and historical experience in the development of apocalyptic ideology proposed by N. A. Dahl in the very important essay, "Eschatologie und Geschichte im Lichte der Qumran-texte," *Zeit und Geschichte,* ed. E. Dinkler (Tübingen: Mohr 1964), 3–18 (ET: *The Future of Our Religious Past,* ed. J. M. Robinson [New York: Harper and Row, 1971], 9–28).
82. This was first pointed out to me by one of my students, the Rev. James Ameling. Note how Paul explicitly uses Gen. 2:4 to express the same notion in 1 Cor. 6:16–17.
83. Philo's peculiar dialectic between Logos and Sophia, and the successive characterization of the wise man's soul as feminine and masculine at different stages of progress, show that such speculations were not unknown to hellenis-

tic Judaism prior to the birth of Christianity. R. A. Baer, Jr. (*Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female,* ALGHJ, 3 [Leiden: Brill, 1970]) collects and analyzes the most important passages, but offers little help in discerning the pre-Philonic forms of the myths.

84. Lately there have been a few preliminary signs of a recognition of this need: E. M. Mendelson, "Some Notes on a Sociological Approach to Gnosticism," *Le origini dello gnosticismo,* 668–75; the two essays by J. Z. Smith, "Birth Upside Down," and "A Place on Which to Stand"; H. G. Kippenberg, "Versuch einer soziologischen Verortung des antiken Gnostizismus," *Numen* 17 (1970): 211–31 (marred by tendentious over-generalizations, coupled with a Feuerbachian "explanation" of religion); and S. Laeuchli, "The Sociology of Gnosticism," a paper read to the Biblical Literature Section of the American Academy of Religion, October 30, 1971.

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EQUAL TO GOD

John 5:18 says that the plot to have Jesus killed began because Jesus was "making himself equal to God." This assertion can hardly be historical, so we must seek an explanation for it in the history of the Johannine circle. It was not only the Johannine Christians who made such connections, of course. Already in Mark hostility against Jesus is first aroused by his claim to exercise a prerogative—to forgive sins—that is God's alone (Mark 2:7), and the actual plot against his life springs, as in John, from a Sabbath healing (3:6). Christians prior to John had appropriated for Jesus biblical texts and phrases that originally applied to God—"the Day of the Lord," "the Word of the Lord," "the Name of the Lord," for example—and had attributed to him functions and honors that traditionally had been God's. In the liturgical poetry used in Pauline circles even the phrase "to be equal to God" had been ap-

plied to Jesus (Phil 2:6), though in a sense very nearly the opposite of that implied in John 5:18. Thus the central issue that would impel the great christological definitions and controversies of subsequent centuries was already emerging in several quarters. Yet, the Fourth Gospel is the first document we have that focuses so intently on this issue. No other first-century writing concerns itself so explicitly and extensively with the relationship between Jesus and God. That is the reason this Gospel was able later to contribute so disproportionately to the language of systematic christologies both catholic and heterodox. Another reason for its importance in later christology is that it spoke in such ways of Jesus and God in Greek.[1] Its Greek, moreover, evoked some familiar discussions in pagan traditions without quite fitting them, even as it called on specifically Jewish traditions but radically transformed them. The peculiar Johannine language would thus furnish major materials for the bridge to be built between a Bible newly construed and Christianly interpreted on the one hand and a philosophical tradition mostly Platonic on the other. It is important, however, if we are to understand this Gospel itself, that we separate it in our minds from those later uses of it. We should not too quickly adopt the shorthand of later controversies, like "subordinationist," "docetist," and "Gnostic," to name what seems to be happening in John.

The thematic importance of the charge attributed to "the Jews" in John 5:18 becomes apparent when we note the similar formulation of two subsequent charges: 10:33, "[We intend to stone you] for blasphemy, because you, being human, make yourself a god," and 19:7, "He ought to die, because he made himself God's son."[2] In each case the verb ποιεῖν with the reflexive pronoun signals Jesus' crime as his opponents see it but also shows the Gospel's audience how wrong the Jews are. Jesus has not "made himself" θεός ("god") or υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ("son of god"); he *was* from "the beginning," and what he does in the world is only what the Father had commissioned him to do. The predicates of the three parallel sentences are different, but their parallelism suggests that ἴσος τῷ θεῷ ("equal to god"), υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ("son of god") and θεός ("god"), as applied to Jesus, all have roughly the same force for the Johannine Christians or for their opponents. We are reminded that the Fourth Gospel is almost alone among first-century documents in insisting upon confessing Jesus as θεός (compare Heb. 1:8; other examples are not so certain). Its first verse affirms that θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος ("the word was god"), and the confession of Thomas at the end is ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου ("my lord and my god" [20:28]).[3]

Returning to 5:18 we are faced with three questions. First, what is the accusation that "the Jews" were making? Why does calling God Jesus' "own fa-

ther" make Jesus "equal to God"? In what sense is that blasphemy? Second, in what sense is the audience of this Gospel itself expected to understand Jesus to be "God" or "a god" or "equal to God"? Third, as knowledgeable Jews themselves, how could the shapers of the Johannine tradition have come to speak of Jesus in a way that Jews apparently took to be self-evidently blasphemous? These questions become acute precisely because J. Louis Martyn has helped us to recognize that "the history of the Johannine community . . . forms to no small extent a chapter in the history of *Jewish* Christianity."[4]

Let us begin with the second question, for our initial step toward understanding the statements about Jesus' claims to divine honor must be to discover their place in the evangelist's literary strategy. John 5:18, like v. 16, which it resumes and expands, is an aside to the readers by an omniscient narrator. That the form of v. 18 precisely recurs in the direct speech of the opponents in 10:33 and 19:7, as we have noted above, helps to confirm that this narrator is no *glossator* but the primary author of the Gospel. As Bultmann rightly observes, the imperfect tenses in both verses break out of the narrative situation "to characterize the long-term attitude of the Jews toward Jesus' customary (or repeated) actions."[5] Following Martyn, we further suspect that, "at a second level," these reports characterize the complaints that Johannine Christians heard from other Jews about the Jesus they confessed.

Was the perception by the Jewish opponents accurate? In one respect, as we have already seen, the evangelist insists that it was not: The Johannine Christians did not believe that Jesus had *made himself* equal to God. One purpose of 5:19–47 is to expose that misunderstanding. Thus v. 19 takes up again the form of the dialogue—though as so often in John the interlocutors are not permitted to speak again—but the "answer" that Jesus gives does not reply to anything the Jews in the narrative have said, but to the generalized complaint that the narrator has told us about in his aside. The answer is, to say the least, ambiguous. On the one hand, Jesus claims to do nothing "of himself" (vv. 19,30). He is merely like a child who imitates "whatever he sees his father doing" (v. 19).[6] He is the perfect agent, who does not seek what he wants, but only "the will of the one who sent me" (v. 30). He does not come "in his own name" nor seek human "glory" but comes in the name of the Father and receives glory from the one God (vv. 41–44). On the other hand, he does what God does: raises the dead, conducts judgment, and has life "in himself" (vv. 21–22, 25–29). And the Father has granted him the authority to do these things precisely that "all may honor the Son as they honor the Father" (v. 23). No wonder Sundberg could conclude "that two christologies, are at work in the Fourth Gospel," the one depicting Jesus as "the subordi-

nate agent of God who does his will in obedience," the other "a new christology in which the Son has reached his majority and has been granted like rank, position and power with the Father." The "new christology" is just what "the Jews" say it is, "a binitarian theology."[7]

All this is true; yet, we sense that this unravelling of the Johannine discourses into "two christologies" does not enable us to hear the effective force of the evangelist's composition. One of the problems with much of our modern way of talking about ancient religious conceptions is our tendency, once we have found a useful category for sorting the data, to treat the category as if it were a thing. A "christology" is not a contraption that, once wound up, runs on its own. What we see happening in the Fourth Gospel's controversies about Jesus' identity is not "two christologies" struggling for dominance but an exegetical and interpretive process by which a new religious movement interpreted Scripture, interpreted Jesus, interpreted its own history, and interpreted the world in one complex dialectic. To enter imaginatively into that dialectic, we must find our way with the peculiar style and idiom of this Gospel. It is not this writer's—or this community's—style to develop an idea in linear argument; instead the tradition and the writer have juxtaposed notions and images, using the forms of dialogue and controversy to expose some of their implications and limitations—and then repeatedly shifted the connections in a kind of verbal kaleidoscope. Does the Fourth Gospel make Jesus into "a second god"? To ask the question this way, in the language of Justin Martyr, immediately reveals the distance between John and the latter author. Somehow the kaleidoscopic worrying of the issue in John is less clear but at the same time more subtle, more profound than the second-century apologist's lapidary assertions. To make John talk like Justin is to impoverish this Gospel.

The Johannine controversies make it clear enough that it was precisely in arguments with other Jews that this circle of Jesus' followers had to work out the sense in which Jesus was for them "equal to God." The implication that there could be any being equal to God was an age-old worry in Israel, one that would not quite go away. "Two powers in heaven" was a thought that the rabbis would still be combatting centuries later.[8] To "think oneself godequal [ἰσόθεος], being mortal" is the arrogance (ὑπερηφανία) of an Antiochus Epiphanes (2 Macc 9:12). "The mind that thinks itself equal to God," writes Philo, is "both vain and godless" (φίλαυτος δὲ καὶ ἄθεος, *Leg. All.* 1.49). It is a little too glib, however, to say, as commentators routinely do, that to call a human person "godequal" was no offense to pagan or syncretistic sensibili-

ties, but self-evidently impossible for a Jew. In fact, one finds ambivalent statements on both sides.

To be sure, ἰσόθεος was an epithet that could be lightly used in the Greek world, from Homer's formulaic ἰσόθεος φώς ("a man equal to a god") for any of his heroic warriors[9] to the medical writers' praise of a really good cough remedy or sciatica medication as ἰσόθεος.[10] All this has, as Bultmann remarks,[11] nothing to do with the discussion in John 5. Yet, there is one point of contact: When the Greek sources call a human being ἰσόθεος, it is a question of honor—for example, in the oft-repeated gnome that one ought to show to one's parents "godequal honor."[12] So, too, in John 5 Jesus' discourse turns on the question of the τιμή ("honor") that is to be given to the Son (v. 23), a motif that returns in the guise of δόξα ("glory") in vv. 41–44.

The notion put forth here and elsewhere in John, that the Son is to be honored as is the Father because he does the *works* of the Father, is also immediately understandable to anyone familiar with the Greek gnomic and philosophical traditions—understandable, but quite different in its logic and mode of expression. "To be like God," said Isocrates, "is to be a benefactor and to tell the truth."[13] The ideal of resembling God by sharing God's attributes was a commonplace. At the heart of the idea of moral progress that becomes so important in the philosophical *koine* in the time of the principate is the belief that to be wise is to strive to be like God. Plato *Theaetetus* 176B is particularly often quoted and commented on in this connection.[14] Here we are obviously in a different world from that of the Fourth Gospel. A "Greek" coming to the Jesus of John 5 might initially think himself on familiar ground, but at the end his puzzlement would be as great as that of "the Jews."

Greeks, too, knew that there were claims by mortals to be godlike that were quite improper, impious, or simply ridiculous. Even Homer's Apollo can warn Diomedes:

> *Take care, give back, son of Tydeus, and strive no longer*
> *to make yourself like the gods in mind, since never the same is*
> *the breed of gods, who are immortal, and men who walk groundling.*[15]

Nearer to John's time, Seneca's satire on "The Pumpkinization of Claudius" is a familiar example of a sophisticated send-up of divine honors given an all-too-human emperor. The post-mortem literary portraits of Seneca's own patron, Nero, and of the earlier Gaius and the later Domitian give further evidence for the distaste for such hubris, at least in circles who suffered under it, in the period of our concern. An author writing an encomiastic biography of

a figure regarded by part of his audience (including perhaps the author's patron) as divine could face a dilemma, as we see throughout Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius,* a work composed about a century and a quarter after the Fourth Gospel. Philostratus undertook to portray Apollonius as a philosopher, but not only was his hero depicted in some of the traditions as a demigod and even called a god, but also there was actually a cult of Apollonius in some places. Philostratus was aware that the miracles attributed to his "philosopher" would be scorned by some as the works of a γόης ("magician"), and the divine claims on his behalf could seem the height of impiety.[16] Philostratus' dilemma was in some respects like that of the Fourth Evangelist, and in a few passages his solution is comparable.

The most interesting of these passages is the defense of Apollonius before the emperor Domitian, who has asked him, "Why is it that men call you θεός?" Philostratus, perhaps guided by the tradition before him, has supplied Apollonius with two replies: one very brief, before Apollonius demonstrates his divinity by vanishing from the scene, the other an elaborate rhetorical apologia that Apollonius is represented as having prepared in writing. The short answer to the emperor's question is, "Because every person who is deemed good [ἀγαθός] is honored by being named after God [θεοῦ ἐπωνυμίᾳ τιμᾶται]" (*V. Ap.* 8.5). This answer is elaborated in 8.7.7: "I say that the good among humans possess something of God [θεοῦ τι ἔχειν]." Then the speaker draws a parallel between the dependence of the κόσμος ("universe") upon the demiurge and the dependence of "another world"—that is, the commonwealth—on the ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός ("good man"), for this human world "needs a man made in God's image." "Undisciplined souls" must have a governor, "a man who concerns himself about their world, a god who has come at wisdom's behest [θεὸς ὑπὸ σοφίας ἡκῶν]."

Although the diction and the range of ideas are different, the argumentative strategy of this passage is quite similar to that in John 10:31–39. In both, the reply of the accused first suggests that the title θεός is innocuous because there are accepted occasions when it is appropriately used of humans. To be sure, the occasions are special: Only the ἀγαθοὶ ἄνθρωποι ("good persons") may properly be called gods in Apollonius' theology, only the recipients of the Word of God (at Sinai?) in John. In each argument there is then a further claim. Every ἀγαθός has "something of God," but Apollonius claims to belong to a unique category of ἀγαθοί, "a man shaped in God's image," "a god sent by wisdom." Even stronger is the heightening of the initially innocuous claim in John, for there the form of the argument is explicitly *a fortiori:* "If [Scripture] calls those θεοί to whom the Word of God came . . . are you saying that I blas-

pheme because I said that I am God's son—I whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world as his envoy?" (vv. 35–36). To those of the Gospel's audience who are equipped with good memories, the comparison is bolder still: If those to whom the Logos came can be called gods, how much more the one who is the Logos.

The issue of Jesus' "blasphemy" in John 10:33 is stated in terms different from 5:18, but the Hannukah controversy obviously represents a further facet of the christological dispute that the Johannine Christians have had with other Jews. The controversy begins (10:24) with the specific question of whether Jesus is "the Christ," a question he refuses to answer directly. Thus we have here as forthright a discussion as we are likely to hear in this Gospel of what it meant to "confess [Jesus] as Christ"—the charge that had led to expulsion from the synagogue (9:22). The issue was not the title χριστός as such, and certainly not the assertion that Jesus was (one of) the Anointed One(s) expected in Jewish tradition. It was the novel complex of beliefs about him that clustered around that title in Johannine—and other—Christian circles that had led to their speaking of him as though he were a god. Thus Jesus' claim that here immediately provokes the charge of blasphemy is his statement, "I and the Father are one" (10:30). The subsequent discussion shows that the claim is connected with the use of the titles θεός and υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ for him. Jesus' sarcastic answer to the Jews' intent to stone him (v. 32) reintroduces the topic of the "good works" that Jesus has done. This recalls both his statement in v. 25, "The works that I do in my Father's name witness on my behalf" and the miracles that occasioned controversy earlier, beginning in chap. 5 (compare 7:21–23). Thus the assertion of Jesus' identity with the Father, like the assertion of his equality with God in 5:17–18, is immediately complemented and modified by his portrayal as the obedient son-agent.

The closest parallel in John to 10:31 is 8:59. As in the Hannukah scene the mob that wants to stone Jesus comprises those who initially seemed ready to accept him as the Christ, so in the earlier passage it is "the Jews who had come to believe in him" (8:31), at least in the Gospel as we have it, who are so provoked by Jesus' strange responses that they want to destroy him. As in 10:30, where the immediate provocation is Jesus' statement, "I and the Father are one," so in 8:58 it is his cryptic remark, "Before Abraham existed, I am," that is taken to be blasphemy, as the stoning indicates. Why is it blasphemy and not merely insanity (see also v. 52)? Probably the knowledgeable reader is expected to hear in Jesus' ἐγὼ εἰμί ("I am") an allusion to the Tetragram, as various commentators have argued (see vv. 24 and 28a and 18:6).[17]

If so, the counterpart to the theme of "works" of God that Jesus does is the *name* of God that he "manifests" to those who are "given" to him (17:6). As godequal Son and envoy, he does God's deeds; as bearer of the secret Name, he reveals that Name to the chosen ones (see 1:18; 14:7–11).

Two of our three questions to John 5:18 have now been answered. The Johannine Christians did indeed speak of Jesus as if he were a god or equal to God and even as if the very Name of God could be used of him. Other Jews were bound to see that kind of talk as blasphemy—both in the general sense of hybristic claims (see 2 Macc 9:12; Philo *Leg. All.* 1.49) and in the specific legal sense of speaking out the Tetragram.[18] So we see that, although John's authorial dilemma was in some ways surprisingly close to that addressed by Philostratus, the dilemma was cast for the Christian writer in specifically Jewish terms. And for him the dilemma was more acute, because he was not writing for a royal patroness, but for a community whose very identity had been shaped around this debate over Jesus' "equality with God," the issue they portray as having distinguished them from the (other) Jews. Thus from the Prologue's θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος ("The Word was God") to Thomas' confession ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου ("my Lord and my God") runs the theme that what *this* messianic group sees in its messiah is something far different from what a messiah could mean to other Jews, and perhaps even to some other Christians. Yet, they have struggled, and this author struggles, to show that what they see is something a Jew or a Samaritan ought to be ready to see, something encrypted in Scripture from the first chapter of Genesis on.

Our third question remains: How could the Johannine Christians, who were evidently themselves Jewish and, moreover, steeped in the Scriptures and traditions of Judaism, ever have come to make such claims about Jesus? If it were simply a question of titles, it would not be difficult to collect a number of instances in which Jewish and Samaritan writers call biblical heroes "gods." After all, God had said to Moses (Exod 7: 1): "See, I have made you a god to Pharaoh" (see also Exod 4:16). Philo, as well as the later rabbis, spent considerable energy discussing the implications of that passage and others in which God's name and other attributes as well seemed to be shared with Moses. The hellenistic Jewish dramatist Ezekiel has Moses describe a dream of enthronement in heaven, in which he was invited to take the place of a human figure (φώς) evidently representing God, who gave Moses his diadem and scepter.[19] Five or six centuries later the Samaritan priest Markah likewise pictured Moses' heavenly honors, which constituted his ascent to "deity" (אלהו).[20] Nevertheless, we must resist the temptation to think that a fixed ideology, say "Moses as divine man," was ready at hand for the Johan-

nine Christians simply to "apply" to Jesus. Even the "Jewish Wisdom Myth," which has seemed since the work of Harris and Bultmann early in this century so readily to explain the basic pattern of Jesus' coming into the world, rejection, and re-ascent, does not solve all the problems.[21] If there really was a myth, and not merely a common metaphorical and exegetical pattern on which many changes were rung, we still cannot understand the christology of John as arrived at by simply substituting the masculine λόγος ("word") for the feminine σοφία ("wisdom") and equating it with Jesus. No more can we simply equate John's Jesus with Philo's λόγος or the *memra* of the targums. The dialectic that we glimpse in the Fourth Gospel could only have emerged from a much more complicated process than that.

It was a process, indeed, too complicated to explore on this occasion. Nevertheless, our investigation of the Johannine Jesus' equality with God will not be complete until at least a few of the clues are noted that point to that process's exegetical and traditional roots and its social context. As for the latter, we have already affirmed with Martyn that the Gospel's controversies press us to look for the context of its theologizing in the same disputes that constituted the Johannine groups a separate religious community over against the Jewish communities to which they had belonged. For the exegetical connectives, we must first pay attention to the series of motifs that are integrally connected with the talk of Jesus' divinity in John.

First, Jesus is depicted as "god," "equal to God," and "God's Son," precisely as the one who came from God and returns to God in the "exaltation" of the crucifixion. It is perhaps significant that the only clear New Testament parallel to John 5:18's ἴσος θεῷ ("equal to God") is Phil 2:6, ἴσα θεῷ εἶναι ("to be equal to God"). In the Philippian poem, "to be equal to God" was a graspable status of the one "in the form of God," precisely in contrast to his "emptied" status "in human likeness," and thus rather different from John's depiction of Jesus as manifesting his divine glory even in his humanness.[22] Nevertheless the mythic pattern in both cases is the descent, obedient completion of a mission, and reascent to glorious enthronement of a divine being.[23] Second—and this is unique to John—the descent/ascent pattern is connected closely with the title "Son of Man."[24] It is precisely as the descending and ascending Son of Man that Jesus is equal to God. Third, the Johannine Jesus can be given not only the general appellative "god," but even (though more subtly) the specific "name" of God, the "I Am," which he has "revealed" to those whom the Father has given him. The key clue in our mystery, however, may be a fourth observation, made nearly thirty years ago by Nils Dahl. The divine δόξα ("glory") of Jesus had already been seen by Isaiah (John

12:41). His "day," the day of his crucifixion = exaltation = glorification, was seen by Abraham (8:56). Dahl argues convincingly that these passages are allusions to the visions that Scripture attributed to certain of the Patriarchs and prophets, which were either explicitly theophanies or had been so interpreted by tradition. In John they become christophanies—perhaps one should say rather "doxaphanies"—visions of the divine Son of Man enthroned in heaven.[25]

The Johannine Christians, in an attempt to make intelligible their own emerging sense of who Jesus was, joined in an interpretive process that was already going on and that would continue among Jewish readers of Scripture, quite independent of the peculiar twist that the Christians gave it. The Johannine group's sense that what Jesus had done in the world was God's action, that their worship of him was worship of God, led them to an interpretive move that paralleled and probably borrowed from attempted solutions to an old dilemma faced by interpreters of the Hebrew Bible. "No man shall see me and live," said YHWH to Moses (Exod 34:20, a passage clearly alluded to in John 1:16–18). Yet, Exod 24:9–11 (RSV) says that "Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel" without harm and eventually "ate and drank" in God's presence. What was one to make of Isaiah's flat assertion, "I saw YHWH" (Isa 6:1), and the similar report by Micaiah (1 Kgs 22:19)—not to mention the elaborate visions of Ezekiel (esp. 1:26) and Daniel (7:9–14)?[26]

The solution that emerges in later Jewish exegetical literature assumes that Scripture's visionaries did not really see God. What they saw must, therefore, have been some intermediary, either a representative or a representation of God. Two texts are likely to have suggested these alternative construals. In Gen 1:26 God speaks of "our image" and "our likeness." And in Exod 23:21 God tells Moses of the angel who would accompany the Israelites: "My name is in him." What Israel's prophets saw was thus either God's image, conceived perhaps as a statue or a bas-relief on the throne, or that highest angel who bore God's name, whom later mystics and exegetes would call "the lesser YHWH."[27] The development of these lines of thinking is reasonably clear in later mystical literature, such as the Hebrew book of Enoch. Earlier allusions to these patterns are fragmentary and hard to trace, but there is enough evidence to make us confident that speculations of this kind were taking place already in John's milieu. After all, Philo, for all his Platonizing exuberance in interpreting the "seeing" of the "invisible God," follows in part a similar exegetical path. Those who Scripture says saw God

really saw "God's λόγος," which Philo repeatedly identifies with both God's image and the chief angel who bears God's name.[28]

Further, the reader of the theophanic texts would naturally conclude that the image or angel of God that the visionaries had seen was a human form. It was "in [or by] the image of God" that God made the first human (Gen 1:27). The figure that Ezekiel saw "on the likeness of a throne" above the cherubim was "the likeness of the appearance of a human" (Ezek 1:26). And, of course, the one who is presented to the Ancient of Days to become his vice-regent in the vision of Daniel 7 is "like a son of man." This intermediate, human figure in heaven provided the connecting point for those traditions that occasionally produced for some Jewish and Samaritan interpreters the equivalents of what Greeks would call the apotheoseis of heroes—like Enoch and Moses, already mentioned—and the epiphanies of gods—like the Man of the sixth vision in the Ezra apocalypse, or Jacob in the Prayer of Joseph. The last-named text, quoted in part by Origen and probably roughly contemporary with John, is particularly interesting for our purposes. Jacob reveals to the angel with whom he wrestles at the Jabok, here identified with Uriel, that he is himself an angel, and indeed the highest of those who attend God's throne.[29] This astonishing claim becomes a little clearer when we compare the way Gen 28:12 is interpreted in the Palestinian targums and in some rabbinic midrash. The targums explain the unusual order of the angels' "ascending and descending" like this: "Behold the angels that had accompanied him from his father's house ascended to announce to the angels of the heights: 'Come and see the pious man whose image [איקונין = εἰκών] is fixed to the throne of glory, upon whom you have desired to gaze.'"[30] Perhaps texts like these, cryptic and diverse as they are, give some hint of the way the Johannine Christians reasoned through Scripture to explain and justify their conviction that "Whoever has seen [the Christ depicted in this book] has seen the Father" (14:9).

What drove the Johannine Christians to make just these connections, in the face of the social pain that it obviously cost them? We must remember that the social pain was but the negative side of the process by which they had become a distinctive community. It is after he is expelled from the synagogue for his stubborn claims about Jesus that the healed blind man, in whom Martyn has taught us to see the paradigmatic Johannine convert, learns the identity of "the Son of Man" and comes truly to believe and to worship (John 9:35–38). In this Gospel, "abiding" in the truth about Jesus has positive and negative social dimensions: It entails stalwart "love" for fel-

low disciples of Jesus and brave separation from those who reject him. The claim that constitutes the identity of this special group of former Jews is that in their abiding in the Son of Man they have been granted what the whole of Israel's Scripture and tradition—both Jewish and Samaritan versions—pointed to. That was the δόξα that the ancient visionaries glimpsed ("from afar," as Philo would say), the vision of God through God's heavenly messenger that was adumbrated in Scripture but fully granted to "no one" until now. They alone are Israel in the sense so beloved of Philo, "the nation that sees God." They are epitomized in one of the first of those "given by God" to Jesus, Nathanael the ἀληθῶς Ἰσραηλίτης ("true Israelite"). Here we have the very model of a sectarian consciousness. To "Pharisees" and to ordinary Jews of all kinds, as the narrative makes clear, these claims did not fulfill but rather subverted the classical Scriptures and traditions. These claims broke the community with other Jews by their audacity, their exclusiveness, and their persistence; they constituted blasphemy. Smarting from the forced separation, the circle of the Beloved Disciple exulted in this subversion, which became the principal literary strategy of the Fourth Evangelist. The ultimate irony of this Gospel, whose author used irony so adroitly, is that its subversive prose was so successful that it enticed future generations of Christian readers, long separated from the intense and specific engagement with the Jews that had given it birth, into ever new subversions of its own language. It is these subsequent strong misreadings of the Gospel's own strong misreading[31] that have contributed so much to the church's christology.

Notes

1. Even if an earlier generation's hypotheses about an Aramaic *Vorlage* of John were to be revived, it remains true that it is only our Greek Gospel or its later translations that the Fathers read.
2. Translations in this essay are my own, unless otherwise indicated.
3. Kikuo Matsunaga, "The 'Theos' Christology as the Ultimate Confession of the Fourth Gospel," *Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute* 7 (1981) 124–45.
4. See J. Louis Martyn, *The Gospel of John in Christian History* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 120–21, emphasis original.
5. Rudolf Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes,* KEK, 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), 82.
6. C. H. Dodd, "Une parabole cachée dans le quatrième évangile," *RHPR* 42 (1962) 107–15.
7. Albert C. Sundberg, Jr., "Christology in the Fourth Gospel," *Biblical Research* 21 (1976) 29–37. Compare already Walter Bauer, *Das Johannes-Evangelium,* HNT, 6; 3d ed. (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1935), 82: "Die Juden verstehen richtig,

was der jo. Christus meint, dass nämlich der Anspruch, Gottes Sohn zu sein, in seinem Munde nichts anders als die Anerkennung seiner Wesensgleichheit mit Gott (1:1) fordert!"

8. Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports About Christianity and Gnosticism,* SJLA, 25 (Leiden: Brill, 1977).
9. See *Il.* 2.565; 3.310; 4.212; 7.136; 9.211; 11.428, 472; 11.644; 15.559; 16.632; 23.569, 677.
10. See, for example, Galen, *De compositione medicamentorum,* ed. Kühn, vol. 13, 65.12; 279.15; Paulus Aegineta, *Epitomae medicae libri,* ed. Heiberg, CMG vol. 9.2, 7.16.48.1; Aetius Amidenus, *Iatricorum liber vii,* ed. Olivieri, CMG 8.2, 11–12; 112.15; *liber viii* (ibid.) 60.44; 63.184; 73.116; 75.13 1; 77–55; 77.67. All these examples are, of course, later than the first century.
11. Bultmann, *Johannes,* 183 n. 1.
12. Νόμος γονεῦσιν ἰσοθέους τιμὰς νέμειν: Menander fr. 805 (in T. Kock, ed., *Comicorum Atticorum fragmenta,* vol. 3); *Sent.,* ed. Meineke 1.378 = *Sent. ex cod. byz.,* ed. Jaekel, 525 = fr. 600 in Körte and Thierfelder. See also Aristotle *EN* 9.2.8 (1165A, 24). Of course, heroes, too, were accorded "godequal honors," see, for example, Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Antiq. Rom.* 1.6.4.2; 1.44.1.9; *Ars rhet.* 7.7.1–8. Some of these Dionysius calls "demigods, whose souls after they had left their mortal bodies are said to have ascended to Heaven and to have obtained the same honours as the gods, such as Hercules, Aesculapius, Castor and Pollux, Helen, Pan, and countless others" (*Antiq. Rom.* 7.72.13.20–22, trans. Earnest Cary in the Loeb edition). Artapanus claimed that Moses was "deemed worthy of ἰσόθεος τιμή by the priests" of Egypt (Eusebius *Praep. Ev.* 9.27.6). Similarly Alexander the Great in ps–Callisthenes *Hist. Alex. Mag.* 1.46a.4 (ἰσόθεος κράτος); 2.10.7; 2.22.12 (ἰσόθεοι τιμαί). The notion that a human could receive divine honors because of power, wisdom, benefactions, or other excellence could also be expressed by calling the person "godequal," as in *Hist. Alex. Mag.* 2.22.11; *Vita Aesopi* 116.9–10; Apollonius of Tyana *Ep.* 44; see also Philostratus *Vit. Ap.* 5.24; 7.21. Homer could be called "godequal in wisdom," evidently a commonplace, for Dio Chrysostom could use it as a base of comparison in the self-praise of Phidias (*Or.* 12.63.4.). This usage, too, could be trivialized. Origen *c. Cels.* 3.25.17 derides the ἰσόθεοι τιμαί given by the Phythian oracle to a boxer, while Athenaeus *Deipn.* 13.55.31–32 speaks of Greece's enslavement to "the godequal beauty of Lais," a famous prostitute. In comedy, this line of thought could produce an ethnic joke: The Egyptians think the eel godequal, for eels cost more than (the images of) gods (Athenaeus Deipn. 7.55.4–5, citing Antiphanes, "in the comedy of Lyko," = Kock, *Com. Att. frag.* fr. 147). An interesting parallel to the whole Johannine controversy occurs in Heraclitus *Ep.* 4 to Hermadorus, conveniently available in A.J. Malherbe, ed., *The Cynic Epistles,* SBLSBS, 12 (Missoula: Scholars, 1977), 190–93. Heraclitus answers an accusation that he erected an altar and inscribed it with

his own name, thus "making myself, a human, a god." He cites the example of Heracles, who was a man and became a god by means of his καλοκαγαθία καὶ ἔργων τὰ γενναιότατα.

13. Isocrates *fr.* 34.
14. Albinus *Epitome* 28.1.1–10, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1; Alexander of Aphrodisias *In A.pr.* 6.7–8; *In top.* 243.25–26; 254.4–8; Galen *De prop. anim.* 5.11.8; Plotinus *Enn.* 1.2.1.3–7; 1.2.5.2; 1.6.6.20; Porphyry *Abst.* 2.43; 3.27; *Marc.* 13, 16, 17, 19; *In Platonis Timaeum comm.* fr. 2.28.14; Theon of Smyrna *De util. math.* 16. 1; compare Diogenes Laertius 6.104; Epictetus *Diss.* 1.12.21; Plutarch *Ad princ. inerud.* (*Mor.* 780E–F); Philoponus *In mete.* 14.1.1.9.
15. *Il.* 5.440–41, trans. by Richmond Lattimore, *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 140.
16. For example, *V.Ap.* 1.2; 4.18; 7.17; 8.7.2.; 8.19 (accusations of being γόης or magician); 1.5 (temple to Apollonius); 3.50; 8.5 (called θεός). See further G. Petzke, *Die Traditionen über Apollonius von Tyana und das Neue Testament,* Studia ad Corpus Hellensticum Novi Testamenti, 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 187–94.
17. See, for example, C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 93–96; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (London: SPCK, 1955), 282–83; Raymond E. Brown, S.S., *The Gospel According to John (i–xii),* AB 29A (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966) Appendix IV; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John,* trans. C. Hastings *et al.* (New York: Crossroad 1982), 2:199–200 and Excursus 8, pp. 79–89.
18. Lev 24:16; *m.Sanh.* 7:5.
19. See Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* 9.29; see translation and notes by R. G. Robertson in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* 2 vols. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 2.811–12.
20. I have collected much of the evidence in "Moses as God and King," in Jacob Neusner, ed., *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough,* Studies in the History of Religions, 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 354–71, and "The Divine Agent and His Counterfeit in Philo and the Fourth Gospel," in E. Schüssler-Fiorenza, ed., *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), 43–67. See also the recent discussion by M. J. J. Menken, "The Provenance and Meaning of the Old Testament Quotation in John 6:31," *NovT* 30/1 (1988) 39–56.
21. See J. Rendel Harris, *The Origin of the Prologue to St. John's Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917); Rudolf Bultmann, "Die religionsgeschichtliche Hintergrund des Prologs zum Johannes-Evangelium," *Eucharisterion: Festschrift für H. Gunkel* (1923), reprinted in Rudolf Bultmann, *Exegetica,* ed. Erich Dinkler (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1967), 10–35. Important for recent discussion has been George W. MacRae, "The Jewish Background of the Gnostic Sophia Myth," *NovT* 12 (1970) 86–101; see also Henry R. Moeller, "Wisdom

Motifs and John's Gospel," *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 6 (1963) 92–100.

22. In this respect Käsemann is relatively correct over against Bultmann's tendency to read John too much in the light of Paul. Ernst Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968).
23. Perhaps the same pattern is implicit in the other poetic passages in which what is said of Jesus resembles what is said elsewhere of God's Wisdom as agent of creation. See Col 1:15–20; Eph 1:3–14.
24. See E. M. Sidebottom, "The Ascent and Descent of the Son of Man in the Gospel of St. John," *ATR* 2 (1957) 115–22; W. A. Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," *JBL* 91 (1972) 44–72.
25. N. A. Dahl, "The Johannine Church and History," in William Klassen and Graydon Snyder, eds., *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Otto A. Piper* (New York: Harper, 1962), 130–36.
26. For a full discussion of these and other, similar exegetical dilemmas and their various solutions in traditional exegesis, see Segal, *Two Powers.*
27. Enoch 12:5; see also 30:1; Gershom G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1960), 43; idem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1961), 68–69; Ithamar Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism,* AGJU, 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 196–98; Segal, *Two Powers,* 65–66.
28. See, for example, *Somn.* 1.238–41; *Conf.* 145–47; *Heres* 205; *Fug.* 101; *Spec.* 1.81; cf. *Cher.* 3, 35; *Fug.* 5; *Mut.* 87. Segal, *Two Powers,* 159–81, discusses the most important passages in Philo and compares Philo's exegesis with that of both the later rabbis and the merkabah mystics.
29. See the brilliant exposition by Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Prayer of Joseph," in J. Neusner, ed., *Religions in Antiquity* (see above, n. 20), 253–94, and his introduction and notes to his translation in Charlesworth, ed., *Pseudepigrapha,* 2:699–712.
30. See the Paris ms. of the Fragmentary Targum, trans. by Michael L. Klein, *The Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch According to Their Extant Sources,* Analecta Biblica, 76 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980), 2:20. Other texts, including Neofiti I, are similar. Compare *Gen.Rab.* 68.12; *PRE* 35 (82a, in Friedlander's translation, p. 265); *b. Hal.* 91b; and see Dahl's comments, "Johannine Church," 286–87 n. 51.
31. See Harold Bloom, "'Before Moses Was, I Am': The Original and Belated Testaments," *Notebooks in Cultural Analysis* 1 (1984) 3–14.

THE MAN FROM HEAVEN IN PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

In Helmut Koester's enormous contribution to the history of early Christianity, one of the things of which he has never tired of reminding us is the exuberance of Jesus' followers that created, in the first decades of the movement's existence, the wildest diversity of mythic portraits of him.[1] Students of the New Testament had often been blinded to this diversity by confusing the church's canon with the canon of the historian. However, we do not have to look beyond the canonical documents to see one of these developments that is among the most astonishing of all: the subject of this diverse myth making was a Jewish man from Galilee who died early and in public shame. In both the Fourth Gospel and in Paul's letter to the Philippians, this Jewish man is said to have been a divine being, "a god" and "with God" or "equal to God," who descended to earth in human form, obeying the Father's

command to the point of suffering human death, for which he was rewarded by exaltation, enthroned above with even greater honor than before.

Debate over the "meaning" of such mythic texts has become mired in two questionable assumptions. The first is that meaning is determined by antecedents: if we can discover whence the Christians borrowed their myth of the descending/ascending redeemer, we will then know what it means. If that assumption were valid, we would still be far from an answer to our question, for we still have no consensus about the origins of the myth, despite the most diligent research and imaginative reconstructions. Even the categories by which we identify the antecedents (Jewish or Hellenistic? gnostic or pre-gnostic?) have proved to be leaky vessels. Second, we assume that the meaning of a myth is a constant "content" carried on by the myth from one context to another and translatable either into non-mythic concepts to which the myth merely refers in an obscure fashion or into existential dispositions that the myth expresses symbolically. Both assumptions run counter to most present theory about language and culture, which emphasizes rather the way language (including the language of myth) works within a particular social setting and practice. Meaning—although perhaps not simply identical with use, as Wittgensteinians have sometimes incautiously said—is at least inextricably connected with use.

Despite the necessary "dismantling" of scholarly categories,[2] enough remains of earlier form-critical analysis to enable us to say something about the *Sitz-im-Leben* (life setting) of the depiction of Jesus as a descended-and-ascended divine being. It was in the liturgical poetry—hymns and psalms—produced in the early Christian gatherings that members of the new cult used this pattern, whatever its precise antecedents may have been.[3] Poetry can have divers uses, however, and its meaning may change with use. In the Fourth Gospel and in Philippians we have two quite different uses of the hymnic tradition.

The Johannine portrayal of Jesus as the Son of Man come from heaven is exceedingly complicated because it is part of an intricate and relatively long literary composition that patently incorporates complex pre-literary traditions and probably several stages of redaction. Several years ago I tried to untangle some of the main features of the resulting social and linguistic web in an article that has stimulated considerable discussion and fairly wide agreement.[4] I argued that, in the final form of the Gospel, the descending/ascending motif is used to depict Jesus' essential strangeness to "the world"—a world that, "though it came into existence through him," was incapable of knowing him. The evangelist accomplished this effect by interweaving this

motif in the discourses of Jesus with statements in a riddling and ironic style and by connecting the discourses with narratives that portray Jesus in conflict with Jewish leaders. Thus John's Gospel gave to its intended audience, through the narrative and the self-presentation of Jesus in it, a template for interpreting their own experience. The conflict they had endured over their assertions about Jesus' identity, their resultant separation from the dominant Jewish communities, and thus their alienation from their world all are predicted, caused, and foreshadowed in this Gospel's depiction of Jesus' own mission and fate.

Paul's earlier use of the Christ hymn in Phil 2:6–11 is obviously quite different from the later Johannine use, both in style and in function. What the two have in common, besides the basic pattern, is that both use the christological motif to interpret the experience of the community and thus to shape and reinforce certain attitudes and patterns of behavior in that community. This usage accords with what Martin Hengel finds to be characteristic of the hymnic tradition: early Christian singing not only created Christology; it simultaneously "created community."[5] In the letter, Paul's community-forming use is much more direct and overt than in the Gospel; the letter as a whole is a letter of friendship with a range of parenetic aims,[6] and Paul quotes the poem to support a central part of his exhortation.

By calling the letter and Paul's use of the hymn "parenetic," I will seem to be taking sides in the debate that has raged over Phil 2:6–11 since Ernst Käsemann, in a seminal essay published in 1950, insisted that the dramatic and mythical form of the hymn portrayed an objective *Heilsakt* and therefore requires the interpreter to abandon altogether the parenetic interpretation.[7] Käsemann was reacting to the moralizing typical of traditional Protestant reading. He rightly insisted that Christ is not presented in the hymn as merely a moral *Vorbild,* the exemplar of a virtue or an attitude to be emulated. Käsemann's position won a wide following. Those who disagreed sought either (with considerable success) to undermine his starting point, the identification of the myth "behind" the hymn with the "gnostic primaeval man-redeemer myth,"[8] or simply to show that Käsemann's denial of the obvious hortatory function of the hymn in its context was a valiant attempt to make water run uphill.[9] However, both Käsemann's supporters and his opponents construe parenesis very narrowly. We would do better to let ourselves be guided by Paul's own language.

The elliptical clause that introduces the hymn has perplexed not a few interpreters: Τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. I would translate this, for reasons that will appear later, "Base your practical reasoning on

what you see in Christ Jesus." The verb φρονεῖν occurs ten times in this short letter. Only in the latter chapters of Romans does Paul use it nearly as frequently (including the compound ὑπερφρονεῖν [12:3], nine times, and the noun φρόνημα four times); otherwise it occurs only in 1 Cor 13:11; 2 Cor 13:11; Gal 5:10. Of the other occurrences in Philippians, the closest to 2:5 is in the curious admonition 3:15, ὅσοι οὖν τέλειοι, τοῦτο φρονῶμεν ("We who are mature should keep to this way of thinking" [REB]). Paul has just offered a remarkable self-presentation, a nutshell theological autobiography (vv. 4b–14), explicitly as a model (τύπος) to be imitated (συμμιμηταί μου γίνεσθε [v. 17]). Even though this self-description is bracketed by warnings against "dogs, evildoers, the mutilation," "the enemies of Christ's cross" (vv. 2, 18–19), reminding us of 2 Corinthians 10–13 and perhaps based on Paul's recollection of that recent controversy, the section as a whole is not polemical but hortatory.[10] It is about the way believers ought to behave (περιπατεῖν) and, logically prior to that, how they ought to think. For both there are good models (Paul and Christ) and bad (the enemies of Christ's cross, who are among other things οἱ τὰ ἐπίγεια φρονοῦντες ["their minds are set on earthly things" (NRSV; REB) v. 19]). Yet Paul as τύπος is not a simple *Vorbild* in the sense Käsemann abhors; there is not some heroic virtue or set of cognitions that the Philippians ought to copy—perhaps it is precisely to avoid that misconstrual that Paul adds the puzzling second clause in v. 15, καὶ εἴ τι ἑτέρως φρονεῖτε, καὶ τοῦτο ὁ θεὸς ὑμῖν ἀποκαλύψει ("and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you" [NRSV]). Rather, just as the way one ought to reason ὡς ἐν Χριστῷ ("as in Christ") is defined not abstractly but by a "drama" (Käsemann), so Paul defines his own example by his own story—in terms almost as telegraphic and paradoxical as the hymn.

What the myth of Christ's descent and ascent and Paul's story of his conversion and subsequent striving have in common is not that the two subjects have done the same thing or thought the same thoughts but that the dramatic structure of the two "plots" is analogous, though not the same. That is the sense in which "to know him and the power of his resurrection and the partnership of his sufferings" is to be "conformed to his death, in order (somehow, miraculously: εἴ πῶς) to attain to the resurrection from the dead" (vv. 10–11). That is the sense too of the inclusive description of Paul and the letter's recipients in 3:20–21, in language that, as most commentators now acknowledge, echoes the hymn: they are people whose moral reasoning is not determined by the ἐπίγεια ("earthly things"), because they are resident aliens, not merely in Philippi but on earth. Their πολίτευμα ("civic community") is in heaven, where Christ has been enthroned and whence they will

receive him, when, as he once transformed his own divine μορφή ("form") to take on human σχῆμα ("shape," "form"), now he will transform (μετασχηματίζειν, σύμμορφος) the faithful to share his δόξα ("glory") as they have shared his ταπείνωσις ("humiliation").

Φρόνησις, often translated "practical reasoning" or "practical wisdom" to distinguish it from the more theoretical or contemplative wisdom,[11] was, of course, an important concept in Greco-Roman moral philosophy. Although Paul does not use the noun, we may say with some cogency that this letter's most comprehensive purpose is the shaping of a Christian φρόνησις, a practical moral reasoning that is "conformed to [Christ's] death" in hope of his resurrection. This practical reasoning ought to issue in a civic life (πολιτεύεσθαι) "worthy of the gospel of Christ" (1:27) and therefore not the civic life of the ordinary πόλις, the arena of classical Greco-Roman ethics, but that of citizens of the heavenly πολίτευμα. The opening thanksgiving, as often in Paul's genuine letters, signals some of the principal concerns of the letter. Verses 9–11 confirm that one of the letter's aims is parenetic. What is wanted is the maturity of the believers' moral knowledge so that they can discern τὰ διαφέροντα ("the profitable things") and thus lead such a life that they will be found "pure and blameless for the day of Christ" (1:10 RSV).

There are two specific areas of concern on which this letter wants to focus the moral reasoning of the recipients: unity and harmony within the Christian community and confidence in the face of opposition and suffering. For both, Paul sets up, as models to think from, specific descriptions of his own experience and the myth of Christ. For the former, Paul's friendship with the Philippians, including their "contractual" exchange for the sake of the gospel (1:5, 7; 4:15–16), is both model and context. Their harmony (τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν) will thus make Paul rejoice (2:2). "Joy" is a repeated motif in this letter, always associated with friendly relations—not only with Paul (1:4, 18; 2:2, 17; 3:1; 4:1, 4, 10) but also with Epaphroditus (2:25–30). "To think the same" is a commonplace in Greco-Roman descriptions of friendship, and in 2:2–4 the phrase is connected with a plethora of other common expressions of friendship. In 4:2, however, the phrase recurs in a specific admonition addressed to Paul's "fellow athletes" for the gospel, Euodia and Syntyche. Perhaps, considering the weight placed on it here, their dispute is one of the major reasons for Paul's writing this letter as he does. "Fellow workers" can be mediators of unity and harmony as well as causes of discord; thus Paul also heaps up friendship language in describing both Timothy (2:19–23) and Epaphroditus (2:25–29). They are, moreover, models of "not seeking one's own" but the good for others, "the things of Jesus Christ" (2:21; cf. v. 30).

And, of course, so is Paul: in one of the boldest of his assertions of his own friendship with the Philippians, he says that he will survive his present imprisonment and coming trial, contrary to his own desire to "depart and be with Christ," for their sakes—for their moral progress (προκοπή) and faith's joy (1:21–26).

At the same time, Paul's careful assertion of indifference to life or death provides a model for Christian φρόνησις in the face of the other major concern of the letter, dealing with hostility from without. Hence, he follows this description of his own situation with the first exhortation of the letter, which introduces and weaves together both themes ("live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that . . . I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side-by-side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, and are in no way intimidated by your opponents" [1:27–28, NRSV]), and includes them both in the recipients' relationship with Christ (ἐχαρίσθη . . . τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν ["It was granted you . . . to suffer for him," v. 29]) and with Paul (τὸν αὐτὸν ἀγῶνα ἔχοντες, οἷον εἴδετε ἐν εμοί κτλ. ["having the same struggle that you saw I had . . . " v. 30]). Paul's assertions of his studied equanimity toward those who preach from motives hostile to himself—not quite what a reader of 2 Corinthians 10–13 would expect!—serve the same end (1:14–18). While Paul's παρρησία ("boldness") in the face of life or death (1:20), like his αὐτάρκεια ("self-sufficiency") in abundance or want (4:11), is a virtue especially prized by Cynics and widely adopted by others as well in the popular philosophy of his day, Paul's confidence that he will not be "put to shame" has another source, as the context makes clear. The competitive values of Greek rhetoric are tacitly reversed both here and in the inverted boasting of 3:4–16. As Nikolaus Walter has acutely observed, Paul's connecting the essentially active ἀγών ("struggle") with the essentially passive πάσχειν ("to suffer") in 1:29–30 would confound the ordinary understanding of both.[12] In neither place does Paul quite make explicit what is the basis for this reversal of values, except that it is "for Christ's sake" (ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, διὰ τὸν Χριστόν). It is fairly obvious, however, that it is Christ's own obedience to the point of death and subsequent exaltation, in short the Christ drama encapsulated in the hymn (2:6–11), that is the basis and model. The analogy is reinforced in Paul's description of Epaphroditus's experience, for Epaphroditus is mediator between Paul and the Philippians not only in his practical service but also here in Paul's rhetoric. His obedience to Christ's task (τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ) led him μέχρι θανάτου ("to the point of death," 2:30)—like Christ's own obedience (2:8).

Thus we see that the hymn's story of Christ is the master model that un-

derlies Paul's characterization of his career and of the mediating Epaphroditus. This model sets the terms of the thinking and acting expected of the Philippians in the face of conflict inside and hostility from outside the community. It is within this larger context, the controlling structure of the whole letter, that we should understand the specific verbal connections between the hymn and the immediate parenetic context. The ταπεινοφροσύνη ("humility") that ought to characterize Christian behavior (2:3) is exemplified by the one who ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν ("humbled himself" [v. 8]); as Christ did not regard (ἡγεῖσθαι) equality with God a windfall to be exploited (v. 6), so Christians ought to regard (ἡγεῖσθαι) each other as superior to themselves (v. 3); Christ's becoming obedient to the point of death (ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου [v. 8]) sets the parameters of the obedience Paul expects of the readers (ὑπηκούσατε [v. 12], with the implied imperative in the following phrase).

The fourth evangelist wrote a Gospel beginning with a poem about a Stranger from Heaven. The Gospel draws the insider-reader into the story of Jesus, replicating and interpreting the community's experience in the Stranger's enigmatic statements about himself and in his confrontations with "the Jews." In John "the Jews" represent a world that is essentially "from below," that loves darkness rather than light; it is a world hostile to the mediator of its own creation and his "friends." His victory over it is visible only through the deeply ironic narrative of his trial and "elevation" on a cross. Paul wrote to the Christians in Philippi a letter of gratitude, friendship, and exhortation, the fabric of which is interwoven with motifs from a poem he quotes, very like the poem that begins the Fourth Gospel. In the letter, too, these motifs suggest a duality between outsiders and insiders, between citizens of this world and citizens of heaven. Paul's world, nevertheless, seems a somewhat brighter and more open world than that of John. Irony, so characteristic of the Johannine narrative and, in a different way, of Paul's more polemical writing, is virtually absent from Philippians. This letter encourages a practical moral reasoning that incorporates language and concerns of Greco-Roman philosophy and rhetoric, even though it transforms those common cultural categories, sometimes radically, by the generative image of the one who did not exploit his superior status but humbled himself, accepting the shape of a slave, and was obedient to the point of death, only by that means and for that reason being exalted and enthroned by God and acknowledged by the invisible powers of the universe. Paul's supple and allusive use of the mythic pattern in his moral advice to the Philippian Christians binds the Christian φρόνησις to that pattern, but opens wide ranges for the unfolding of a moral reasoning based on it.

Notes

1. Of Koester's many articles that could be mentioned in this connection, two have become classics: "GNOMAI DIAPHOROI: The Origin and Nature of Diversification in the History of Early Christianity," and "One Jesus and Four Primitive Gospels," both reprinted in *Trajectories through Early Christianity,* ed. J. M. Robinson and H. Koester (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 114–204.
2. James M. Robinson, "The Dismantling and Reassembling of the Categories of New Testament Scholarship," in Robinson-Koester, *Trajectories,* 1–19.
3. Martin Hengel, "Hymns and Christology," *Between Jesus and Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 78–96, nn. 188–90. In order to keep this essay within the strict limits of space in this volume—limitations necessitated by the enthusiastic response of Helmut Koester's friends and students to this opportunity to express our affection and admiration for him—I have kept references to scholarly literature to an absolute minimum. For an overview of the massive literature on Phil 2:5–11, see R. P. Martin, *Carmen Christi: Philippians ii.5–11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship,* SNTSMS, 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 17–95; and Reinhard Deichgräber, *Gotteshymnus und Christushymnus: Untersuchungen zur Form, Sprache und Stil der frühchristlichen Hymnen,* SUNT, 5 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 11–21.
4. W. A. Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," above, pp. 55–99.
5. Hengel, "Hymns," 96.
6. I was formerly convinced that our received Philippians is a composite of two or three letter fragments, for reasons that Koester ably summarized in his "The Purpose of the Polemic of a Pauline Fragment (Philippians III)," *NTS* 8 (1961–62) 317–32. However, as study of ancient epistolography has advanced rapidly in recent years, the scholarly consensus appears to have shifted, and for good reason. I now take the letter to be single and complete. On the friendly letter and the parenetic letter and their social functions, see Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity,* Library of Early Christianity, 5 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 58–70, 94–106. An important discussion of Paul's use of the conventions of friendship and enmity is to be found in Peter Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians,* WUNT, 2.23 (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1987) 130–64. Kenneth Berry is presently writing a dissertation at Yale (under the direction of A. J. Malherbe) on the use of the friendship *topos* in Philippians.
7. Ernst Käsemann, "Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2, 5–11," *ZTK* 47 (1950) 313–60; reprinted in his *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen I* (2d ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 51–95.
8. Among the throng, see, e.g., Dieter Georgi, "Der vorpaulinische Hymnus in

Phil 2, 6–11," in *Zeit und Geschichte: Dankesgabe an Rudolf Bultmann zum 80. Geburtstag,* ed. E. Dinkler (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1964), 266–75.

9. Most recently, Ulrich B. Müller, who goes farther in trying to show that the hymn itself, not just the epistolary use of it, was parenetic from the outset ("Der Christushymnus Phil 2, 6–11," *ZNW* 79 [1988] 17–44).
10. *Pace* Koester, "Purpose." All translations in the present essay are my own unless otherwise indicated.
11. The distinction is nicely summed up by Synesius, the third-fourth century rhetorician-turned-bishop, *Epistle* 103: δύο γὰρ αὗται μερίδες φιλοσοφίας, θεωρία καὶ πρᾶξις· καὶ δῆτα δύο δυνάμεις ἑκατέρα παρ᾽ ἑκατέραν μερίδα, σοφία καὶ φρόνησις, κτλ. (*PG* 66:1476D; cited in *LPGL* 1491a).
12. Nikolaus Walter, "Die Philipper und das Leiden: Aus den Anfängen einer heidenchristlichen Gemeinde," in *Die Kirche des Anfangs: Festschrift für Heinz Schürmann zum 65. Geburtstag,* ed. R. Schnackenburg et al. (Leipzig: St. Benno, 1977), 431. I see nothing in the text, however, to support Walter's conjecture that the letter (only "letter B" in his reading, since he accepts Bornkamm's division) was occasioned by a report that the Philippians were upset and bewildered by having to suffer. The notion that the ἀγών of the wise person entailed patient endurance of hardships is in itself not at all foreign to Hellenistic philosophy, especially in the Cynic and Stoic traditions. What is novel in Paul's view of suffering is that it is not his own inner strength that is exhibited but an external power that is revealed precisely in his own weakness. See John Fitzgerald, *"Cracks in an Earthen Vessel": An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence,* SBLDS, 99 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

BREAKING AWAY

Three New Testament Pictures of Christianity's Separation from the Jewish Communities

We have now become accustomed to say that earliest Christianity was a sect of Judaism. This is useful language: it helps us avoid some kinds of anachronism, and it may assist Christians to approach the painful history of Jewish-Christian relations with appropriate humility. Moreover, there is ancient support for this terminology. It was Josephus who depicted the "Jewish philosophy" as made up of three or four "sects" (αἱρέσεις, *Ant.* 13.171; *Vit.* 10–12; *B.J.* 2.162; their members αἱρετισταί, *B.J.* 2.119, 124; cf. *Ant.* 18.11, φιλοσοφίαι, "philosophies"). And the book of Acts, which like Josephus speaks of Pharisees and Sadducees as αἱρέσεις, also has outsiders occasionally speak of Christians as a αἵρεσις (Acts 24:5, 14; 28.22).

However, there are some problems with the phrase. After all, in writing as

he did, Josephus had an apologetic purpose for which we have to make allowance. We should not fall into the trap of thinking that all, or even the majority, of Jews in Josephus' time belonged to one of the "sects" he named, any more than a majority of non-Jews were Stoics, Platonists, or Epicureans. Further, while it may be appropriate to translate his αἵρεσις as "sect," what he and Acts called by this term is not necessarily the same as what a modern sociologist means by "sect." To make matters more difficult, the sociologists have not had an easy time agreeing on a definition of the latter category. Finally, the book of Acts, too, had apologetic aims, and the picture its author drew of early Christianity may be distorted, or, at best, may not represent the whole movement.

For all these reasons, a fresh look at the evidence may be timely. In order to take account of some of the diversity of viewpoint present in the early Christian literature while still keeping the inquiry within reasonable bounds, I propose to examine three sets of documents: the Fourth Gospel, the letters of Paul and his disciples, and the Gospel of Matthew. All these are most likely earlier than Acts, and, of the Christian writings of the first century, they are the ones most intensively concerned with the question of Christianity's relationship to Israel. Each of them gives some reason for affirming that Christianity indeed *had* been a sect of Judaism, but we shall find that each looks back at that connection from a point just *after* a decisive break has occurred. The following questions may help to focus our inquiry: (1) With what kind of Judaism was each of these writers or groups of writers concerned? (2) What was the relation between the author's Christian community and that variety of Judaism? (3) In what social context was this interaction taking place?

THE JOHANNINE GROUPS AND "THE JEWS"

Although the Fourth Gospel is certainly not the earliest of our sources, it is a convenient place to begin, because despite the occasional obscurity of its symbolic language, it portrays the Jewish-Christian issue starkly and with peculiar intensity. The rupture between the followers of Jesus and "the Jews" is at the center of attention; it has manifestly shaped the Johannine groups' language and their perception of the world. These features of the Johannine universe have become so widely recognized in recent scholarship that there is no need for me to rehearse the evidence.[1]

Even in the synoptic gospels there are predictions that Jewish authorities, among others, will persecute Jesus' followers (for example, Mark 13:9–13 and parallels). The comparable prediction in John 16:2, however, is rather

different. On the one hand, the expected hostility is intensified—"the hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God." On the other, instead of general chastisement by "councils" (συνέδρια) and "synagogues," Jesus here tells the disciples that "they will make you ἀποσυνάγωγοι ("persons outside the synagogue")." This peculiar expression occurs also in 9:22, where we are told that "the Jews had already decreed that if anyone confessed him [sc. Jesus] as Messiah, he would become ἀποσυνάγωγος" and 12:42, where the "many" leaders (ἄρχοντες) who believed in Jesus did not confess that belief "on account of the Pharisees, lest they become ἀποσυνάγωγοι." Those fearful leaders are exemplified in this gospel by Nicodemus (3:1–21; 7:48–52; 19:39). The positive countertype is the blind beggar healed by Jesus in chap. 9; he boldly refutes "the Jews" (not otherwise identified) who interrogate him about Jesus, whereupon they "put him out" (9:34).

J. Louis Martyn's ingenious "two-level reading" of John 9 and other conflict stories in this gospel has been widely accepted in its general outline if not in all its details.[2] There is a broad consensus today that many aspects of the confrontation between Jesus and the Jewish authorities are projections into the narrative from the experience of the Johannine community. The evangelist has not only made Jesus prophesy such experiences, he or she has also adapted the stories circulating among these Christian groups into vignettes that provide *exempla* of good and bad faith. Consequently, we can use the dialogues and stories in John to learn something about the separation sometime in the last quarter of the first century between these particular Christian groups and the Jewish communities. It would help if we knew exactly where this took place, but unfortunately we have no direct evidence. Further below I shall make a tentative suggestion about the Johannine locale.

The Fourth Gospel has a great deal to say—much but by no means all of it negative—about οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, which modern translations ordinarily render as "the Jews." A fair amount has been written about this usage, for it is puzzling in several respects.[3] There are places, like John 7:1, where οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is primarily a geographical term, and there is a strong contrast, which apparently carries some symbolic weight, between "the Galileans" and "the Judaeans." It will not do, however, to treat the term as always merely geographical.[4] Phrases like "the festival of the Ἰουδαῖοι," referring to festivals in which "Greeks" from the Diaspora and Galileans (including Jesus) participate, require us to think of the term as designating something like a religious community. Anachronism may trip us up, however; it is important to remember that our concept "a religion" can hardly be expressed in Greek or Latin, for

the religious pluralism that was characteristic of the Roman empire was structured in a quite different way from our kind of pluralism. Cults traveled principally by the migration of people,[5] and they tended to be identified by their place of origin: "the Syrian goddess" and the like.[6] It may help to remind us that neither of our categories "religion" and "race" had been invented in antiquity if we translate Ἰουδαῖοι as "Judaeans," keeping in mind that "Judaeans" may refer either to people residing in Judaea or to a diaspora city's community of resident aliens whose origin was in Judaea, and who preserved their identity by means of characteristic religious customs. In either case, the term is one more likely to be used by an outsider looking in than by a member of the community speaking within the group.

These considerations do not yet solve the problem of people like the blind man in John 9 who is indubitably both a "Jew" and a resident of Judaea, but who is, along with his parents, distinguished from the Ἰουδαῖοι. Von Wahlde argues that in such passages "the Judaeans" are to be understood as "the [Jewish] authorities," and that all of the hostile references to "the Judaeans" in John may be so understood.[7] With what would this usage correspond in the real world? It is hard to imagine a situation in which someone resident in Judaea would say, "The Judaeans put me out of the synagogue." In a diaspora city, say Ephesus or Antioch, it is somewhat more plausible, since we may think of a Jew speaking to non-Jews.

Von Wahlde's survey focuses narrowly on the use of the term "the Judaeans," so that he does not help us much to understand the dialectic between those so designated in John and other groups, especially "the Galileans" and "the Samaritans." It is that dialectic, however, which determines the meaning of these terms in the structure of the Johannine narrative. Jouette Bassler has made that particularly clear in her analysis.[8] Correcting earlier work (including my own) which observed these symbolic oppositions but concentrated one-sidedly on the places so represented, Bassler points out that it is groups more than places in which the fourth evangelist is interested. "Galileans [and on one occasion Samaritans] symbolize those who receive the Word, Judeans symbolize those who reject it."[9] Bassler also points out the inconsistency in the reconstructions of Johannine community history by R. E. Brown and J. L. Martyn who "have exhaustively combed the Gospel (and letters) for allusions to groups that figured [negatively] in the community's history," but who nonetheless reject suggestions that "the Galileans" or "Samaritans" in the narrative prefigure real groups in the church's experience. Any reconstruction of the setting and history of the

Johannine Christians must offer some explanation for the special and positive place accorded both the Galileans and the Samaritans in this Gospel.

There are a few more peculiarities of John's story which we should keep in mind before we try to deduce its geographical and social setting. First, the boundaries of the story are the boundaries of Israel. While Ἰουδαῖοι is frequently used in a hostile sense, *Israel* is always used positively in this Gospel, which can describe Jesus' mission as to "gather into one the children of God who are scattered" (11:52). Now because the context makes it clear that these children include more than the ἔθνος of the Judaeans, the reader may jump to the conclusion that gentiles are included. Yet in fact there is hardly a hint of a specifically gentile mission in John. We do hear of "Greeks," but it is the "*diaspora* of the Greeks" (7:35) and "certain Greeks of the pilgrims who came to worship at the festival" (12:20). That is, it is Greek-speaking Jews who are meant.[10]

Second, the imagery and structure of the Johannine argument are, despite contrary appearances, profoundly Jewish. The author of the Gospel, the community traditions he employed, and presumably his audience, if they understood what was being said, were intimately familiar with scripture and with a variety of interpretive traditions. To be sure, the evangelist uses the Jewish traditions in a way that Jews would regard as perverse, but his transformation of them presupposes familiarity.[11]

Preliminary answers to our first two questions emerge from the clues we have recalled so far. What kind of Judaism is represented by the hostile "Judaeans" of the Fourth Gospel? We cannot identify these Judaeans with any of the various "sects" of Israel that we hear about in ancient sources. The Pharisees, for example, do have a leading role in the opposition to Jesus, but they seem a conventional group here, without distinguishing characteristics —in contrast to the situation in Matthew. This counts against an assumption that the Johannine communities took shape primarily vis-à-vis the formative rabbinic movement at Yavneh. Also against that assumption is the fact that the controversies in John do not turn centrally on practice, but on beliefs. Christian beliefs about Jesus seemed blasphemous to the Judaeans of John's gospel. This emphasis on beliefs does not mean that the traditions used in John do not retain a memory of controversy about practice. For example, the story of Jesus healing a paralytic (5:1–8) has at some point been converted into a controversy story by adding the note, "It was the sabbath that day" (5:9c–16). The controversy, however, does not lead to a pronouncement about what is the proper way to observe the sabbath, as for ex-

ample the stories of Matthew 12:1–14 do. Instead, it leads to the much more severe accusation that Jesus "made himself equal to God" (5:17) and to a discourse on Jesus' relationship to "the Father." This observation does not help us much to discover just which group of Jews may have been in mind, however, for probably most Jews would have agreed that it was blasphemy for any human being to be called "God" in the sense the Johannine Christians meant when speaking of Jesus (10:33).[12]

If there are no grounds for identifying the opposing "Judaeans" of John with "normative Judaism" or its "formative" predecessors at Yavneh, nevertheless we must recognize that, in the eyes of the Johannine community, the "Judaeans" and their ἄρχοντες were people who exercised power. The locus of their power, moreover, was in the synagogues, and it was sufficient to expel persons from membership, even to threaten their lives.

The relationship of the Johannine Christians to "Judaism," then, was a relationship with organized Jewish communities centered in synagogues. By the time the Fourth Gospel was written, these Christians were no longer connected with those communities. By the time when the three Johannine letters were written, there was no sign of any direct interaction with the synagogues, nor even of any interest in the issue of separation.[13] Yet when the Gospel was written, the rupture with the synagogue remained in the sect's memory as the all-important crisis which had shaped the groups' identity and helped to shape their christology. One might say that "the world" of the Fourth Gospel, in more than one sense, is the world of Judaism. It would be more accurate, however, to say that it is a world in which groups identified as "Judaeans," "Samaritans," and "Galileans" interact. If we assume, for reasons mentioned above, that the Gospel's world is not a purely artful creation but reflects in some measure the real context in which the Johannine groups took their distinctive shape, then it is worth asking whether we can think of a place or at least a kind of place where the Johannine fictions would correspond with reality.

External evidence does not take us very far. By late in the second century, some traditions connected the Fourth Gospel's author with Ephesus, but most recent students of John have been skeptical of these traditions. Even if we take them quite seriously, they do not answer the question of where the formative break between the Johannine communities and the "Judaean" synagogues took place. We are left with the internal evidence, that is, the peculiarities of the Johannine narrative. Is it more plausible to think of it as having been produced in an urban, diaspora environment, or somewhere in the Land of Israel? Attempts to argue for a Palestinian or other bilingual provenance on the basis of a putative Aramaic Vorlage, which were popular

a generation ago, have not been successful.[14] The language of the evangelist and of the tradition upon which he immediately depended was Greek, and there is no reason to believe that Greek had not been the language of the Johannine groups for some time. Hence the chances are strong that we should look to some *polis* for the origin of this work. Martyn takes this for granted when he speaks of the events mirrored in the Gospel's stories as taking place in "the Jewish Quarter of John's city."[15]

Would controversies among "Judaeans," "Samaritans" and "Galileans" have an immediate meaning to residents of a polis like Ephesus or Antioch? The more we learn from archaeology of the immigrant communities' organization in the Graeco-Roman cities, the more plausible such scenes appear. Especially, the existence of a substantial Samaritan Diaspora side by side with the Jews seems more and more certain. Tombstones found in Thessalonica have shown that there was a Samaritan community in that city as late as the second century C.E., and we know that there was a large Jewish community there.[16] Just recently, inscriptions from the island of Delos dated to the second century B.C.E. have revealed a community who called themselves "Israelites of Delos, who offer first fruits at sacred Har Garizim."[17] Their community center, if Philippe Bruneau is right, was less than one hundred meters from the Judaean synagogue.[18] The question whether "in this mountain" or "in Jerusalem" was the place to honor God (John 4:20) was evidently a question that could be argued on Delos as well as in Palestine, and presumably in any city where there was an organized Jewish as well as a Samaritan community.[19]

The "Galileans," however, pose more of a problem in such a setting. To be sure, it is possible that "Galileans" had already become a nickname for Christians, as it would be for the emperor Julian three centuries later and perhaps already in Epictetus (*Diss.* 4.7.6). Yet the "Galileans" in John are not simply identified with those who become Jesus' disciples. They are rather those who are receptive to the signs and word of Jesus. It is possible that the evangelist hit upon the symbolic use of the term by an ingenious blending of such an outsiders' nickname with reflection on the geographical setting of Jesus' career, but his work in that case would seem extraordinarily artificial. It is more straightforward to assume that "Galileans" as well as "Judaeans" and "Samaritans" were known entities in the formative milieu of the Johannine community. It is not impossible that an association of immigrants from Galilee might have existed and been called "the Galileans" in one or another Mediterranean city in the Roman age, but I am aware of no evidence for such. A setting somewhere in Palestine thus seems more plausible.

There is one further aspect of the Gospel's imagery that speaks in favor of a Palestinian setting. If the primary Johannine milieu had been a large, cosmopolitan city, then it is strange that we hear no whisper in the Fourth Gospel about a dominant, pagan society. There is only the Roman governor who plays his necessary role. For those who picture the "Jewish Quarter of [a Graeco-Roman] city" after the model of the mediaeval ghetto, that may not seem surprising, but in fact Jewish life in Alexandria, Antioch, Sardis, Miletus, and Aphrodisias was nothing like that.[20] Yet for the Johannine Christians, as late as when the Gospel was written, "the world" into which they were sent, but to which they belonged no more (John 17:14–18), was a world dominated by the "Judaeans."

The symbolic importance of Galilee and Samaria and the presence of what seem to be old local traditions from these areas in John some years ago prompted me to posit a Galilean provenance for the Gospel.[21] My argument was simplistic in some respects, yet there are still good reasons for considering whether the Johannine groups took shape in Galilee even though we shall probably never be certain. The recent explorations by Eric Meyers and others show that some areas of Lower Galilee in particular might well provide just the socio-cultural mix which my analysis of the symbolism in John requires: the towns were both urbanized and hellenized; the community could relate closely with Samaria, Judaea, and "the Diaspora of the Greeks"; strong Jewish communities were prepared to exercise firm discipline; and there was, of course, a quite positive sense for "the Galileans."[22]

An alternative localization is that proposed by Klaus Wengst.[23] His analysis, though more detailed than mine can be here, parallels mine in most respects. There are two weaknesses. First, he does not pay adequate attention to the symbolism of the interaction among "Galileans," "Samaritans," and "Judaeans" in the Johannine narrative which I have stressed above. However it would only strengthen the conclusions he reaches. Second, and more troublesome, he assumes that a "uniform, pharisaically defined Judaism" became normative in Palestine instantly after 70 C.E., and that it was that kind of Judaism the Johannine Christians confronted (Wengst, 42). Jacob Neusner's research argues persuasively that it was not until the Bar Kochba crisis that the thoroughgoing reinstitutionalization of life in the land of Israel began,[24] and I have argued above that the Johannine controversies do not seem essentially "halakhic."[25] Further, Wengst assumes a village rather than an urban setting, and one sufficiently uniform that exclusion from the synagogues would mean effective exclusion from social and economic life. There is nothing in the Fourth Gospel, however, which speaks directly of economic

pressures. The Johannine Christians evidently were able to sustain their independent and increasingly sectarian existence. A *polis,* though not a very cosmopolitan one, as explained above, seems more plausible than a circle of villages. Finally, Wengst has assumed too quickly, with many students of John, that the expulsion from synagogues is explained by the imposition of the *birkat ha-minim* (Wengst, 52–57). It is time to recognize that the *birkat ha-minim* has been a red herring in Johannine research. Not only do questions remain about its date and the earliest form of its wording—not to mention questions of where and when it would have been effective after it was promulgated[26]—the more fundamental issue for interpreting John 16:2 and John 9's depiction of the healed blind man's expulsion is whether these scenes have anything to do with the way the *birkat ha-minim* would have worked in practice. John does not speak of people who do not go to synagogue services because they cannot conscientiously say the prayers. It speaks of being put out of the synagogue. All we have to assume is that the ἄρχοντες of the Jewish community in John's location had simply made up their minds to get rid of these trouble-making followers of a false Messiah.

Nevertheless, Wengst's proposal for the geographical setting of the formative (perhaps not the final) stage of the Fourth Gospel is attractive. He proposes the southern part of the kingdom of Agrippa II, especially the western portion around Bathyra in Batanaea. The factors present in the larger towns of Lower Galilee would be present there as well.

Whichever of these three possibilities we prefer—Galilee, Batanaea, or some small *polis* elsewhere with a relatively large presence of Judaean, Galilean, and Samaritan immigrants—the Johannine Christians had formed their lives in a society dominated by the Jewish community. In response, they had taken on the characteristics of a *sect* in the modern sociological sense.[27] Significantly, the social formation which they developed by the time the Johannine letters were written depended upon that institution so characteristic of Christianity in its early spread through the cities of the Mediterranean basin, as of other migratory cults: the Graeco-Roman household.[28] Traumatically divorced from the synagogues, Johannine Christians made a new life for themselves within private houses, starting anew just as Jewish or Samaritan immigrants in Diaspora cities had often done when they first arrived.

PAULINE CHRISTIANITY AND THE JEWS

In contrast with the Fourth Gospel, the Pauline letters provide us with a wealth of specific information about the places and social settings where ex-

isted the Christian groups founded by Paul and his co-workers.[29] I have called the setting "urban" for convenience, but that adjective may tempt us to commit anachronisms. It is important to distinguish the village and rural setting presupposed by most of the gospel stories about Jesus from the culture of the Graeco-Roman towns, but we must not confuse the latter with our post-industrial notion of a city. I mean by the term "urban" that Pauline Christianity was at home in the Greek *poleis* of the eastern Roman provinces.

One characteristic of that setting was "pluralism," if I may be permitted yet another deliberate anachronism. There was no officially sanctioned "religion" of the empire.[30] Both the hellenistic and the Roman cultures tended to be quite tolerant of different kinds of religious practices—so long as they did not endanger public order or infringe upon common decency, and so long as they seemed to have some ancient pedigrees. Specifically, the national cult of the resident aliens was ordinarily not only tolerated but even protected—even if it was a little bizarre in Roman eyes, as was the case with Judaeans. But a new superstition without any national basis, like the Christians', was something else again, and likely to attract suspicion or disdain.[31]

This pluralist context which is so strikingly absent from the Fourth Gospel is always lurking at the edges of the Pauline letters. Take, for example, the characterization of the converts in 1 Thessalonians 1:9 as those who "turned from idols to serve the living and true God," or Paul's concern about interaction between the Christian community and pagan culture as he answers questions about eating "meat offered to idols" in 1 Corinthians 8–10, or his warning not to let charismatic phenomena get out of hand, lest outsiders think the Christians were indulging in a Dionysiac orgy (1 Cor 14:23). Paul not only recognizes, as does the fourth evangelist, that it is not possible to "go out of the world" (1 Cor 5:10), he also is concerned that "the outsiders" should think well of the Christians' behavior (e.g., 1 Thess 4:11f.).

In further contrast to the Fourth Gospel, we hear very little about "the Jews" or "the Judaeans." The only place where Paul sounds like John is in 1 Thessalonians 2:14–16, and a number of commentators have suggested that all or part of that passage is an interpolation.[32] There is otherwise remarkably little in the Pauline letters to suggest any continuing contact between the Christian groups and the organized Jewish communities in their cities. Paul himself ran into conflict with Jewish authorities from time to time (2 Cor 11:24f.), but the real and potential conflicts he treats and anticipates in the congregations he addresses are either internal or between the Christian groups and the pagan society of the city.

This state of affairs is surprising on two counts. First, the book of Acts

would have us believe that Paul always began his mission in the synagogue. That, however, is clearly a later idealization, although it cannot be entirely false in view of Paul's reported conflict with synagogue authorities, just mentioned, and his statement in 1 Corinthians 9:20. Nevertheless, his retrospective accounts of his missionary career assert that he saw himself commissioned entirely as "apostle of the gentiles" (Gal 1–2; Rom 15:15–21; cf. 11:13f.). Accordingly, we have to set aside the Acts picture of the earliest mission in order to understand the separation of Pauline Christianity from the synagogues.

The second reason why the rarity of allusions to the Jewish communities in Pauline letters is surprising, however, has to do with a central element in Paul's theology. The question of the continuing validity in the Christian groups of such *miṣvot* as circumcision and *kashrut,* and the broader issue of the relation between Israel's hopes and traditions and Christianity (between "Jew and Greek"), were vigorously debated in the Pauline circles. Paul and some of his disciples made them the touchstone for understanding the radical innovation entailed in accepting the gospel of the crucified Messiah. Furthermore, there are several indications in Paul's letters that his relationship to his own past and to "Israel according to the flesh" continued to exercise his deepest feelings (e.g., Rom 9:1–5). Nevertheless, the locus of these conflicts is altogether different from that reflected in the Fourth Gospel.

The main difference is this: the great issue in Pauline Christianity is not between "the synagogue" and the sect of the Christians, but within the Christian movement. The social context of Pauline groups is the private household provided by various patrons in each city. That form of organization does not become visible in the Johannine communities until the later phase marked by the Johannine letters. The household may have served as the location of those Christian cells, too, by the time the Fourth Gospel was written, but the Gospel provides no evidence for it. Instead, the identity of the groups is largely determined by their reaction to the synagogues and the synagogues' attitudes toward them. For Pauline Christians the case is quite different. Like the fourth evangelist, Paul wants to claim the name and hopes of Israel for the followers of Messiah Jesus.[33] Theologically it is correct to say that the scriptures and traditions of Judaism are a central and ineffaceable part of the Pauline Christians' identity. Socially, however, the Pauline groups were never a sect of Judaism. They organized their lives independently from the Jewish associations of the cities where they were founded, and apparently, so far as the evidence reveals, they had little or no interaction with the Jews.

Paul's own reflection on Israel's "disbelief'" and destiny in God's plan is

unique in early Christian literature (Rom 9–11). Even this discussion, however, does not arise from any active engagement between either the Pauline groups or the various Christian groups in Rome and the Jewish communities. This homily by Paul is the climax of the entire letter, as commentators in the past few years have belatedly recognized.[34] It belongs to Paul's reflection on the purpose and meaning of his own mission, and that, in turn, is an integral part of his protreptic discourse on the nature of the Christian life by which he introduces himself to the Roman Christians.[35] It is thus, again, the Christian community's internal dynamics and beliefs, rather than real interaction with Jews, that evokes this discussion.

At least some of Paul's disciples understood the significance of his preoccupation with unity of Jew and gentile in "the Israel of God." The encyclical letter we know as Ephesians develops the grand idea of one "household of God" uniting Jew and gentile 2:11–22. This can be regarded as a kind of cosmic projection of an idealized Pauline house church.[36] Yet in this letter there is no hint of any relation a Christian might have with the majority of the Jews meeting in the synagogue down the street. Ephesians' sublime disregard of that issue is testimony that Pauline Christians in Asia Minor had gone their own way without much contact with the strong, well-placed Jewish communities which existed in the cities of that region. The pseudonymous but more particular epistle to the Colossians points in the same direction, despite the fact that it attacks a syncretistic movement among the Christians which seems to involve a Jewish festival calendar, sabbath observance, some dietary rules (2:16) and perhaps Jewish mystical practice of some kind (2:18).[37] Even here the author does not say anything about contact between the Christians and the Jewish community of Colossae.

There is thus a certain paradox about Pauline Christianity. The apostle himself was deeply concerned about the relation between Christianity and "the Israel of God." Yet he and his associates had created an organized movement that was entirely independent of the Jewish communities in the cities of the northeastern Mediterranean basin. The scriptures and traditions from Judaism played a major part in the beliefs and practices of Pauline Christianity, yet the identity of the Pauline groups was not shaped by having once been within a Jewish context. However much Paul's own identity may have been formed by the trauma of what we call his conversion, there was no comparable trauma for the communities which he founded. Unlike the Johannine groups, the Pauline congregations were not composed of people who had become ἀποσυνάγωγοι.

MATTHEW AGAINST THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

The combination of strong Jewish traditions with rejection of Jewish institutions is as fiercely ambivalent in Matthew as in John. The terms of the argument, however, are quite different. It is not always easy to determine exactly what is at issue in Matthew, and scholarly opinions have diverged widely on the question of the Matthean community's relationship to Judaism. Only in rather recent years have scholars recognized the full import of the question of precisely what kind of Judaism confronted the Matthean Christians and in what way. The recent comment by Graham Stanton is accurate: "Scholarly interest in many aspects of first-century Judaism is considerable and significant advances are being made, especially by J. Neusner and his pupils. Few Matthean specialists have yet taken these advances sufficiently seriously."[38] What would it mean for our three questions if we did take those advances seriously? First, it would mean keeping constantly in mind the diversity of both the forms of Judaism and the forms of Christianity in the first century. That point, however, is now generally conceded, at least in principle. Second, we would have to try more rigorously than has usually been the case to avoid anachronisms when comparing first-century documents with those produced by the rabbinic schools of the second century and later. Third, we would have to acknowledge that the means by which groups of Jews and Christians established their own cohesion, identity, and boundaries were not always the same. Christian scholars tend to think of group identity in terms of theological systems or "confessions," and in spite of our best intentions, we almost inevitably ask Christian theological questions of Jewish documents.[39] As a corrective, when we look through Matthew's eyes at the Jewish groups he opposed, it will be well to begin with clues to more external aspects of the groups' life, which do not imply a systematic theology.

The opponents in Matthew are preeminently "the scribes and the Pharisees," and the Pharisees are particularly odious to the writer. There are other groups, too, which are mentioned as Jesus' opponents, but for the most part they seem to be relics of the remembered tradition and no longer to have sharp contours.[40] Matthew can, for example, simply merge the Sadducees with the Pharisees, even though he knows from Mark, if nowhere else, that they were distinct sects (Matt 3:7; 16:1, 6, 11, 12 and 22:23). The Pharisees and scribes of Matthew's acquaintance "like . . . to be called 'Rabbi' " (23:6f.), and the prohibition of this and other titles in the Christian community identifies "rabbi" with "teacher" (23:8–10). All of this fits admirably Neusner's re-

construction of the institutionalization that occurred at Yavneh, in which leaders from the sect of the Pharisees joined with members of the professional guild of scribes to create a new thing: the rabbinic academy and, eventually, the rabbinic court.[41] It has long been recognized that the issues at stake in the Matthean controversy stories have more similarity in both form and substance with parallels in rabbinic literature than do pre-Matthean forms. W. D. Davies especially, in his pioneering work on the Sermon on the Mount, argued eloquently for seeing the work of the Christian scribes in Matthew's community as "a parallel task" to that of the rabbis at Yavneh.[42] Neusner's work requires revision of Davies' at many points, but it tends to reinforce this fundamental insight.

Even if we accept the proposition that Matthew's "scribes and Pharisees" refer to the emerging rabbinate of Yavneh, however, a number of puzzles remain. Where and in what form did the Christian community encounter Yavneh's rabbis? From the typical setting of the controversy stories, we may gather that the main location was in "their [i.e., the Jews'] synagogues." There the rabbis have or want to have "the first seats" (23:6). That they also are said to like wide phylacteries and long "hems" (presumably *ṣiṣit* 23:5) does not help us to be more specific, but the whole passage implies that the rabbis enjoy considerable prestige in public (in the *agorai,* at banquets) as well as in the synagogues. The problem is the more difficult because we know so little about the extent of the Yavneh academy's power and prestige outside its immediate circle. Because the majority of Matthean scholars think, though without absolutely convincing evidence, that Matthew was written in Antioch on the Orontes, we would like very much to know whether representatives of the Yavneh school, or a diaspora equivalent similarly constituted, could have exercised power in that metropolis at so early a date. Unfortunately, the prospects are slim for answering these questions definitively.

We turn then to our second question. What connections were there between the Christian groups out of which and for which Matthew was written, and the emerging new form of rabbi-led Judaism? Scholars who have pursued this question in recent years have come to dismayingly opposite conclusions. Either Matthew's Christians were a "Jewish-Christian" sect which, however alienated from the rabbinic leadership, still belonged to the "union of synagogues" (as Hummel puts it),[43] or they had no connections at all and existed in a purely pagan environment (Van Tilborg, for example). What leads serious scholars to such incompatible conclusions is a real ambivalence in the evidence in the First Gospel itself. We must decide how the

"Jewish" elements in Matthew are to be reconciled with the "anti-Jewish" elements, a problem similar to that in the Fourth Gospel. The "redaction-historical" method that has come to prevail in such studies, despite the discouraging lack of agreement in results, does give promise of a solution along lines similar to those found in recent Johannine scholarship. A consensus is emerging that the Matthean community went through several stages of interaction with the Jewish communities close to it, and that these stages have left fossils in the strata of tradition and redaction.[44] A quick summary of the evidence will show the direction in which an answer to our question must be sought.

There is much in Matthew that sounds like intra-Jewish, sectarian debate. To begin with, there are the learned arguments from scripture which have led Von Dobschütz and others to identify the evangelist with the "scribe discipled to the Kingdom of Heaven" of 13:52. Then there is the concern with "commandments" that crops up throughout Matthew, culminating in the "Great Commission" of 28:20. The Sermon on the Mount reads like the ethic of a Jewish sect. Jesus speaks here as the authoritative teacher of Israel. The crowds are astonished at his teaching for he has authority, unlike *their* scribes (Matthew has added the pronoun to the Marcan phrase; 7:29). Here and elsewhere in this gospel we could say that Jesus is the authoritative interpreter of *halakha* (for example, in the Sabbath controversies of chapter 12). Yet only rarely does the form of these controversies approximate the forms typical of the debates transmitted in rabbinic tradition's early strata.[45] The Matthean debates are much broader and less stylized, and they question more fundamental issues of Jewish identity.

Jesus' authority in Matthew is that of the Messiah of Israel, the son of David, who has come to "save his people" (1:21). In illustration of this, the crowds repeatedly bring their sick to Jesus for healing, for, as Messiah, he "bears away" the diseases of Israel (8:17; citing Isa 53:4). Matthew inserts one of his summaries to this effect into the Temple Cleansing pericope: "They brought him blind and lame *in the Temple,* and he healed them" (21:14). In these passages and elsewhere, Jesus is well received by the "crowds" (ὄχλοι), but rejected by the formal leaders of Israel.[46] In Mark it was the leaders of Israel—there identified as the high priests and scribes and elders (Mark 11:27)—who "recognized that it was against them that he spoke the parable" of the vineyard (12:12); Matthew connects this remark with the parable of the two sons also, and changes the leaders to "the high priests and the Pharisees" (Matt 21:45).

From such texts we get the impression that the Matthean prophets and

disciples were an integral part of one or more of the Jewish communities in Matthew 's environment, challenging the leaders on their own ground. In support of such a reading, one could observe that 23:2f. seems to accord some authority to the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees, even while sharply challenging their integrity and sincerity (contrast 16:5–12!). This sounds indeed like a sectarian dispute between two schools, both of which construe the faithful life in similar terms, but which disagree about the locus of authority and the form of internal community life. So also, Matthew retains the Q-saying that the disciples will "sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (19:28). It is easy to imagine a time when Christian missionaries actually believed that they could win over the allegiance of masses of Jews from their constituted leaders. Perhaps, adopting part of W. D. Davies' suggestions in *The Background of the Sermon on the Mount,* we could even think of an active competition between representatives of the new "rabbinic" academy at Yavneh and missionaries of the Jesus movement.

Yet there are many indications in the First Gospel that the connections with organized Jewish communities cannot have been so close when the gospel was written. If the Matthean Christians once held such an optimistic view of their mission to the organized Jews in their town, they have long since become disillusioned. In a remark that betrays a distance quite as complete as that in John, they can speak of a story about the disciples' faking the Resurrection, a story "spread among the Jews until this day" (28:15). This gospel contains a rising theme, climaxing in the trial and passion narrative, of the alienation of "the whole people" from Jesus, their appointed Messiah. The theme is clearly sounded in the healing of the centurion, for "in no one in Israel" has Jesus found such faith (8:10), and he adds that "many will come from East and West and recline at dinner with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, but the sons of the Kingdom will be cast into outer darkness." The implication of this dark saying works its way through the rest of the gospel: through the judgment pronounced in 10:14f., on towns of Israel which did not receive the apostles (emphasized by Matthew's placement of the judgment pericope from Q in 11:20–24 and the saying that no one can know the Father but the Son in 11:27); through the parables of Two Sons, the Vineyard, and the Banquet. Despite the modified Marcan statement in 21:45f. (quoted above), these parables speak not merely of judgment on Israel's leaders, but of replacing Israel by another *ethnos* (21:41, 43). Looking back, we see that this replacement is foreshadowed by the curious story of the "Canaanite" woman of 15:21–28, for Jesus' disclaimer that he is sent only to

"the lost sheep of the house of Israel" is but the counterpoint to his receiving the faith of this gentile, just as the identical phrase in the sending of the twelve (10:6) is prelude for judgment on those who reject their message.[47] Thus not only is "the whole sanhedrin" responsible for Jesus' condemnation (26:59), but "all the people" confirms it by the saying which would have such terrible and unforeseeable consequences, "His blood be on us and on our children" (27:25).

Like the Johannine community, then, the Matthean was shaped to a very large extent by the attempt to define the Christian groups' relation to Jewish traditions, Jewish expectations, and the organized Jewish communities. Unlike John, but rather like Paul, Matthew sees the Jewish self-definition primarily in terms of law and commandments and, more broadly, in the question of what it means to "do the will of God." Like Paul personally, but unlike the Pauline churches, Matthew's community has had to wrestle with that issue in a way central to its own development. However, all three are alike, finally, in seeing the ultimate issue and crisis to be defined by christology. Although the christologies of John, Paul, and Matthew are different from one another in many respects, the breaking point for each is in the question of Jesus' role as Messiah vis-à-vis Israel (and the world).

The Judaism from which Matthew has separated looks much more like that taking shape in the academy of Yavneh around the same time than does the Judaism from which the Johannine Christians were expelled. The "rabbis" who represented the Yavnean (or some analogous but otherwise unknown) merging of scribal profession with Pharisaic piety were important and prestigious people in Matthew's environment. Unfortunately there are few clues that would enable us to describe that environment with any specificity. "Their synagogues" and "banquets" and *agorai* sound like an urban setting, and Matthew's Greek and the knowledge of the LXX he presupposes speak for that as well. The early mission to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" described in chap. 10, however, sounds like itinerancy among villages on Palestinian soil[48] (though some of Matthew's redactional touches make the scenery less rural; e.g., addition of *polis* in vss. 11, 14, 15). Did the Christian groups for which Matthew wrote, or some significant number of their members, originate as a sect of Galilean Jews before the war, later to join the already existing Christian household communities of Antioch? It is probably not possible to advance beyond conjecture. It is not even possible to say very much about the internal organization of the Christian groups, even though such passages as 16:18–20 and 18:15–20 imply a high degree of sectarian self-consciousness and self-discipline.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The three major witnesses from early Christian literature which we have considered show us three quite different circles of the movement, each profoundly shaped by its Jewish heritage and by the trauma of separation from Judaism experienced either by the sect as a whole or by some of its leaders. The path of separation, then, was not single or uniform. Taking these three paths as representative, it may yet be useful to ask, now, where were they leading for the future of Christianity and of Judaism? On the one hand, they were leading to a Christianity that could not allow itself to forget its origins in Judaism. That meant, preeminently, that in order to define itself Christianity would always in some way turn to the Jewish scriptures. Moreover, it inherited some of the Jewish ways of interpreting them. If Marcion's movement had endured, Christianity would have become a very different thing.

Nevertheless, by the end of the first century, and much earlier than that in the Pauline groups, the Christian movement was socially independent of the Jewish communities in the cities of the empire. That had little or nothing to do with formal measures like the *birkat ha-minim,* but much to do with the internal dynamics illustrated by the three corpora of documents we have surveyed and with the social setting of Jews and Christians in the Greek cities. There would continue to be interactions between Jews and Christians in various places; there would continue to be followers of Jesus who remained within synagogues here and there, down through at least the fifth century, despite disapproval by leaders on both sides; there would be Christians of pagan origin who continued to be attracted to the synagogue until at least the same period. These, however, were the exceptions. By and large the separation was complete by the beginning of the second century. For example in Antioch, the first bishop, Ignatius, betrays hostility toward "Judaism" but little evidence of any knowledge of the Jews. A later successor, Theophilus, could simply take for granted that the scriptures and central traditions of Israel now belonged to the Christians.[49]

To Jews, claims like those of Theophilus must have seemed so preposterous and the Christian movement so remote or so minuscule that, save for a few local exceptions, they could ignore it altogether. That accounts for the sparse evidence about Christianity in Mishnah, Talmuds, and early midrashim. Too late, the Jewish leaders would be forced to recognize how dangerous the Christian movement was. Not even the post-Constantinian changes of the fourth century seem to have alerted them, portentous as those changes seem in retrospect. In places like Antioch, Sardis, and Aphrodisias, the Jew-

ish communities remained secure and powerful, hardly troubled even as the legal and political mechanisms of Christian dominance were put into place. Yet what survives from those communities' glory is only what has lately been uncovered by the archaeologist's spade. In time, the Christians would dominate the cities and, in ways partly obvious and partly obscure, would choke off the growth of those Jewish communities. The living Judaism that survived, which we see taking shape as a "utopian" vision in the Mishnah and more practically in the two talmuds,[50] seems rather to have been a rural and small-town phenomenon. Thus the massive confrontation between "apostolic Christianity" and "normative Judaism," which even now haunts the imagination of students of Christian origins, never happened.

Notes

1. See Wayne A. Meeks, "'Am I a Jew?': Johannine Christianity and Judaism," in Jacob Neusner, ed., *Christianity, Judaism, and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 1:164–185; for more recent literature, see F. F. Segovia, "The Love and Hatred of Jesus and Johannine Sectarianism," *CBQ* 43 (1981) 258–272.
2. J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel,* 2d ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979).
3. Most recently, see U. C. von Wahlde, "The Johannine 'Jews': A Critical Survey," *NTS* 28 (1982) 33–60; cf. my "Am I a Jew?" cited above, n. l.
4. Against C. J. Cuming, "The Jews in the Fourth Gospel," *ExpT* 60 (1948–49) 290–92; M. Lowe, "Who Were the IOUDAIOI?" *NovT* 18 (1976) 101–30; see criticism by Klaus Wengst, *Bedrängte Gemeinde und verherrlichter Christus: Der historische Ort des Johannesevangeliums als Schlüssel zu seiner Interpretation,* Biblische Theologische Studien, 5 (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 40.
5. See Ramsay MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 113–15.
6. Cf. my remarks in "Am I a Jew?" 182, and note the comments by Alf Thomas Kraabel, "Judaism in Western Asia Minor under the Roman Empire" (unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Harvard: 1968), 30f. An inscription of benefactors of Smyrna, ca. 125 C.E., includes a group called οἱ πότε Ἰουδαῖοι; Kraabel argues this refers to recent immigrants from Judaea, recalling Dio Cassius 37.16.5–17.1.
7. Von Wahlde, "The Johannine 'Jews,'" passim.
8. Jouette M. Bassler, "The Galileans: A Neglected Factor in Johannine Community Research," *CBQ* 43 (1981) 243–57.
9. Bassler, "Galileans" 253.
10. These "Greeks" may of course have been Jewish proselytes or θεοσεβείς, as

most of the commentaries suggest, but that requires that John observed a rigorous distinction between ἕλληνες and ἑλληνισταί, of which we cannot be sure. Hans Windisch observes that ἕλληνες can sometimes refer to "Hellenized Orientals" but insists that it cannot refer to Greek-speaking Jews (TDNT 2:509f.). Were the latter not "Hellenized Orientals"? In any case, if the ἕλληνες in John were meant to refer to a mission to gentiles, the passages in question are a strangely muted way to do so.

11. See "Am I a Jew?" and the literature referred to there.
12. See W. A. Meeks, "The Divine Agent and His Counterfeit in Philo and the Fourth Gospel," in Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, ed., *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), 43–67.
13. Pace J. A. T. Robinson, "The Destination and Purpose of the Johannine Epistles," *NTS* 7 (1960–61) 56–65.
14. See the literature discussed in "Am I a Jew?" and note the remarks by Klaus Beyer, *Semitische Syntax im Neuen Testament* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 1:17f.
15. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel,* rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), 30.
16. B. Lifshitz and J. Schiby, "Une synagogue samaritaine à Thessalonique," *RB* 75 (1968) 368–78.
17. Philippe Bruneau, "'Les Israélites de Délos' et la Juiverie délienne," *BCH* 106 (1982) 465–504.
18. Bruneau, 488; some caution is necessary, for the Jewish inscriptions discovered so far are dated to the first century C.E. The Samaritan and Jewish evidence does not therefore overlap in time, and it is a conjecture, though a reasonable one, that both communities were continuous over a long period. See Bruneau's careful discussion, 495–99.
19. Whether the temple on Gerizim destroyed by John Hyrcanus in 128 B.C.E. (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.256; the parallel in *B.J.* 1.63 mentions Hyrcanus' defeat of the "Cuthaeans," but not the destruction of the temple) was subsequently rebuilt, ancient sources do not reveal. That Mt. Gerizim remained a cultic center for the Samaritans, however, is clear.
20. This point has now been repeatedly made; Kraabel's observations are exemplary. See, besides his dissertation cited above, A. T. Kraabel, "Paganism and Judaism: The Sardis Evidence," in André Benoit et al., eds., *Paganisme, Judaïsme, Christianisme . . . Melanges offerts à Marcel Simon* (Paris: Boccard, 1978), 13–33; "The Diaspora Synagogue: Archaeological and Epigraphic Evidence since Sukenik," *ANRW* 11.19.1 (1979), 477–510; "Social Systems of Six Diaspora Synagogues," in Joseph Gutmann, ed., *Ancient Synagogues: The State of Research,* Brown Judaic Studies, 22 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars, 1981), 79–91.

21. On local traditions in John, see the recent article by C. H. H. Scobie, "Johannine Geography," *SR* 11/1 (1982) 77–84.
22. E. M. Meyers, J. F. Strange, and Dennis E. Groh, "The Meiron Excavation Project: Archaeological Survey in Galilee and Golan, 1976," *BASOR* 230 (1978) 1–24; Eric M. Meyers and James F. Strange, *Archaeology, the Rabbis, and Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981). See also the impressive collection of literary evidence in Sean Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian; 323 B.C.E. to 135 C.E.* (Wilmington and Notre Dame: Michael Glazier and University of Notre Dame, 1980) and Freyne's observations in "Galilean Religion of the First Century C.E. against its Social Background," *PIBA* (1981) 9–114. Freyne gives very short shrift to archaeological evidence, ignores the Meyers-Strange thesis of Galilee's two cultural regions, and asserts that "the overall Galilean ethos was rural and peasant," with no significant hellenistic influence, "despite the circle of the cities" (1981, 107f.). The statement seems a priori rather than a conclusion from evidence.
23. See above, n. 4.
24. The foundations of Jacob Neusner's position were laid in his studies of traditions associated with particular named sages, especially *Eliezer ben Hyrcanus: The Tradition and the Man,* SJLA, 3,4 (Leiden: Brill, 1973), built up through the long series of historical and redactional studies of Mishnaic traditions by Neusner and his students (most of them published in the Brill SJLA series), and confirmed in his *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981).
25. Against Wengst's analysis on p. 63, which is not altogether self-consistent. Wengst cites Severino Pancaro's observations about "Law" as center of controversy (*The Law in the Fourth Gospel: The Torah and the Gospel, Moses and Jesus, Judaism and Christianity according to John,* NovTSup, 42 [Leiden: Brill, 1975]). However, Pancaro may have misled Wengst, for νόμος in John usually refers to the books of Moses or scripture in general, i.e., "Torah," not *halakha.* See further my review of Pancaro in *JBL* 96 (1977) 311–14.
26. Reuven Kimelman, "*Birkat Ha-Minim* and the Lack of Evidence for an Anti-Christian Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity," in E. P. Sanders, ed., *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition,* vol. 2: Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period (Philadelphia: Fortress, and London: SCM, 1981), 226–44.
27. I proposed this interpretation in "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," *JBL* 91 (1972) 44–72, and it is now widely accepted. See, e.g., the recent article by F. F. Segovia (above, n. 1).
28. See A. J. Malherbe, "The Inhospitality of Diotrephes," in Jacob Jervell and Wayne A. Meeks, eds., *God's Christ and His People: Studies in Honour of Nils Alstrup Dahl* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1977), 222–32; reprinted with an addendum in *Social Aspects of Early Christianity,* 2d ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 92–

112. See also W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians; The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), esp. chap. 3. For a massive collection of evidence on the use of households in the establishment of Jewish, Christian, and other Graeco-Roman cults, see L. Michael White, "Domus Ecclesiae, Domus Dei" (Ph.D. Diss. Yale University, 1982).

29. I have analyzed the sociographic information of the Pauline letters in *The First Urban Christians* (see previous note). For the evidence underlying the following summary, I refer the reader to that work, and to the large literature cited there.

30. MacMullen, *Paganism,* emphasized by also Nikolaus Walter, "Christusglaube und heidnische Religiosität in paulinischen Gemeinden," *NTS* 25 (1979) 422–42, and Gerd Theissen, *Psychologische Aspekte paulinischer Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 46.

31. Cf. the comments by E. A. Judge, "Christian Innovation and its Contemporary Observers," in Brian Croke and Alanna M. Emmett, eds., *History and Historians in Late Antiquity* (Sydney: Pergamon, 1983), 13–15, and Robert L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

32. Birger A. Pearson, "1 Thessalonians 2:13–16: A Deutero-Pauline Interpolation," *HTR* 164 (1971) 79–94; Daryl Schmidt, "1 Thess 2:13–16: Linguistic Evidence for an Interpolation," *JBL* 102 (1983) 269–79; other literature cited by both. The case for interpolation has been rebutted, most recently by Karl Paul Donfried, "Paul and Judaism; 1 Thessalonians 2:13–16 as a Test Case," *Interp* 38 (1984) 242–53, though I find his construal of the text strained. If commentators would stop to ask whether ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων in 2:14 should be translated "by the Jews" or not rather "by the Judaeans," I believe it would be obvious that vss. 13–14 fit quite well into the pattern of the letter and of Paul's thought elsewhere. Vss. 15–16, on the other hand, require the word to refer to the Jews in a global sense and import into the letter the kind of anti-Jewish polemic found in later Christian literature, especially in interpretations of the fall of Jerusalem. Donfried would make these verses an older tradition quoted by Paul; it seems to me more likely they were added later by a reader whose conception of Paul's mission was rather like that of the author of Acts. See *First Urban Christians,* 227, n. 117.

33. Much has been written about the phrase, "the Israel of God," in Gal 6:16. I think myself that Paul uses it here with deliberate ambiguity. It certainly includes the addressees, the Christian groups of Galatia, and it certainly is not limited to "Jewish Christians." Yet, in the light of Paul's fuller exposition of his thinking about Israel not too many years later in Rom 9–11, we are justified in thinking that "Israel" here includes not only the "remnant" who follow Messiah Jesus (Rom 11:5), but also the entire people, "all Israel," which would be reconciled in Paul's eschatological vision (Rom 11:26).

34. See especially Nils A. Dahl, *Studies in Paul* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977),

137–58. Also Krister Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 4.

35. Stanley K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans,* SBLDS, 57 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981).
36. On Ephesians' idealization of the church, see N. A. Dahl, "Cosmic Dimensions and Religious Knowledge (Eph 3:18)," in E. Earle Ellis and Erich Grasser, eds., *Jesus und Paulus; Festschrift für Werner Georg Kümmel zum 70. Geburtstag* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 72f.
37. See the various proposals represented in Fred O. Francis and Wayne A. Meeks, eds., *Conflict at Colossae: A Problem in the Interpretation of Early Christianity Illustrated by Selected Modern Studies,* rev. ed., SBLSBS, 4 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1975).
38. Graham Stanton, *The Interpretation of Matthew,* Issues in Religion and Theology, 3 (Philadelphia: Fortress, and London: SPCK, 1983), 17.
39. Jacob Neusner's criticism of E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism,* HR 18 (1978) 177–91, is valid at precisely this point, though I think that on the whole he treats Sanders' important contribution rather too severely.
40. Sjef van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew* (Leiden: Brill, 1972) has sorted out the evidence conveniently, although his analysis is not particularly illuminating.
41. Elaborated in many places, Jacob Neusner's reconstruction is conveniently summarized in "The Formation of Rabbinic Judaism: Yavneh (Jamnia) from AD 70 to 100," *ANRW* II 19.2 (1979) 3–42; cf. (1979) "'Pharisaic-Rabbinic' Judaism: a Clarification," *HR* 12 (1973) 250–70.
42. *The Background of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 315.
43. Reinhart Hummel, *Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Judentum im Matthäusevangelium,* BEvT, 33, 2d ed. (Munich: Kaiser, 1966).
44. For example, W. G. Thompson, *Matthew's Advice to a Divided Community,* Analecta Biblica, 44 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1971); summarized in "An Historical Perspective in the Gospel of Matthew," *JBL* 93 (1974) 243–62; Douglas R. A. Hare, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution in the Gospel According to St. Matthew,* SNTSMS, 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967); John P. Meier, *The Vision of Matthew: Christ, Church and Morality in the First Gospel,* Theological Inquiries (New York: Paulist Press, 1979).
45. A number of important points are still to be found in Morton Smith, *Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels,* JBLMS, 6 (Philadelphia: SBL, 1951); for more extended analysis of the early rabbinic forms, see Jacob Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70* (Leiden: Brill, 1971).
46. See Van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders,* 142–165.
47. Cf. Meier, *Vision of Matthew,* 104.
48. For a wide-ranging and suggestive discussion of the "ecology" of the early mis-

sion, see Gerd Theissen, "Wanderradikalismus: Literatursoziologische Aspekte der Überlieferung von Worten Jesu im Urchristentum," and "Legitimation und Lebensunterhalt: Ein Beitrag zur Soziologie urchristlicher Missionare," both reprinted in *Studien zur Soziologie des Urchristenturns,* 2d. ed. (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1983), 79–105, 201–30.

49. Ignatius, *Mag* 8:1–9:2; 10:3; *Philad* 6:1; 8:2; see also William R. Schoedel, "Ignatius and the Archives," *HTR* 71 (1978) 97–106, and Paul J. Donahue, "Jewish Christianity in the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch," *VC* 32 (1978) 81–93; Theophilus, *Ad Autol.* 2.33 et passim.
50. Jacob Neusner, *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); *Judaism in Society: The Evidence of the Yerushalmi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

"AND ROSE UP TO PLAY"

Midrash and Parenesis in 1 Corinthians 10:1–22

The logic of Paul's counsel to the Corinthian Christians about "meat offered to idols" has long troubled interpreters. A particularly difficult problem has been the relation of 1 Corinthians 10:1–22 to the rest of chapters 8–10. In these verses Paul appears to adopt an absolute prohibition of contact with pagan cults, but that accords ill with his more lenient stand in chapter 8 and in 10:23–31. Moreover, the sequence of thought in 10:1–22 has not been completely clear, either. How are the scriptural examples connected with the paraenetic warnings? How is the consoling statement about temptation in verse 13 to be squared with the general warnings that precede it and the specific warning against idolatry that follows? What is the connection between the example of the wilderness experience of Israel and the dangers of pagan society in the city of Corinth?

Several modern commentators have sought a key to the exegetical problems by supposing that Paul depended on Jewish *aggadic* traditions and that he used interpretative techniques like those found in rabbinic midrash. Johannes Weiss called verses 1–5 "a midrash,"[1] and he has been followed by many subsequent interpreters. Attempts to describe this "midrash", however, have focused mostly on the intriguing matters of the first four verses: the following Rock, the meaning of "spiritual food" and "spiritual drink," and the "Wisdom Christology" suggested to many by the fact that Philo had treated both manna and rock as symbols of the divine wisdom.[2] As a result, the scriptural texts alluded to in verses 1–4 and the Jewish targums and interpretations of those texts have been repeatedly examined, while little attention has been paid to the allusions in verses 6–10, including the one explicitly cited quotation in verse 7.[3] Consequently the unity of verses 1–13 has often been overlooked or ignored. In fact verses 1–13 are a literary unit, very carefully composed prior to its use in its present context. For convenience's sake I shall call it a homily, without wishing to beg the question of its pre-epistolary *Sitz im Leben.* By analyzing its construction, we will be able both to understand its own meaning better and to see more clearly how Paul has adapted it to his epistolary admonition.

The passage is divided neatly in half by a simple contrast between "all" of the Israelites, who enjoyed God's salvation at the Sea of Reeds and his protection in the wilderness, and "some [most] of them," who rebelled against God and were punished for it. To the five parallel clauses signalled by the repeated πάντες ("all") in verses 1–4 correspond five statements about "some of them" in verses 6–10.[4] The five positive and the five negative exempla are both punctuated and linked with the paraenetic conclusion in verses 12–13 by means of an inclusio, verses 6 and 11;

> Ταῦτα δὲ τύποι ἡμῶν ἐγενήθησαν κτλ.
> ("These things became models for us . . . ")
> Ταῦτα δὲ τυπικῶς συνέβαινεν ἐκείνοις, ἐγράφη δὲ πρὸς νουθεσίαν ἡμῶν κτλ.
> ("These things happened to them as a model, and they were written for our correction . . . ")

The summary warning in verse 12, in the generalizing third person imperative, draws together the five warnings of verses 6–10, which in the commonly accepted text alternate between first and second person plural.[5] Thus it is not only verses 1–4 that exhibit a "*strenger Aufbau,*"[6] but the whole section, verses 1–13.

There are some elements that perturb this rigorous symmetry, however. "And the rock was Christ" reads like a gloss. It is very likely Paul's addition; a possible reason for it will emerge as we look more closely at the ways he adapted the homily. The clause, "And all received baptism into Moses by means of the cloud and by means of the sea," has also seemed problematic to many readers. Because no real analogy can be found in Jewish texts, commentators all but universally agree[7] that it is a Christian construction by analogy with "baptized into Christ." If this whole sentence were eliminated, the *exempla* would be simply the cloud-pillar, the sea-crossing, the manna, and the miraculous spring, and the whole homily might be Jewish rather than Christian. However, the double five-fold structure would thereby be broken. Furthermore, while it is conceivable that another Jewish eschatological sect could believe itself to have encountered already "the end of the aeons,"[8] verse 11 expresses a view of scripture's fulfillment that is also stated by Paul in Romans 15:4. On the whole, it requires fewer assumptions to regard the homily as Christian. In that case, the variant reading χριστόν ("Christ") in verse 9 may well be original, as the Bible Societies and Nestle-Aland texts now suppose.

To be sure, there is no dearth of Jewish models for this kind of composition. Space does not permit here a rigorous form-critical analysis, which would reveal several related *Gattungen.* However, the general pattern is obvious: a list of God's gracious acts for Israel, especially connected with the Exodus and the wilderness pilgrimage, followed by a list of Israel's sins in despite of that grace, committed especially by the wilderness generation, culminating in warnings to the contemporary audience to respond to God's grace and not to follow the bad example of the wilderness Israelites. Several of the so-called "historical Psalms" exhibit this pattern, especially Psalm 78. Psalm 105 is similar, but scarcely mentions Israel's rebellions, while Psalm 136 mentions them not at all. Both Psalm 106 and the great prayer of Ezra recorded in Nehemiah 9:9–37 use the pattern in a confession of sins rather than an exhortation. A similar prayer may have been used by the Alexandrian Jews on Yom Kippur in the first century of our era, for Philo quotes just such a prayer, although he describes it as a silent prayer of the souls of those fasting and omits all reference to sins.[9] The admonitory form recalls some of the judgement oracles of the classical prophets, for example, Hosea 13:4–8; Amos 2:9–16; 3:2. The pattern is implicit in several strands of the Hexateuch narratives, and it is a leitmotif of Deuteronomy. It is particularly clear in the "Song of Moses," Deuteronomy 32, a passage which, as we shall see later, has special importance for understanding 1 Corinthians 10. It is interesting that the

fourth-century Samaritan midrash on sections of the Pentateuch, the *Memar Marqah,* devotes an entire book to the exposition of the Song of Moses, elaborating just the pattern I am describing by means of cross-references to the narratives of Exodus and Numbers.[10]

Paul was not the last Christian author to adapt this pattern for Christian exhortation. The principal theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews turns upon the superiority of the new covenant established through the new High Priest to the old covenant enacted through Moses, and the consequently greater dangers of neglecting it. This theme is announced in 2:1–4 and summed up in 12:18–29. Hebrews 3:7–4:13, an exposition of Psalm 95:7–11, particularly resembles our text in 1 Corinthians, A similar homiletic pattern may be found in Jude, as E. Earle Ellis has observed.[11] Jude 5, indeed, is a terse summary of the point made in 1 Corinthians 10:1–12.

The careful construction of our passage is evident not only in its logical structure, but also in a subtle use of the scripture that underlies that structure. That is what Weiss and others meant by calling the first portion "a midrash." The "midrashic" character of verses 6–11 is even more complex. Since the *aggadah* about the wandering well, spring, or rock has been so often explored, I shall concentrate rather on the five *exempla* of the wilderness generation's sins. The question what that generation did which was so heinous they were forbidden to enter the promised land already exercised the biblical writers, and it was frequently discussed by later interpreters. The basic text is Numbers 14:20–35; it will be helpful to have two of its sentences before us:

> None of the men who have seen my glory and my signs which I wrought in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have *put me to the proof* these ten times and have not harkened to my voice, shall see the land which I swore to give their fathers; and none of those who despised me shall see it (verses 22–23).
>
> Say to them, "As I live," says the Lord, "what you have said in my hearing I will do to you: *your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness;* and of all your number, numbered from twenty years old and upward, who *have murmured against me,* not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun (verses 28–30).

(I have italicized the elements to which Paul makes direct allusion in 1 Corinthians 10:5, 9, 10). The rabbis disagreed about precisely which incidents were to be counted among the ten "tests." Mishnah *Aboth* 5:4 compares

them with the ten wonders in Egypt, ten at the sea, and ten plagues, but does not specify the rebellions. Version "A" of *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan,* however, offers two lists. In chapter 9, the ten are "[two] at the Red Sea, one when the manna began to fall, one when the manna ceased to fall, one when the first quail were seen, one when the last quail were seen, one at Marah, one at Rephidim, one at Horeb, and one when the spies (returned)."[12] In chapter 34 there are seven derived from Deuteronomy 1:1: the calf, the clamor for water (Exod. 17:3), the Red Sea complaint (Ps. 106:7), the spies (Num. 13:3ff.), the complaint about manna (Num. 21:5), the Korah rebellion (Num. 16), the quail (Num. 11) and three from Deuteronomy 9:22 (*Taberah, Massah,* and *Kibroth-hattavah,* not further explained in the text). Since Deuteronomy 1:1 can be read as a list of eight items, a glossator has added a further explanation of the one omitted, *Di-zahab,* making it a second allusion to the golden calf. The second version of *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan* contains a further list, attributed to Rabbi Judah, and a fragment of yet another.[13]

Paul or his *Vorlage* has been content to mention five of the wilderness sins. Four of the five are allusions to texts in Numbers. "Craving evil things" probably is suggested by Numbers 11:4, καὶ ὁ ἐπίμικτος ὁ ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐπεθύμησαν ἐπιθυμίαν ("And the mixed crowd among them had a strong craving . . . "). The "mixed crowd" craved flesh, remembering the abundant fish of Egypt. The fornicators of verse 8 are those who succumbed to the wiles of the daughters of Moab, Numbers 25:1–9—though Paul has somehow reduced the twenty-four thousand of Numbers 25:9 to only twenty-three thousand. The "testing" of God that led to punishment by the serpents (verse 9) is described in Numbers 21:4–9. The verb πειράζειν ("to test, tempt"), to be sure, does not appear in this account, though it is used in the partly parallel story in Exodus 17:1–7, as well as in the summary of the wilderness sins discussed above, Numbers 14:22. The "grumbling" of verse 10 is more difficult to pin down, since the verb γογγύζειν ("to grumble") is used frequently in the wilderness traditions: Exodus 16:7; 17:3; Numbers 11:1; 14:27, 29; 16:41; 17:5. Destruction of malcontents by plague occurs after the "craving" (Numbers 11:33) and after the rebellion of Korah (16:49). The latter is most likely the occasion to which Paul refers.[14]

One of the named sins is different from the other four in that it is identified by means of a direct quotation, introduced by the formula ὥσπερ γέγραπται ("as it has been written"), and that quotation is from Exodus 32:6 rather than from Numbers. We might suppose that, since "idolatry" is the immediate issue under discussion in the letter, Paul himself has added this reference. The Golden Calf episode was the classic instance of Israel's idolatry. *Aboth de*

Rabbi Nathan preserves a saying attributed to Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob, "For this iniquity there is enough to punish Israel from now until the dead are resurrected."[15] It was sometimes passed over in silence by interpreters.[16] For this very reason, however, it is hard to imagine a list of the wilderness generation's sins without this one. Moreover, the cited text may have a more intimate connection with the structure of the whole homily than first appears. It may be that it is quoted verbatim because it provides the midrashic basic for the antithesis we found to be central to the whole passage's logic:

> "They sat down to eat and drink"—that is, they "ate the spiritual food and drank the spiritual drink"—
> "and rose up to play"—that is, to commit the five sins listed.

This possibility will seem more likely if we can find in Jewish tradition some analogous exegetical move that would permit the verb παίζειν ("to play") to imply all these sins: ἐπιθυμεῖν, εἰδωλολάτραι γίνεσθαι, πορνεύειν, ἐκπειράζειν τὸν Χριστόν, γογγύζειν "to lust," "to become idolaters," "to commit immorality," "to test Christ," "to grumble"). As a matter of fact, rabbinic midrash does take an interest in the variety of nuances of the corresponding Hebrew verb צחק. The troublesome text that produces the midrashic problem for the rabbis, however, is Genesis 21:9, "But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing [מצחק]. So she said, 'Cast out this slave woman with her son.'" Why would a child's play provoke such anger from Sarah and such punishment from Abraham? Obviously מצחק must have a more serious meaning, and several traditional explanations are handed down. One of the earliest collections is in the Tosefta, reported in the name of Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai:

> Rabbi Akiba interpreted [the verse], "And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, מצחק", [as follows:] צחק as used here means only idolatry [עבדה זרה], as it is said, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up לצחק"—thus teaching that our mother Sarah saw Ishmael building pedestals [בימוסן = Greek βήματα], catching locusts, and making burnt offerings with incense for idolatry. R. Eliezer, son of R. Jose the Galilean, said: שׂחק[17] as used here means only sexual immorality [גלוי עריות], as it is said, "This Hebrew slave came in to me . . . לצחק בי" (Genesis 39:17), teaching that our mother Sarah saw Ishmael "seizing the gardens"[18] and assaulting the women. R. Ishmael said: The word צחק means only bloodshed, as it is said, "And Abner said to Joab, 'Let the youths arise now וישׂחקו before

> us,' and they arose . . . ' (2 Samuel 2:14–17), teaching that our mother Sarah saw Ishmael taking bow and arrows and shooting them toward Isaac, as it is said, 'Like a madman who throws firebrands, [arrows, and death is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, 'I am only joking (משחק)]'" (Proverbs 26:18f.).[19]

There are several variants of this tradition elsewhere in rabbinic literature. In Genesis Rabbah 53:11, for example, all four of these explanations are repeated, but the attributions are different: Akiba, immorality; Ishmael, idolatry; Eleazar, bloodshed; Azariah in the name of R. Levi, the threat to Isaac's life derived from Proverbs 26:18. The Palestinian targums on Genesis 21:9 all explain Ishmael's sin as idolatry.[20] Some of the other interpretations appear singly in other midrashic collections.[21]

These rabbinic variations on the possible meanings of the verb שחק/צחק yield two of our five Pauline examples: idolatry and sexual immorality. There is no need to suppose, however, that Paul (or his *Vorlage* if there was one) was using only the Hebrew text. The Septuagint usually renders שחק/צחק by παίζειν or ἐμπαίζειν (occasionally by γελᾶν), so the texts employed by the rabbis in their midrash would also work for the Greek reader. At the same time, the semantic range would be altered somewhat. Thus παίζειν and ἐμπαίζειν frequently mean "to joke, mock, make fun of."[22] That would immediately suggest the fourth and fifth sins, "testing Christ [or, the Lord]" and "grumbling" (1 Cor. 10:9, 10).

It is more difficult to see how the first and more general of the sins, "craving for evil things," could be read into the verb παίζειν. Philo's interpretation of the Golden Calf gives us the needed clue. For him the calf is "the Egyptian vanity," symbol of the body.[23] Thus in his *Life of Moses* he expatiates on the "play" of the calf-worshippers:

> Then, having fashioned a golden bull, in imitation of the animal held most sacred in that country, they offered sacrifices which were no sacrifices, set up choirs which were no choirs, sang hymns which were very funeral chants, and, filled with strong drink, were overcome by the twofold intoxication of wine and folly. And so, reveling and carousing the livelong night, and unwary of the future, they lived wedded to their pleasant vices, while justice, the unseen watcher of them and the punishments they deserved, stood ready to strike.[24]

Philo consistently understands the sin of the Golden Calf to be a turning of the soul away from higher things and becoming embroiled in the material

world, with the things that concern the body rather than the mind. Paul's phrase, ἐπιθυμία κακῶν ("desire for evil things"), is an apt expression of that view, which was hardly unique to Philo among Jews of Hellenistic culture.[25]

We are thus able to follow the way in which Paul or some anonymous predecessor constructed the homily he has used in 1 Corinthians 10:1–13. The form is one that is common in both biblical and post-biblical exhortations. Each of the individual components of the Pauline composition has close parallels in contemporary, hellenistic Jewish documents, in later Christian expositions, or in later rabbinic midrash. Above all, these parallels, especially the rabbinic ones, help us to perceive the interpretative techniques that connect the logical structure of the homily with the scriptural texts that support it. The elegant symmetry of the piece is not adventitious, but is founded on a quite subtle exegesis of the one scriptural verse that is formally quoted, Exodus 32:6.

It remains for us to see whether our reconstruction of the earlier homily can help us to understand better the force of Paul's argument in the letter. The homily's moral is drawn in verses 12–13. On the one hand it warns against overconfidence in language that could well be Paul's own (cf. Rom. 11:20f.; 14:4; 1 Cor. 15:1f.)—on the other, it offers the consolation that God does not permit temptation beyond the strength of the faithful. Paul, however, begins his exposition of the homily's implications in verse 14, which states a rule that was evidently widespread in early Christianity.[26] "Idolatry" is the central issue being debated between "the weak" and "the strong" at Corinth, and the subject of this part of Paul's reply to their letter. Hence the central place of Exodus 32:6 in the homily made it particularly suitable for the occasion, even though the homily itself makes a rather different point, about resistible temptations. Then, in verses 15–22, Paul further supports the prohibition of any engagement in pagan cults by inferences he draws from the Lord's Supper. There are signs in these verses that he has not entirely finished with the "midrash" of verses 1–13.

Among the biblical texts that show a formal resemblance to the homily, Deuteronomy 32 is especially similar, as I pointed out earlier. Perhaps Paul, too, noticed this resemblance, for he twice alludes to the Song of Moses in his application to the Corinthian situation. In verse 20 he quotes Deuteronomy 32:17 directly, except for a change of tense, from the aorist to the present. Verse 22 is a clear allusion to Deuteronomy 32:21. Perhaps it is not accidental, too, that, in the Hebrew text of the Song, "Rock" (צור) is the preferred name for God, though the Septuagint abandons it for the colorless θεός (verses 15, 18, 30, 31). Since it seems likely that Paul added the gloss in

1 Corinthians 10:4, "The rock was Christ," it may well be that "putting Christ to the test" in verse 9 (if that is the original text) is a midrashic cross-reference to Deuteronomy 32:15, "He (Jeshurun = Israel) scoffed at the Rock of his salvation." To be sure, the Septuagint renders the Hebrew verb נבל (piel) by the stronger verb ἀφιστάναι, but it will not have escaped Paul's ken that the Hebrew ("to play the fool, mock") could be yet another synonym for our now familiar παίζειν. Be that as it may, he did find in Deuteronomy 32 phrases that were suggestive for his admonition to the Corinthian Christians.

The change of tense in verse 20 generalizes and actualizes the Deuteronomic text. This suggests a solution to the age-old problem whether Paul meant the subject of the verb to be "pagans" (as most manuscripts have it) or "Israel according to the flesh" (verse 18, the nearest logical subject if we read, with most modern critics, the text of B D F G, Ambrosiaster, and pseudo-Augustine). Since the quoted text refers again to the Golden Calf debacle, it is still "Israel according to the flesh" that is the bad example, as in verses 5–11. By changing from the aorist to the present tense, however, Paul wants to say, "Everyone who engages in pagan festivals"—whether Israelites in the wilderness or a Corinthian Christian eating in a pagan shrine—is "sacrificing to demons and not to God."

If I am correct in seeing the whole of verses 1–13 as a previously composed homily, and Paul's application as still controlled to some extent by scriptural texts related to that homily, then the apparent *aporiae* between it and the rest of Paul's argument in chapters 8–10 are easier to understand. However, the sequence of thought in these chapters is not so disjointed as it is sometimes said to be. Paul is responding to a question put to him in the letter from Corinth, whether one is allowed to eat "meat offered to idols" (8:1). The question has been sent to him because there is a division of opinion among the Corinthian Christians. Paul labels the two sides of the controversy "the strong" and "the weak." "The strong" adopt a weak-boundary position in their understanding of the relationship between the Christian community and the larger society. Taboos against idolatry are not needed to protect their Christian faith, because they know that the idols are not real. "The strong" are proud both of their "knowledge" (γνῶσις) and of the "power" (ἐξουσία) and "freedom" (ἐλευθερία) which this knowledge, the grace they have received as believers in Christ, gives them. "The weak," on the other hand, are accustomed to associate the eating of meat with participation in the cults of pagan gods. "Idolatry" for them is real and dangerous.

Chapter 8 sketches out the problem and Paul's dialectical answer in lively, diatribal style, using slogans and phrases from the Corinthians' internal de-

bate. Chapter 9 and 10:1–22 provide backing for Paul's answer in the form of examples drawn first from his own missionary practice (chapter 9), then from the biblical account of Israel in the wilderness (the homily we have just analyzed, 10:1–13) and, in the light of that account, from an implication of the Eucharist (10:14–22). Finally, Paul sums up with a series of rules, formulated in imperatives, introduced by his modification of a Corinthian slogan (10:23–11:1).

Paul's response is addressed to "the strong," speaking to "the weak" only obliquely. He affirms the intellectual position of "the strong": the idols are non-existent (8:4) though he qualifies this statement in 8:5f. and 10:19f. Eating and drinking are matters of ultimate indifference (8:8). Therefore a Christian may eat anything sold in the market without scruples of conscience, "for the earth and its fullness are the Lord's" (10:25f.). So, too, one may accept invitations by pagans and eat anything served by them, so long as the eating is not explicitly designated a cultic act by someone else (10:27f.). However, the enlightened believer must be prepared to sacrifice this freedom to avoid harming the "weak" brother, for whom the association of meat with pagan sacrifices is still a serious matter (8:7–13; 10:24, 28f.).

The first of the examples Paul offers fits admirably with this general rule. The apostle's "rights" (ἐξουσία), for example to be accompanied by a wife or to receive financial support, are by no means abolished by his decision not to assert them. He has not ceased to be "free" (ἐλεύθερος) by freely "enslaving" himself to others. So also "the strong" will not deny their freedom of conscience if on occasion they relinquish their rights for the sake of "the weak"; on the contrary, they will "become imitators of me [sc. Paul] as I am of Christ" (11:1). The second example does not fit the context so well, but as we have seen, that is partly because it was composed for another purpose. From the homily Paul draws out the central warning against idolatry and restates it in the form of the common rule (10:14). Then he backs this rule by connecting an interpretation of the Lord's Supper, evidently known to the Corinthians, with a further deduction from the Golden Calf story. The cup of blessing and the broken bread represent "partnership" with Christ. In Israel, too, those who ate the sacrifices were "partners in the altar," but by the same principle those who participated in the sacrifices to the Golden Calf became "partners of demons" (verses 18–20). Notice that the diatribal question that Paul inserts in verse 19 reveals that he is aware that he seems to be contradicting his agreement with the "strong" (8:4) that the idols are not real. He wants to say that the pagan gods are not what their worshippers think they are; they are "by nature not gods" (Galatians 4:8). Nevertheless, they have

some reality, as "demons," and any participation in their cults is absolutely excluded for those who belong to the one God and one Lord.

The result of the argument leaves the issue of the Christian group's boundaries—and that is the policy question behind the immediate concern about eating meat—somewhat ambiguous.[27] On the one hand, social intercourse with outsiders is not discouraged. Paul desacralizes the mere act of eating meat, in order to remove a taboo that would prevent such interaction. It is thus not "idolatry"; in this respect Paul agrees with "the strong." On the other hand, any action that would imply actual participation in another cult is strictly prohibited. Thus the exclusivity of cult, which had been a unique mark of Judaism, difficult for pagans in the Hellenistic cities to understand, would remain characteristic also of Pauline congregations. The emphasis in Paul's paraenesis, however, is not upon the maintenance of boundaries, but upon the solidarity of the Christian community: the responsibility of members for one another, especially of the strong for the weak, and the undiluted loyalty of all to the one God and one Lord.[28]

Notes

1. Johannes Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief,* KEK, 5, 9th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910), 250.
2. E.g., J. W. Doeve, *Jewish Hermeneutics in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts* (Assen: van Gorcum, 1954), 110–11; Peder Borgen, *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo,* NovT Sup, 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 21f., 91f.; E. Earle Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity,* WUNT, 18 (Tübingen: Siebeck [Mohr]; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 156, n. 36; 168; 209–12; 226, n. 11; Gustave Martelet, "Sacrements, figures et exhortation en 1 Cor. X, 1–11," *RechSR* 44 (1956): 323–59, 515–59. On the other hand, Roger le Déaut, *La nuit pascale* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963), 320f., regards the exhortation as a spontaneous composition by Paul, but based on the Passover seder.
3. An exception is the second half of Martelet's essay cited in n. 2 above.
4. Four times καθώς (καθάπερ) τινες αὐτῶν. But the first of the series, καθὼς κακεῖνοι, is no exception, for the antecedent is οἱ πλείονες in vs. 5.
5. The textual witnesses are divided, however. The first plur. has strong support in vs. 10, and γίνεσθε in vs. 7 could possibly have been an early auditory error for γίνεσθαι (pronounced the same), parallel to εἶναι in vs. 6 (a reading actually attested in the bilingual mss F G and presupposed by the Armenian, according to Tischendorf).
6. Georg Braumann, *Vorpaulinische christliche Taufverkündigung bei Paulus,* BWANT, 82 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1962), 20, n. 46.
7. Although the Bible Societies text and Nestle-Aland 26th ed. have returned

to the passive ἐβαπτίσθησαν the arguments made for the middle by Georg Heinrici, *Kritisch exegetisches Handbuch über den ersten Brief an die Korinther,* KEK, 5, 7th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1888) 269, still seem persuasive. So does his interpretation, that the middle here does not necessarily imply self-baptism, but perhaps merely emphasizes "den receptiven Sinn" (p. 271). Apparently C.K. Barrett agrees, for he translates "accepted baptism" (*A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians,* Black/Harper NTC (London: Black; New York: Harper, 1968), 219–21, 234). See also H.W. Bartsch, "Ein neuer Textus Receptus für das griechischen Neue Testament"? *NTS* 27 (1981): 585–92.

8. Cf., e.g., 1QpHab 7:1–4.
9. *Spec. leg.* 2.199.
10. *Memar marqah: The Teaching of Marqah,* ed. and trans. John Macdonald, BZAW, 84 (Berlin: Topelmann, 1963). See especially 4.4 and 4.8. Note the introduction to 4.4, which would be better translated as follows, rather than as Macdonald does: "A faithful God [Deut. 32:4]. The word pertains to kingship. There is no succession [to the kingship] forever. Yet there were rebellions against it ten times [cf. Num. 14:22, quoted and expounded in 4.8], and no one quelled these but Moses the prophet."
11. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic,* 221–36; for comparison with 1 Cor. 10:1–13, see p. 226, n. 11.
12. *ARNa* 9, trans. Judah Goldin, *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan,* Yale Judaica Series, 10 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 54. The same list appears in *bArak.1*5a, and Goldin has restored the text of *ARNa* 9 from there (p. 186, n. 7). Midrash Tehillim on Ps. 95:3 (ed. Buber, pp. 420f.; in the trans. by William G. Braude, *The Midrash on the Psalms,* Yale Judaica Series, 13 [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959], vol. 2, pp. 137f.,) has a related but not identical list: "twice at the Red Sea; twice with the quail; once with the manna; once with the golden calf; once at Paran, this one being the most provoking."
13. Chap. 38, ed. Schechter, pp. 98 f.
14. Cf. Heinrici, *Kritisch Exegetische Handbuch,* 278.
15. *ARNa* 34, trans. Goldin.
16. *MMeg.* 4:10 directs that when the two accounts of the calf (Exod. 32:1–20; 32:21–25, 35) are read in synagogue, only the first is to be translated; so it is in Targum *Neofiti* I. Josephus, *Ant.* 3.95–98, omits both (cf. Thackeray's note *ad loc.* in the Loeb edition).
17. The orthographic variants are of no significance for our purposes.
18. The phrase מכבשׁ את הגנות, in the Vienna codex here and in the generally accepted text of the parallel passage in *Gen.R.* 53:11, is difficult. The variant reading in the Erfürt codex of Tosefta and in "the best manuscript" of *Gen.R.,* which Lieberman prefers, is even more obscure: "seizing roofs" (גגות). Both seem to be sexual metaphors, however. For גן as a euphemism for a woman, see

Marcus Jastrow, *Dictionary of Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi, Midrashic Literature and Targumim* (New York: Pardes, 1950), s.v. גן. For "roofs" as an allusion to homosexual activity, see Saul Lieberman, *Tosefta ki-Fshuṭah:* A Comprehensive Commentary on the Tosefta (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1955–73), vol. 8, p. 670.

19. *TSotah* 6:6.
20. "Playing in foreign worship and bowing to the Lord," *Tg Jon. b. Uzziel;* "Doing evil works which are not proper, playing in foreign worship," fragmentary tg.; "Doing actions that are not proper, playing in foreign worship," *Neofiti* 1 (the last clause restored by the editor from vs. 8, where a longer version of vs. 9 appears, presumably by scribal error).
21. E.g., *Exod.R.1*.1, idolatry; *Pesikta Rabbati* 48.2, the threat to Isaac's life; *Sifre Deut.* §31 (ed. Finkelstein, p. 50), idolatry (attributed to R. Akiba, as in *TSotah* 6:6). *Exod.R.* 42.1 applies three of these interpretations to Exod. 32:6: idolatry, immorality, and bloodshed; also in *Midrash Tanḥuma, Ki-tiśśa* (ed. Buber, p. 113).
22. LSJ, s.vv. παίζω, ἐμπαίζω. The LXX prefers ἐμπαίζειν for צחק / שחק in this sense, e.g., Exod. 10:2, God mocking the Egyptians; cf. 1 Kdms 6:6; Num. 22:29, Balaam accuses the ass of mocking him; 1 Kdms 31:4 = 1 Chron. 10:4, Saul fears the Philistines will mock him; 2 Chron. 36:16, Israel "kept mocking the messengers of God despising his words, and *scoffing* at his prophets, till the wrath of the Lord rose against this people." Cf. Hab 1:10. Note, too, Philo's interpretation of the calf episode in *Spec. leg.* 3.125. He understands παίζειν as "to dance," but also recognizes the nuance "to mock," which he expresses by χλευάζειν: "They [the calf-makers] *mocked* at the most excellent and admirable injunctions which bade them honour the truly existing God" (trans. Colson).
23. *Ebr.* 95; *Sac.* 130; *Fug.* 90–92; cf. *Spec. leg.* 3.125 and *Mos.* 2.162.
24. *Mos.* 2.162, trans. Colson; cf. *Spec. leg.* 3.125.
25. There is another possible midrashic connection between Num. 11:4 and Exod. 32:6: the idolaters "sat to eat and drink"; the grumblers "sat and wept." Cf. *Exod.R.* 41.7, where the midrash tells us, "Wherever you find the expression 'sitting' (ישיבה), you will find that some great sin occurred there." The scriptural examples cited are, beside Exod. 32:6, Gen. 11:1; 37:25; Num. 25:1. The same tradition is found in Midrash *Tanḥuma, Ki-tiśśa* (ed. Buber, p. 113), and a related one in Sifre Deut. §43 (ed. Finkelstein, p. 92).
26. Cf. the "Apostolic Decree" Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25; and 1 John 5:21; also the rules and vice catalogues quoted in the Pauline corpus, Gal. 5:20; 1 Cor. 5:10f.; 6:9; Col. 3:5; Eph. 5:5.
27. I have dealt with this question at some length in one chapter of a book forthcoming from Yale University Press.
28. It has been twenty-six years since Professor Ernest Best undertook to initiate an obstreperous student in an American seminary into the discipline of histor-

ical exegesis. Neither he nor I would have predicted then that that might be the start both of a career and of an unquenchable curiosity about the puzzles of the Pauline letters. No one will blame him, I trust, for the turnings of the road by which that curiosity has led me, but I owe him more thanks than this small tribute can pay for the example of his own inquisitiveness and care, and for his and Sadie's friendship over the years.

JUDGMENT AND THE BROTHER

Romans 14:1–15:13

The Letter to the Romans is, by ancient epistolary standards as well as our own, very long. No wonder the latter chapters have often been neglected. In the early church, a shortened version circulated, presumably because the document seemed more universally applicable if one removed all those names and personal greetings of chapter 16. Some modern scholars have performed the same surgery. More often, commentators have treated Paul's discourse about the status of Israel in chapters 9–11 as a kind of personal excursus, interesting for insights into Paul's problems but not of much relevance to ours. The real message of Romans was found, of course, in the rich theological arguments about the law, faith, grace, and justification in the first eight chapters. Many a course on Romans has ended with chapter eight, and some commentaries might as well have done so.

In recent years the latter half of Paul's letter has begun to receive more attention. More and more readers are recognizing that the argument about Israel in chapters 9–11 is, far from being an excursus, the climax of the letter, as Stendahl boldly asserted some years ago.[1] Harry Gamble showed that chapter 16 was an integral part of the letter;[2] those greetings are important not only for our understanding of Paul's missionary and epistolary strategy and of the social form of the earliest churches, but also for understanding Paul's theology of the church. Indeed, the rediscovery of the latter half of Romans goes hand in hand with a returning awareness that Paul's theology and his practice can hardly be understood correctly when they are separated.

But what of chapters 12–15? Are they not "mere parenesis," a kind of ethical appendix tacked on after the real theological teaching of the letter is complete? It is not uncommon to find in handbooks and introductions a statement to the effect that the typical Pauline letter divides into two parts, a theological or didactic section and an ethical or parenetic section, the latter introduced by the verb παρακαλῶ ("I exhort"). In fact, it is difficult to fit any other of Paul's letters precisely into that scheme; Romans seems to be the tacit model. In this essay I will argue that, even in the case of Romans, the bipartite pattern encourages misreading. Paul's advice about behavior in the Christian groups cannot be rightly understood until we see that the great themes of chapters 1–11 here receive their denouement. And we do not grasp the function and therefore the meaning of those theological themes in their epistolary context unless we see how Paul wants them to work out in the everyday life of the Roman house communities.

In these chapters, before discussing his own travel plans in 15:14–33 (verses which themselves form an inclusion with 1:8–15), Paul has exemplified the manner of life for which he appeals at the beginning of chapter 12 by adducing a number of parenetic topics. The last and longest of these, 14:1–15:13, has to do with the relations between those who have scruples about food and the calendar and those who do not—the "weak" and the "strong." It is commonly recognized that here Paul draws upon the response he worked out in 1 Cor 8–10 to a specific problem raised by Corinthian Christians. On the face of it, this topic thus seems remote from the epistolary situation of Romans[3] and from the letter's main themes, although those who see the "weak" as "Jewish Christians" and the "strong" as "Gentile Christians" obviously recognize some connections between the two parts of the letter. Those connections are in fact much tighter than is commonly perceived, and they remain intact even if one calls into question the simple identification of the two factions just mentioned.

PAUL'S ARGUMENT IN ROM 14:1–15:13

Paul's admonition is framed by the two parallel imperatives of 14:1 and 15:7, each of which is backed by an explanation, the one simple, the other elaborate.

> Τὸν δὲ ἀσθενοῦντα τῇ πίστει προσλαμβάνεσθε
> ("But receive the one who is weak in faith." [14.1])
> Διὸ προσλαμβάνεσθε ἀλλήλους
> ("Therefore receive one another." [15.7])

The imperatives are identical, but their objects are not, and the differences reflect the movement of the intervening argument. Paul begins by assuming an unequal relationship; the "strong" are urged to "accept" those who are "weak with respect to faith"[4] (cf. 15:1). However, 14:2 already introduces a series of statements in antithetical form (ὃς μὲν . . . , ὁ δὲ + participle and the like), which introduce a pattern of reciprocity. We recall that also in 1 Cor 8–10 there is a broad alternation of viewpoints—to the confusion of some commentators; here, however, the alternation is much more compact and explicit.

The imperative of 14:1 is followed by a qualification: μὴ εἰς διακρίσεις διαλογισμῶν ("not in order to dispute about opinions"). Here we see the first pejorative use of a word on the root κριν-, which becomes a leitmotif of our text. There are limits on the strong person's obligation toward the weak, and these limits imply at the same time obligations upon the weak: not to be disputatious and judgmental. The qualification is not repeated in 15:7, for it is implicit in the way Paul has worked out the dialectic of the situation in chap. 14. That discussion is summed up in 15:1–6 with (1) a reprise of 14:1 in the explicit terms of the obligation which "we the powerful" have toward "the powerless" (v. 1); (2) a warrant for that obligation in the form of a christological statement backed by a citation of scripture (vv. 3–4); and (3) a wish or prayer that the recipients of the letter be granted unity and mutuality (τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν ἀλλήλοις κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, ἵνα ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν ἑνὶ στόματι δοξάζητε τὸν θεὸν, κτλ. vv. 5–6). The ἀλλήλους ("one another") of v. 7 thus replaces the qualification of 14:1, which has been superseded by the preceding appeals for reciprocal acceptance. Instead of a qualifying clause, the imperative of 15:7 is supported by another christological warrant, this time cast in language specific to the parenetic appeal: "Therefore welcome one another, as indeed Christ welcomed you." That warrant is similar in use and meaning to the one in v. 3, and like it is backed by scripture, this time in the form of a

catena of texts that provides a formal conclusion to the parenesis and culminates in another wish/prayer more general than that in vv. 5–6.

There is one odd thing about this catena of texts. What is common to the four quotations is that all refer to the ἔθνη ("Gentiles"), and specifically to the Gentiles "confessing" and "praising" Israel's God—joining with Israel, μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ ("with his people"), as the quotation in v. 10 from Deut 32:43 LXX puts it. That, too, is the point which Paul emphasizes in his introduction to the catena (vv. 8–9): Christ's "receiving" the Gentile Christians of Rome is identified with his having become "circumcision's servant for the sake of God's truth, to confirm the promises of the fathers, that the Gentiles would glorify God for mercy." Note the indirection of this claim: Christ accepted the *Gentile* Christians by being a διάκονος ("servant") of the *Jews,* in order to fulfill promises made in the Jewish scriptures to Jewish patriarchs about Gentiles. This extraordinarily compact statement constitutes a reprise of the themes Paul has developed in chaps. 9–11 and, more than that, in the whole letter, leading up to Paul's restatement of the goal of his own mission, which follows in the remainder of this chapter (*n.b.* 15:16, 18, 27). But what has the theme of the unity of Jews and Gentiles to do with disputes between meat-eaters and abstainers? The "weak" cannot be simply identified with "Jewish Christians" and the "strong" with "Gentile Christians," as Paul's inclusion of himself among the strong makes plain (15:1: ἡμεῖς οἱ δυνατοί).

To be sure, the way Paul characterizes the issue between strong and weak does embrace specifically Jewish categories, and those are probably the starting point in his mind. Nevertheless he avoids halakic language, for example, about *kashrut* and Sabbath. The nearest he comes is in 14:14. It is in this part of the discussion (14:13–15:6) that the parallels with 1 Cor 8–10 are closest, but the differences are important. The term εἰδωλόθυτα ("meat offered to idols") does not appear in Romans, and indeed the whole question of idolatry goes unmentioned in the present context. Rather, it is a question of food being deemed "profane," κοινός, or not. In the synoptics and Acts, the term is used as the opposite of "clean" and thus equivalent to the Hebrew *tame',* or perhaps *stam.*[5] Paul's statement, "I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is κοινόν of itself," is roughly equivalent to the synoptic Jesus-saying, "There is nothing that, entering a person from without, can κοινῶσαι ("defile") him (Mark 7:15 par.; cf. Acts 10: 15; 11:19). The question in Rom 14:14 thus seems broader than in 1 Cor 8–10; not only meat from pagan markets, but *kashrut* or at least some modified food taboos, like those in Acts 15:20, 29; 21:15, are at issue.

We may be surprised that the Paul who so indignantly opposed the "Ju-

daizers" in Galatia should here so irenically urge acceptance of people who keep food-purity rules. There are however, at least two significant differences in the circumstances of the two letters.[6] First, the Roman house-churches were not founded by Paul; he is very much conscious of being an outsider to them, who must carefully introduce "his gospel" before he visits them (note the polite and rhetorically correct disclaimer that follows immediately on our text, 15:14–33). Second, there is no evidence, despite many attempts at "mirror-reading" by commentators, of any present crisis around this issue in the Roman groups. Paul takes up the topic out of his experience, not theirs, because it is well suited to show in behavioral terms the outworking of the main themes of the letter.

Furthermore, Paul takes pains to state the issue in terms general enough that a former Jew is not necessarily on one side and a former Gentile on the other, as we have seen. Thus 14:2 speaks of those who "eat everything" and those who "eat (only) vegetables," and 14:21 suggests that "it is good neither to eat meat nor to drink wine" if such things would trip up a brother. To be sure, there is a certain degree of rhetorical hyperbole in these sentences, but it is nevertheless significant that Paul chooses expressions that are broader than either the εἰδωλόθυτα of Corinth or food purity rules. Similarly in the other kind of example that he gives in 14:5–6, Sabbath observance is perhaps the most obvious instance of someone who "judges one day in contradistinction from another," but that need not be the only case. Anyone who has read Theophrastus' or Plutarch's description of the superstitious person[7] will see that there were many reasons for a pagan to judge one day more auspicious or more dangerous than another, and some of those concerns could (and doubtless did) persist in people who were converted to Christianity. Thus, throughout the argument, Paul is describing concerns that every diaspora Jew faced, but using language general enough to include Gentiles, too.

What then are the major points that Paul wants to get across in this paradigmatic address to the scrupulous and the enlightened? We may see them more clearly if we sum up the main outline of the steps that this passage shares with the argument of 1 Cor 8–10 and then look more closely at one further way in which the two arguments differ. (1) Paul identifies himself with the position of "the strong" (a designation explicit only in Rom 15:1, but implicit in both passages; cf. also 1 Cor 1:26), which is based on *knowledge* given in the Christian proclamation (Rom 14:14 οἶδα, cf. 1 Cor 8:1–6 οἴδαμεν). (2) He insists that those who have this liberating knowledge should nevertheless forego exercising their resultant rights if such exercise would

harm the "weaker" brother who has not come to this insight (14:15, 20, 21; 15:1; cf. 1 Cor 8:7–13; 9 passim; 10:28). (3) However, the strong are not to permit their own free conscience to be "slandered" or "judged" by a (weaker) conscience (1 Cor 10:19–30; cf. Rom 14:16). (4) Thus mutual love (ἀγάπη) and upbuilding (οἰκοδομή) are the fundamental guides (e.g., 14:15, 19; 15:2; cf. 1 Cor 8:1, 10; 10:23). (5) What finally counts is God's will and rule, and "food" or "food and drink" do not affect our relationship to him (14:17; cf. 1 Cor 8:8).

Obviously this is not the place to go into details of either passage,[8] but examining one further apparent difference between them will bring us back to our main question. One of the key terms of 1 Cor 8–10, συνείδησις, "conscience," does not appear in this part of Romans, The person who is described in 1 Cor 8:7, 12 as having a "weak conscience" is in Rom 14:1 called "weak with respect to faith." However, the difference in substance is not great. There are expressions in Romans 14 that are functionally equivalent to συνείδησις: λογίζομαι (14:14) and ὁ δὲ διακρινόμενος (14:22–23). 1 have already called attention to Paul's predilection in this passage for verbs of "judging," which is illustrated again here. In anticipation of God's eventual judgment, the Christian is advised to judge his own behavior, but not to judge fellow Christians. In 1 Cor 8–10 Paul does not use quite those terms, but he does elsewhere in 1 Corinthians, especially 4:3–5 (about which I shall say more in a moment) and 11:27–34. In Romans the theme of God's impartial judgment, before which there is "no distinction" among humans, has been prominent since the beginning, and the careful listener to a reading of the letter will have noticed sharp reminders of Paul's first use of that theme. Before turning to those reminders, however, let us widen our net a bit by noticing some similar uses of this motif elsewhere in the New Testament.

GOD'S JUDGMENT RELATIVIZES OUR OWN

While the argument that God's judgment ought to preempt our own judging of each other is only hinted at in 1 Cor 8–10 (particularly in 10:29: "For why is my freedom to be *judged* by a conscience not mine?"), it is prominent elsewhere in that letter, as noted above. The elementary lesson (probably that is the meaning of the quasi-proverbial μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται ["not beyond what has been written"][9] that Paul wants the Corinthians to learn in 1 Cor 14 is "that you not be puffed up, one for the one and against the other" (4:6). Their partisanship, exemplified in choosing between Paul and Apollos, is wrong because it entails inappropriate and untimely acts of judgment. As

builders and planters and "stewards of God's mysteries" (4:1), Paul and Apollos will indeed be judged by "the Day" of God's judgment (3:10–16; 4:1–2). For that very reason, though, Paul will not submit to their premature judging. "For me to be judged by you or by a human day is a negligible matter. Indeed, I do not even judge myself—for I have nothing on my conscience, but that fact does not acquit me—the one who judges me is the Lord. Therefore do not judge before the time when the Lord comes" (4:3–5). Now obviously this expected judgment by God and the Lord does not eliminate all present acts of mutual judgment within the community, as chapters 5 and 6 make clear in different ways. The problem of the coherence of these parts of the letter, which I believe can be solved by careful attention to context and Paul's strategy, need not concern us for our present purposes, however.[10]

Colossians 2:16 may be an application of Paul's rule by a disciple; it could almost be taken as a concise summary of one pole of the advice in Rom 14:1–15:13: μὴ οὖν τις ὑμᾶς κρινέτω ἐν βρώσει καὶ ἐν πόσει ἢ ἐν μέρει ἑορτῆς ἢ νεομηνίας ἢ σαββάτων ("Therefore let no one judge you in matters of food and drink or with respect to a feast day or new moon or sabbaths"). However, there is no hint in the immediate context of Paul's eschatological warrant for such advice, though one does not have to read far to find a related statement in 3:3–4. Again, the thought is that the real life of the Christian is "hidden with Christ" and only to be revealed at his coming. Special claims by individuals or groups within the community, by which claims they "judge" or "disqualify" other Christians, are therefore to be resisted. What counts in the present is what all believers alike received in their baptism. This is true to the concerns of Paul in 1 Corinthians as well as Romans, but the emphasis is different. In 1 Corinthians Paul played down baptism as such, presumably because the elitist movements at Corinth were making a special point of it, while in Colossians his disciple emphasizes baptism but does not make much of the eschatological motif of final judgment.

Paul was not the only leader of the early Christian groups to use the expectation of God's judgment to try to restrain judgmental and divisive tendencies in those groups. He also may not have been the first, though that is harder to decide. The most striking parallel to Paul's repeated apostrophe to the "judging" brother of Rom 14:4, 10 comes from what we usually take to be the opposite end of early Christianity's theological spectrum, the letter of James: σὺ δὲ τίς εἶ ὁ κρίνων τὸν πλησίον; ("But who are you to judge your neighbor?" [4:12]). The formulation with πλησίον instead of Paul's ἀδελφός ("brother or sister") suggests that we may have a Jewish theologoumenon, alluding to Lev 19:18, and that would accord with the affinities of much of

the other material in James. However, it is hard to find any precise parallel in Jewish sources.[11] Pseudo-Phocylides 10–11 is close: "Cast the poor not down unjustly, judge not partially. If you judge evilly, God will judge you thereafter."[12]

On the other hand, gnomes of this sort were also used independently in later Christian parenesis, as the third-person formulation in Sentences of Sextus 183 shows: ὁ κρίνων ἄνθρωπον κρίνεται ὑπὸ θεοῦ ("The one who judges a person is judged by God.").[13] Perhaps independent use of such gnomes has also affected the manuscript tradition of James 4:12, producing the substitution of ἕτερον for πλήσιον in the majority text, though it is also possible that scribes thought of Rom 2:1. None of these formulations of the gnome or admonition seems likely to have been derived directly from the form most familiar to us from the synoptic tradition, "Judge not, lest you be judged" (Matt 7:1; the parallel in Luke 6:37 is somewhat different). Thus we find hints that the sentiment may have been more widespread than our extant sources demonstrate and therefore reasons to doubt that Paul was the first to express it. His use of it in Romans, however, is special, and to that use we now return.

"WHO ARE YOU TO JUDGE?"

Let us look more carefully at the first part of Paul's address to the strong and the weak, Rom 14:1–12/13, the part in which he plays variations on the theme of judgment. At the beginning and end of this section, immediately after the introductory admonition and immediately before the concluding warrant with its scripture backing, there are surprising intrusions into the parenetic style. These two intrusions, as they seem, are addresses to an imaginary interlocutor—characteristic of diatribe but unusual and calling particular attention to themselves when they appear, as here and in James 4:12, in parenesis.[14] The force of the apostrophe depends upon the abruptness of its shift to the second person singular and the sharpness of its indictment of the behavior that it portrays. "You—who are you (to be) judging someone else's houseslave?" (v. 4). Is this addressed only to the "weak," since that is who is urged not to "judge" in v. 3? Not likely, for the next sentence (v. 5) uses κρίνει on both sides of the antithesis. The two verbs in v. 3, ἐξουθενεῖν ("to despise") and κρίνειν ("to judge"), are equivalent, though the nuances are appropriate to the two sides, and they are taken up again in the second apostrophe, v. 10, which balances v. 4.

The first apostrophe introduces the dominant theological warrant for

Christians' not judging one another; more precisely, it specifies the context of the warrant already stated in v. 3: "God has received" the other precisely as the ultimate Judge, before whom each "stands or falls." Verse 4 states that context in a vivid metaphor: the judgment of a possibly miscreant slave is in the hands of his or her master, and another private person (especially, as is implicitly the case here, a fellow slave!) has no right to intrude. Moreover, in this case we are told that the master will certainly vindicate the slave, having the power to establish him (as acceptable). The warrant that follows the reiterated apostrophe in v. 10 ("For all of us will present ourselves before the tribunal of God") translates the metaphor into direct theological language. Equally important, the one who is called "someone else's slave" in v. 4 now becomes "your brother," and the single apostrophe becomes a merism, reprising the two verbs of v. 3, "despise" and "judge," in reverse order.

The rhetorical circle established by these two parallel apostrophes clearly sets the terms for the expansion of the argument that follows. Verse 13, shifting the verb into the plural and, initially, to the first person, returns us from the indicting address of the apostrophe to the mutual appeal proper to the parenetic context: "Let us then no longer judge one another; rather come to this judgment (τοῦτο κρίνατε), not to set a stumbling block or obstacle in the way of your brother." In the further argument, Paul once again employs apostrophe in 14:22; "You—the faith that you have, keep it your own before God."[15] Like the other two, this address to an imagined interlocutor also turns on the theme of judgment (vv 22–23), but here in the sense of a believer privately judging his own conduct "before God." Paul appears to be using πίστις ("belief") here in a rather special sense to refer to the whole shape of one's relation to God, which may vary according to the different insights of different groups or individuals within the church. (Most likely he has the same special sense in mind when he uses the dative to qualify "being weak" in 14:1, as the use of the verb πιστεύει ["he or she believes"] in 14:2 shows.)[16] To act in a way that is out of accord with that faith, διακρινόμενος, misses the mark and is condemned. The exact point remains less than lucid, but the general contours of Paul's argument are clear enough.

Once we recognize how central and forceful these apostrophes are in this last of Paul's admonitions in Romans, it becomes surprising that commentators, as far as I can see, have paid no attention to the striking parallel in form, substance, and function with the apostrophe that startles every reader in the middle of the first argument in the letter, 2:1: "Therefore you are without excuse, O man, everyone who judges, for by judging the other you condemn yourself." The abruptness of the change to the second person singular has led

most editors of texts and translations to put a paragraph here, and most commentators speak of a turn from the indictment of Gentile sins in 1:18–32 to "judgment on the Jews."[17] However, once we recognize that the abruptness of the apostrophe is typical of its use in diatribe, as Stowers has shown,[18] there is no longer any reason to try to explain away the normal inferential force of the διό ("therefore") in 2:1.[19] The address to "the hypocritical judge," which even has close parallels in the diatribes of pagan philosophers,[20] thus functions "to bring home, to concretize and to sharpen the indictment in 1:18–32 (especially vv 28–32) for Paul's audience."[21] Far from marking a sharp break from the previous chapter, 2:1 requires rather that we read the indictments of that chapter in an inclusive sense and connect them closely with 2:1–11 (ὦ ἄνθρωπε πᾶς ὁ κρίνων ["O every person who judges," 2:1] corresponds with πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων ["every impiety and unrighteousness of persons," 1:18]; ἀναπολόγητος ["one without a defense," 2:1] picks up ἀναπολογήτους ["ones without a defense," 1:20], to mention only the most obvious links).

We can therefore acknowledge the correctness of a minority view of 1:18–2:11 that has been argued with increasing force in recent years. The exposé of idolatry in 1:18–32, though it does obviously employ elements typical of Jewish polemic against paganism, is not directed exclusively against paganism. Verse 23 contains unmistakable allusions to Ps 106:20 and Jer 2:11, which speak of Israel's idolatry in the incident of the Golden Calf.[22] And in chapter 2, it is not until v. 17 (another apostrophe!) that the Jew is addressed directly. There is therefore good reason to take Paul's ἄνθρωπος ("person") in 1:18; 2:1, 3, 9, 16 as deliberately inclusive, of "the Jew first and also the Greek" (1: 16; 2:9, 10).[23] The "pivot" of the argument in 1:16–2:29 is, as Bassler says, 2:11: "For there is no partiality with God."[24] And the human implication of that "theological axiom" is that "there is no distinction, for all have sinned and are lacking the glory of God, yet they are justified as a gift by his grace, through the redemption that is effected in Christ Jesus" (3:22–23). Paul's summation in 3:27–31 of his first, foundational argument shows that in fact the axiom of 2:11 is pivotal of the whole argument, not only the first part. For the appeal here, again in vivid diatribal style, to the even more fundamental axiom, "God is one," recalls for the reader again the impartiality of the one God, who is obviously therefore not the God of Jews only but also of the Gentiles and "will justify circumcision on the basis of faith and uncircumcision through faith" (3:30).

It is the just, impartial judgment of the one God, therefore, that eliminates the distinction (or separation, διαστολή) between Jew and Gentile within the

community of faith and, as we learn from Rom 9–11, in God's ultimate plan, though without abolishing the special gifts and promises which the Jew received (3:1; 9:4–5; 11 passim). It was that righteousness, which can be enacted only by the God who characteristically makes something out of nothing, which Abraham obtained by his trust (chap. 4). That is the righteousness that brings liberty (in the paradoxical form of servitude to God and righteousness, 6:12–23) to all the children of God in hope, awaiting a final liberation to be shared by "the creation itself " (chap. 8). Again it is the impartial judging by God that renders human distinctions invalid: "It is God who acquits; who is it who condemns?" (8:33b–34a). Even the hard case, the apparent rejection by God of his own people Israel (since they do not on the whole accept the crucified Jesus as Messiah), is not what it appears, for there is "no injustice with God" (9:14). Of course, as creator of us all, he has absolute power to behave as arbitrarily as he wishes. Again an apostrophe to the foolish human judge makes the point: "O man, who are you to be answering back to God?" (9:20). Yet rightly understood, God is not acting inconsistently at all; the same rules apply, in God's hidden wisdom, to Jew and Gentile alike. "The end and goal of the Law" is none other than Christ (10:4).[25] The boasting that is excluded by the law of faith (3:27) includes not only the boasting of Jew over Gentile, but also of Gentile Christian over Jew (11:18). Just as, contrary to all "natural" expectation, Gentiles have been grafted into the people of God, so also, contrary to what now seems evident to Gentile Christians, "all Israel will be saved." If the Jews are now disobedient (to the righteousness of God revealed in Messiah Jesus), then they are in just the same position as the Gentiles before that revelation, and again the impartiality of God will triumph: "For God confined all to disobedience, that he might enact his mercy to all" (11:32). Precisely how God is going to bring that about, Paul does not tell us, for the way is hidden in the "unsearchable judgments (κρίματα) of God" (11:33).

CONCLUSION

Even this cursory review of some central themes of the Letter to Romans should suffice to show that Paul chose the topic of his final sample of admonition with deliberate thought and shaped his rhetorical presentation of it with great care, as an altogether fitting conclusion to his great protreptic exhibition of "his gospel." The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah reveals the impartial righteousness of the one God, "himself just and justifying" (3:26) without respect of human distinctions. The debate over the eat-

ing of meat at Corinth has helped Paul to see what he here explains to the Roman Christians: those acts of judging one another that divide the people of God run directly contrary to the universal judgment of the one God. Until the strong accept the weak and the weak the strong, the liberated and the scrupulous each other, they do not yet understand the implication of the fact that "Christ has accepted us."[26] Paul's care to put the issue in general terms, including but not limited to either the specific matter of sacrificed meat or the related question of Jewish food rules, should warn us against limiting the object of his admonitions in 14:1–15:13 to relations between former Jews and former Gentiles in the Christian groups. Still less is he laying down general rules for "tolerant coexistence" between Jews and Gentiles.[27] We may even venture further than that. We may hope to go beyond "tolerant coexistence," reaching out to the Jews not to "convert" but to work out with them implications of our shared confidence in the one God whose promises and mercy will not finally be thwarted by our prejudices. Indeed Christians will not have betrayed Paul's vision if they reach out not only to the Jews, though their election remains the trunk that supports our branches, but to "every human being" (πᾶς ἄνθρωπος), as we wait in hope, with all the creation, for the revealing of "the children of God," not all of whose names are in our rollbooks. As Paul saw so clearly, however, such a universal outreach is only pious talk unless it begins when those of us who already acknowledge that God is judge of us all therefore cease to judge one another.

Notes

1. K. Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976).
2. Harry Y. Gamble, *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans: A Study in Textual and Literary Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977).
3. I remain unconvinced by any of the attempts by modern scholars to connect Paul's admonitions to specific issues in the Roman churches of which he is supposed to have become aware, though no doubt he had enough information to convince him that what he had learned from the "idolatry" controversy in Corinth would be relevant in Rome. For a representative sample of arguments on both sides, see *The Romans Debate,* ed. K. P. Donfried (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977).
4. All translations in this essay are mine.
5. For the difficulty in taking κοινός = טמא and a possible alternative, (κοινός = סתם), see M. Smith, *Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels,* SBLMS, 6 (Philadelphia: SBL, 1951), 51–52.
6. See J. P. Sampley, "Romans and Galatians: Comparison and Contrast," in *Un-*

derstanding the Word: Essays in Honor of Bernhard W. Anderson, ed. J. T. Butler, E. W. Conrad, and E. C. Ollenburger, JSOT Sup, 37 (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1985), 315–39.

7. Theophrastus, *Char.,* 16; Plutarch, *De superst.* (*Mor.* 165E–171F).
8. See the comparison of the two passages in U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer,* vol. 3: *Rom 12–16,* EKKNT, 6.3 (Zürich: Neukirchener, 1982), 115.
9. J. Fitzgerald, "'Cracks in an Earthen Vessel': An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence," Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1984 (revised version forthcoming in SBLDS), 224–35.
10. David Kuck is presently writing a dissertation at Yale on Paul's use of judgment language, particularly in 1 Cor 1–4, and I refer to that for further discussion of these passages. In general I have been greatly aided in my understanding of this motif in Paul's letters by Mr. Kuck's preliminary work. On the question of chap. 6 in its context, see A. C. Mitchell, S.J., "1 Corinthians 6:1–11: Group Boundaries and the Courts of Corinth," Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1986.
11. See chap. 2 of the dissertation by Kuck cited in the previous note.
12. μὴ ῥίψῃς πενίην ἀδίκως, μὴ κρῖνε πρόσωπον· ἢν σὺ κακῶς δικάσῃς, σὲ θεὸς μετέπειτα δικάσσει. *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides, with Introduction and Commentary,* ed. P. W. van der Horst, Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha, 4 (Leiden: Brill, 1978).
13. *The Sentences of Sextus,* ed. and trans. R. A. Edwards and R. A. Wild, S.J. Texts and Translations: Early Christian Literature Series, 5 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981). See also *Sent.* 184.
14. See S. K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans,* SBLDS, 57 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981), 79–118.
15. The variant reading that omits the relative is strongly supported; if we adopt it, we might better punctuate the first clause as a rhetorical question (cf. H. Lietzmann, *An die Römer,* Handbuch zum NT, 8; 4th ed. [Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1933], 118), like the other two apostrophes in this chapter and very often in other literature: "Do you have faith? Keep it to yourself . . . " Cf. Jas 2:14, 18, 19.
16. Against Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer,*115.
17. E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans,* trans. and ed. by G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 52.
18. Stowers, *Diatribe,* chap. 2.
19. Käsemann, *Commentary,* 54, following numbers of others, identified by Stowers, *Diatribe,* 214 n. 21, as dependent on E. Molland, "Dio: Einige syntaktische Beobachtungen," *Serta Rudbergiana: Symbolae Osloenses, Suppl.* 4 (1931): 43–52.
20. Stowers, *Diatribe,* 103, cites Epictetus, *Diss.* 2.21.11–12, 3.2.14–16; Plutarch, *Curios.* (*Mor.*) 515D; Seneca, *Vit. beat.* 27.4.
21. Stowers, *Diatribe,* 110.

22. J. M. Bassler, *Divine Impartiality: Paul and a Theological Axiom,* SBLDS, 59 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1982), 249 n. 3 and Appendix C.
23. For a list of scholars who have argued for the unity of Paul's exposition in 1:16–2:11, see Bassler, *Impartiality,* 250 n. 8; her own argument to this purpose is pp. 123–37.
24. Bassler, *Impartiality,* 153.
25. On this most controverted verse, see P. W. Meyer, "Romans 10:4 and the 'End' of the Law" in *The Divine Helmsman. Studies on God's Control of Human Events, Presented to Lou H. Silberman,* ed. by J. L. Crenshaw and S. Sandmel (New York: KTAV, 1980), 59–78.
26. Bassler is thus quite correct when she says that Rom 14–15 show the "actual sociological ramifications" (she means, I think, "social ramifications") of Paul's understanding of divine impartiality (*Impartiality,* 162).
27. Against R. Jewett, "The Law and the Coexistence of Jews and Gentiles in Romans," *Int* 39 (1984), 354.

THE CIRCLE OF REFERENCE IN PAULINE MORALITY

For Aristotle, the context in which character is formed and the arena in which virtue is exercised is the *polis*.[1] For the sect or cult of early Christianity, obviously the *polis* does not have the same force, but what precisely took its place? The first groups that emerge clearly into what little light is cast by our surviving sources are the communities to which Paul wrote his letters. Because those letters are primarily instruments intended for moral instruction and formation, they are particularly precious sources for questions about the scope of moral perceptions and obligations in the Christian movement, at least as Paul understood them. Moreover, the research by Abraham J. Malherbe and his students over the past two decades has put into a quite new context the question, How large was the moral world of Paul, his fellow workers, and their communities?

THE SOCIOLOGY OF MORAL REFERENCE

Before turning to the sources and to the insights Malherbe has won for us, let me try to make the object of our inquiry clearer by introducing one notion from sociological theory: reference groups. This term was coined in 1942 by the social psychologist Herbert H. Hyman,[2] who used it to point out that the groups with reference to which people shape their attitudes may or may not be the same as the groups to which these people belong—the latter's being labeled usually membership groups or in-groups. Harold H. Kelley observed that reference groups may act on people normatively, by affecting their motivations, or comparatively, by affecting their perceptions and giving them a standard for self-evaluation. He also pointed out that the relationship may be negative as well as positive.[3] Tamotsu Shibutani emphasized the perceptual side of reference group function and connected it both with G. H. Mead's "taking the role of the generalized other" and with the concept of *culture* as used by anthropologists. Shibutani's definition will serve our purposes well: "any collectivity, real or imagined, envied or despised, whose perspective is assumed by the actor," where *perspective* means "an ordered view of one's world—what is taken for granted about the attributes of various objects, events, and human nature."[4] It will also be important to keep in mind Hyman's observation, in his original article, that there may be reference individuals who affect us in much the same way as reference groups—and these, too, may be "real or imagined, envied or despised."

The notion of reference groups and reference individuals will help us understand how broad were the moral horizons of Pauline Christianity. It will, of course, help us with only one dimension of Paul's moral world. In particular, it will not directly enable us to talk about the circle of moral responsibility that Paul tried to draw for his audiences. The composite of a person's reference groups does not necessarily comprise all those for whom the person may feel responsible.[5]

We can put our question in this way: In his admonitions, what reference groups and individuals did Paul assume would be effective, or did he want to make effective, for the people to whom he was writing? A related question is this: What are Paul's own overt or implied reference groups and individuals? Who were those whom Paul might imagine looking over his shoulder, or the shoulders of his audience? Who were those before whom they would like to feel proud or fear being shamed, by whom they would be praised or blamed? Who were those whose values Paul's audience had internalized? Whose picture of the way things are do they take for granted? We are limited, of course,

to what Paul takes to be the case and wishes to make the case; unfortunately, we cannot interview his addressees to see whether the reference groups and individuals Paul assumes or proposes were in fact effectual among the people who heard his letters read out in church. Pauline Christianity is thus inevitably an idealized construct. It is nevertheless neither uninteresting nor irrelevant to the interpretive concerns mentioned above.

MORALS FOR CONVERTS

1 Thessalonians

A good place to begin is with 1 Thessalonians, especially in view of the extraordinary new insights that Malherbe has introduced into our understanding of this earliest extant Christian letter.

The Movement as Reference Group

In 1 Thess 1:7–10, Paul says that the Thessalonian Christians have become a τύπος ("model") for converts in other Macedonian cities, as well as in Achaia. We could almost translate τύπος as "reference group." Paul puts this notion of the Salonicans' "modeling" for other converts into the context of his notion of "imitation," which would become a standard part of his parenetic repertory (v. 6: "You have become imitators of us and of the Lord"). The chain of imitation is thus extendable: Christ/Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy/Thessalonian Christians/other converts. In 2:14, Paul inserts another link: the Thessalonian Christians, by suffering at the hands of their peers and relations, have become imitators of the Judean churches. Paul's praise, in this philophronetic portion of the letter, serves as a reminder to the addressees of the attitudes and behavior that they exhibited in their initial response to Paul's missionary preaching and that they are expected to continue, and at the same time as a reminder of the other groups that are, as it were, witnesses to their good behavior. The apostles, the other churches that Paul has founded near and far from them, and the earlier Christian groups in Judea, as well as the idealized picture of themselves at the beginning, thus constitute the reference circle with which the Thessalonian Christians ought to compare themselves and within which the norms that Paul will state and imply in the admonitions of the letter are validated.

Reference Individuals

Paul has also introduced reference individuals—not only himself, his fellow workers, and (in 1 Thess 5:12–13) local leaders and patrons who are ex-

plicitly identified as moral guides (καὶ νουθετοῦντες ὑμᾶς "and correcting you" [5:12]), but also Christ. For these Gentile converts in Macedonia, Christ is, of course, an *imagined* individual. That is, the converts are dependent, for their picture of the features of Christ by which they are to guide their lives, upon the things that the apostles have told about him and that are reiterated in the group's ritual and song.[6] Some elements of that narration are recalled in the letter: suffering, being raised from the dead, expected return from Heaven, action "saving us from the coming wrath," and companionship with the living and dead believers in the future.

Not only Christ but also God become here, though the phrase sounds crude, reference individuals. The comprehensiveness of the relationship is implied by the words that recall the addressees' conversion: "how you turned to God from the idols to serve a God living and real" (1 Thess 1:9). Paul makes the reference function explicit in 2:12, "to the end that you behave in a way worthy of the God who calls you into his kingdom and glory," and in 4:1, "how you must behave and (so) please God" (to the last, compare Paul's declaration of his own integrity in 2:4, οὐχ ὡς ἀνθρώποις ἀρέσκοντες ἀλλὰ θεῷ ["not as pleasing humans but God"]). As in the case of Christ, the way in which God serves as model is explicitly tied to the Christian narrative and to the addressees' experience of conversion: "worthy of the God *who calls you"* (italics added). The underlying conception of God, nevertheless, is not exclusively Christian but broadly Jewish and includes many elements familiar in the larger culture (for example, "the God who tests our hearts" [2:4]).

It is obvious that Paul quite deliberately presents himself as a model to be imitated, in a way typical of philosophical parenesis,[7] and thus, in our sociological jargon, as a reference individual. Throughout the first three chapters of 1 Thessalonians, Paul's reminders and self-references serve to reinforce his own position (along with Silvanus and Timothy) in that role. His allusions to his own feelings may serve the same function. For example, in 3:5 he recalls the anxiety that made him send Timothy to find out about the recent converts: μή πως ἐπείρασεν ὑμᾶς ὁ πειράζων καὶ *εἰς κενὸν γένηται ὁ κόπος ἡμῶν* ("lest the Tester had tested you and *our labor had come to naught"* [emphasis added]). An ancient audience would doubtless hear an allusion to Paul's concern about his honor; failure of the Thessalonian Christians to endure would bring shame on Paul. Paul makes no explicit mention of honor, but he does speak of the addressees as his ἐλπὶς ἢ χαρὰ ἢ στέφανος καυχήσεως ("hope and joy and proud diadem" [2:19]) and as ἡ δόξα ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ χαρά ("our glory and joy" [2:20])—though in the specifically Jewish and Christian context of final judgment and Jesus' Parousia (2:19; cf. 3:13). The "public" before which the

apostle's shame or honor will be manifest is not a crowd of citizens in the agora of the *polis* but a transcendent community: God and Christ and their "holy ones." The motif of being blameless at the Parousia reappears at the end of the letter (5:23) in the form of a wish or prayer that at the same time serves as a reminder of the ultimate sanction of the admonitions.

The Thessalonians are not so dependent upon report and imagination for their conception of Paul as for their images of God and Christ, for they have seen and talked with the apostle. Nevertheless, Paul takes some pains in 1 Thess 2:1–12 to be sure that the image they have of him is appropriate precisely for one who sets himself as a reference individual for them. The interesting thing is that the language he uses, as Malherbe has shown, is drawn from typical self-descriptions of moralizing philosophers, as found especially in the debate between rigoristic Cynics and milder curers of souls.[8] Thus, as Paul supports his position as a reference individual for his audience, by reminding them of his credentials to give them moral advice, he does so in terms that are familiar and approved in the larger society. Those philosophers and orators—an intellectual elite—are in some important sense a reference group for Paul and, at some remove, also for the audience, or so Paul must assume. Still, he does not mention Cynics or even philosophy by name; the audience of the letter need not recognize the implied reference in order to understand Paul's point. Further, Paul has interwoven the Cynic themes with specifically Christian phrases: ἐπαρρησιασάμεθα ("we exercised bold speech" [good Cynic language]) but "in our God" (2:2); οὐδὲ ἐν δόλῳ ("not by guile" [a familiar philosopher's self-defense]), but καθὼς δεδοκιμάσαμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ("as we stood God's test to be entrusted with the gospel" [2:4]); "as Christ's apostles" (2:7); "the gospel of God" (2:8, 9); and "worthy of the God who calls you into his own kingdom and glory" (2:12). Paul's reference to moralists of the dominant culture is thus tacit, whereas specific Christian references are explicit.

Outsiders as Reference Group

We may doubt that Paul wants prestigious circles of pagan society to provide positive moral reference points for his converts, because at several places in 1 Thessalonians, "Gentile" society as a whole is explicitly a *negative* reference group. Thus, the marriage precept, handed on by Paul as (Jewish-Christian) tradition and recalled by way of example in 4:4–7, is accentuated by contrast with alleged behavior of "the Gentiles who do not know God" (4:5). Similarly, the consolation passage 4:13–5:11 uses apocalyptic commonplaces to distinguish the Christians from "the rest who do not have

hope" (4:13b; cf. 4:6,), the "sons of light" and "sons of the day" from the children of darkness and night (5:8), and so on. Such negative stigmatization of the social world from which the converts have "turned" is, of course, an essential feature of the language of conversion.[9] Malherbe has shown how much of Paul's pastoral appeal to the Thessalonian Christians interprets and builds upon the real pain of separation that every convert experiences.[10]

However, Malherbe has also pointed out, building on earlier work by A. D. Nock, that in antiquity, apart from Judaism, it was preeminently in the philosophical schools, not least in the Cynic letters and in friendly accounts of Cynic philosophers, that conversion stories were told.[11] Thus, we find Paul urging the Christians to distinguish themselves from the world around them, but doing so in terms that were at home in the "philosophical *koine"* of that world. Even the content of Paul's admonitions reveals the same ambivalence. The sex life of the "Gentiles who do not know God" is characterized by πάθος ἐπιθυμίας, "passion to possess" (1 Thess 4:5)—just the language a Stoic or Cynic (and many Middle Platonists, including the Jew Philo) would use to characterize the chief obstacle to a rational moral life. And the monogamy here set forth as required of Christians and avenged by God was, in fact, the ideal of most pagan moralists as well.[12] Further, Malherbe has shown that beginning with περὶ τῆς φιλαδελφίας, "concerning affection for brothers," in 4:9, Paul is employing "well-known *topoi"*: minding one's own business, decorum, self-sufficiency, quietism, and love.[13] Malherbe thinks that Paul may be urging the Christians not to behave like Epicureans, and that Paul's neologism in 4:9, θεοδίδακτοι ("God-taught"), may be a deliberate rejection of Epicurus's claim to be αὐτοδίδακτος ("self-taught").[14] Be that as it may, it is clear that here, as in Stoic and Academic criticism of the Epicureans, the implied reference group is a generalized public, the *polis.* The ἡσυχία ("quiet life") of the Christians is not, as opponents complained of the Epicurean withdrawal, opposed to the good order of the city. Paul makes this explicit in 4:12: ἵνα περιπατῆτε εὐσχημόνως πρὸς τοὺς ἔξω ("that you behave decently vis-à-vis the outsiders").[15]

The Other Letters

The reference individuals and groups that we have identified in Paul's parenesis in 1 Thessalonians appear throughout the later letters that are generally recognized to be undoubtedly by Paul, though the emphasis and tone vary considerably according to the issue and the situation. What turns out to be most characteristic of Paul's moral universe is precisely the multiplicity of reference. The categories we found in 1 Thessalonians provide a rough map.

The Movement as Reference Group

When Paul invokes specifically Christian teachings or practices as warrants for admonitions about behavior, the implicit reference group is the Christian movement itself—for example, 1 Cor 6:12–20. The common theme of 1 Corinthians 5–6 is the internal purity of the groups. Specific Christian traditions (παραδόσεις) can be the basis for praise or blame (1 Cor 11:2, 17, 23). Over against common "status-specific expectations" in the larger society for standards at meals provided by patrons of extended household gatherings,[16] Paul sets the concern for the ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ ("God's meeting") and, on the part of those who are better provided, the concern for "those who haven't [namely, houses? anything?]" (τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας [11:22]). Citation of the tradition about the Last Supper provides the warrant for behavior that will be "worthy" when one "discerns the body" (11:29). Paul's preference for prophecy over tongue speaking in the meetings at Corinth is explicitly for the sake of the community itself as the object of moral concern: "but one who prophesies speaks to human persons words of construction (οἰκοδομή) and exhortation and consolation" (14:3); "that the Meeting may be built up" (οἰκοδομὴν λάβῃ [14:4, cf. 14:12]. Yet in this same context, Paul also expresses concern for outsiders' opinions (14:23–25).

Next to 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians is perhaps the most interesting of Paul's letters for the historian of morality, because it gives an extended picture, however clouded at places, of conflict and attempts to deal with it within one of the Pauline congregations and between it and Paul.[17] In a hermeneutical *tour de force,* Paul wants to persuade the Corinthians to see the grief (λύπη) he has caused them by his previous visit and letter (2 Cor 2:1–4; 7:8–12) and the grief they, especially one of them, have caused him (2:5–11) within the category of "the sufferings of Christ" (1:5), the θλίψεις in which God provides comfort. The conflict between them can thus be managed and, he hopes, reconciliation made possible. The circle of responsibility thus seems at the outset strictly "sectarian": the conflict is internal to the Christian movement, and the interpretive framework is distinctively Christian, even distinctively Pauline. At one point, Paul, to be sure, extends this interpretive framework to "cosmic" dimensions: the reconciliation of their quarrel belongs to the process of God's "reconciling the world to himself" (5:18–21). But that image of cosmic reconciliation is itself peculiar to the Christians and to some other varieties of Judaism. The circle of action and the circle of reference are still limited to the Christian groups, even though the terms imply an ultimate responsibility for the world.

As in 1 Thessalonians, Paul in the other letters sometimes calls attention to churches in other places as models or witnesses. There are three places in 1 Corinthians where Paul refers to "all the churches" or the equivalent, twice in explicit warrants for recommended behavior (1:2; 11:16; 14:33b—though the first and last of these are often regarded as later interpolations). Shame and honor figure largely in Paul's exhortation about the collection in 2 Corinthians 8–9, explicitly at 9:2–4 but implicitly from the beginning of the comparison of the addressees with the Macedonian Christians (8:1–7: the Macedonians, despite their "abysmal poverty," have given abundantly; how much more the Corinthians, who "abound" in all kinds of gifts, should give). The public before whom this shame, both of the Corinthians and of the apostles, might be displayed (9:4) is the representatives of the Macedonian churches. Paul introduces instructions for the collection in 1 Cor 16:1–4 by referring to the directive he gave to the Galatian Christians.

The principle of equity (ἰσότης) that Paul enunciates (2 Cor 8:13) is, of course, a commonplace in Greco-Roman moralizing; Aristotle had already expatiated on equity in the transactions that make the κοινωνία ("sharing" or "community") of friendship or of civic life possible (for example, his discussion of friendship in *Eth. Nic.* 7.7.1–3, or of "corrective justice" in 5.4). For Paul, however, it is not the city or ordinary friendship that forms the circle of reference but the various Christian communities. The ἄλλοι ("others") in 2 Cor 8:13 is perhaps deliberately vague, encompassing both the proportional obligation between the Gentile communities and the Jerusalem center, which Paul will later enunciate in Rom 15:27, and the friendly competition between the Macedonians and the Corinthians, which Paul introduces at the beginning of this chapter and again in 9:2–4.

The Aristotelian (or common Greco-Roman) sense of proportion is altered here in one fundamental respect. For Aristotle (and evidently in common custom, even in law), ἰσότης entails that the socially superior party always receive more—honor, affection, goods, whatever—than the inferior. Here, however, a different model is introduced: the "grace [χάρις, the same word Paul uses for the gift (2 Cor 8:4, 6, 7, 19; 1 Cor 16:3)] of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for your sakes he being rich impoverished himself, that by his poverty you should be enriched" (2 Cor 8:9). Note that this description of Christ's action parallels the earlier description of the Macedonians' gift: "their abysmal poverty abounded to the wealth of their integrity" (8:2b). Paul is thus making the pattern of Christ's self-giving a model by which to revise the notion of equity within the Christian movement. At the same time, his citation of Exod 16:18 (2 Cor 8:15) undoubtedly indicates that, at least in his own mind, the

movement is continuous with Israel and that therefore the same pattern of equity is to be seen in God's dealings with (biblical) Israel.

In the Letter to Philemon, Paul forcefully and adroitly invokes the reference circle of the Christian community, both local and extended, to put Philemon into a situation of obligation.[18] By addressing the letter not to Philemon privately but to the whole κατ᾽ οἶκον ἐκκλησία ("the household meeting"), by naming Apphia and Archippus, by including greetings from five "fellow workers" (23–24), and by announcing that he will visit Philemon soon, Paul emphatically portrays the normative group in sight of which Philemon must make his decision. And, of course, Paul at the same time underscores his own role as a reference individual.

Despite the years that have intervened, Philippians reminds us in several ways of the first of Paul's extant letters, addressed to nearby Thessalonica. Even more than in the earlier letter, elements of the friendship *topos* of Greco-Roman rhetoric pervade Philippians—without a single use of φίλος ("friend") or φιλία ("friendship").[19] As usual, friendship is understood as a relationship of exchange, so language that sounds to our ears "commercial" provides many of the metaphors—contracts, giving and receiving, payments and receipts, making up the balance, profit and loss, and bankruptcy.[20] Although the aim of the parenetic portion of the letter is like that of much of 1 Corinthians, the promotion of unity and concord within the community—the "political" commonplaces of parts of that letter[21]—is here replaced almost entirely by the more intimate language of friendship. Moral commonplaces from the language of philosophy appear again: the list of urbane values in Phil 4.8 (the true, the grand, the pure, the amiable, the reputable, and any virtue and anything praiseworthy) as well as the virtue of αὐτάρκεια, "self-sufficiency," so cherished by the Cynics (4:11–13). The correspondence thus again takes place within the reference circle implied by sophisticated public and private talk, a circle within which the importance of "those of Caesar's household" (4:21) is self-evident. Yet again, as in the Thessalonian letters, this educated circle of reference is taken for granted. In the foreground is the specific set of relationships that constitute the Christian community itself.

We noticed above that when the Christian movement as a whole serves as the reference group for Paul's admonitions, he often represents it as continuous with biblical Israel.[22] Implicitly, that is the case whenever Paul appeals to Scripture or to traditional interpretations, as in 1 Cor 10:1–22 or 5:6–8, or when he contrasts his audience with "the Gentiles," as in 1 Thess 4:5; 1 Cor 5:1; 12:2; cf. Gal 4:8–9. In Galatians, when the terms of entry for Gentiles

into the community are the center of controversy, Paul sketches a narrative of God's dealings with Israel and the world (chapters 3 through 4), so one might say that the eschatological people of God—an idealized construct from the biblical account of Israel's history, transformed by eschatological hopes and by peculiarly Christian exegesis based on the *kerygma* of Christ's death and resurrection—is the central reference group to which all others are subordinated. In Romans, which evidently contains fruit of Paul's reflections on the Galatian controversy, Paul declares the history, scriptures, and destiny of Israel to be of utmost relevance to the mostly Gentile congregations of Rome, and the complex dialectic governing Paul's understanding of that relevance becomes the central theme of the letter. The letter itself, to be read in all the house-churches that make up the "fractionated" Roman church,[23] is designed to be a practical instantiation of the interconnectedness of all such Christian groups—hence Paul's account of his expanded mission area, of the planned journey to Jerusalem, and the greetings from Corinth and to the many separate groups in Rome. As in Galatians, but in much more carefully nuanced and elaborated terms, the ultimate reference group is an ideal entity, the eschatological people of God, comprising the Israel of God's choosing and promises and the Gentile Christians who have been "grafted into" it; and, potentially, πᾶς ἄνθρωπος—"every human person."

Reference Individuals

It hardly requires documentation that Christ and God are the primary imagined reference individuals, either explicitly or implicitly, in all Paul's letters. As in 1 Thessalonians, we see in the other letters a fairly narrowly drawn narrative of Christ as not only reference individual but also model. Also, as in the early letter, we find a much broader conception of God that is, however, often focused by relating specific actions: raising Christ from the dead, making and keeping promises, calling his people, and acting as judge. Consider only the way in which Paul's quotation of the liturgical poem in Phil 2:6–11 presents the mythic picture of Christ's ταπείνωσις ("humility") as model for the φρόνησις ("way of thinking") appropriate to the Christian community.[24] The narrative structure of Galatians 3–4 and Romans 1–11 not only portrays the idealized community's history, as noted above, but also offers a picture of God as active agent by which, in varied and subtle ways, the behavior and attitudes of the Christian groups ought to be measured.

Paul's self-portrayal as reference individual is as pervasive as the christological and theological references. For example, in his rebuking letter to the Galatians, his account of his own prophetic call, his interaction with the

Jerusalem apostles, and his previous relationship with the converts are an integral basis for his appeal for them to alter their behavior. Examples abound in the Corinthian letters. In 1 Corinthians 1–4, Paul, of course, presents himself as a reference individual, as he sums up in 4:6–21; note especially v. 6: "I have used these figures of myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that you could learn by us." Again, in 1 Corinthians 9, he makes himself the imitator of Christ and the model to be emulated, as he reiterates in 10:32–11:1.

As was the case in 1 Thess 5:12–13, patrons and leaders of local congregations can be singled out as reference individuals—for example, "such people" as Stephanas and his household and Fortunatus and Achaicus (1 Cor 16:15–18; comparing the language in Phil 2:30 and Philemon 7, 20). The same is probably implied of Phoebe in Rom 16:1–2 and the people greeted explicitly as heads of households where meetings are held, like Prisca and Aquila in Rom 16:3–5a and 1 Cor 16:19, and probably others among the named individuals who would be known by the recipients to have such roles.

Outsiders as Reference Group

The places where Paul explicitly refers to outsiders to back up his admonitions are few. One instance of a positive reference is 1 Cor 14:23–25, where Paul warns that ἰδιῶται καὶ ἄπιστοι ("uninitiated and unbelieving people"), if they "enter" a meeting dominated by undisciplined tongue speakers, would think them possessed of a (Dionysian?) frenzy. In 1 Corinthians 5–6, the common theme of which is the internal purity of the Christian groups, the "outsiders" (κόσμος οὗτος [5:10], οἱ ἔξω [5:13]) are excluded from the circle of reference, though eventually the ἅγιοι ("saints") will judge them (6:2). Certainly the institutions of judgment of the "unbelievers" are not to be resorted to in disputes among the Christians. Gentiles are a negative reference group in 1 Cor 12:2–3 ("when you were Gentiles") and, though with double-edged irony, in 5:1 ("not even among the Gentiles").

In contrast, if we consider also the standards of value that are implicit in Paul's style, and argumentative strategies, the map of his effective reference groups becomes more complex. Malherbe and his students have taught us that Paul often depends tacitly upon the reference circle of the rhetorically or philosophically educated elites of Greco-Roman society. To be sure, he appeals to their values often with ambivalence, and sometimes he expressly contradicts or modifies them. 1 Corinthians 1–4 is a telling example. The dissension that Chloe's people have reported to Paul is rooted in the pride of partisans for different apostles, primarily—perhaps solely—Paul and Apollos

(*n.b.* 4:6–7). The "boasting" involved in this partisanship is like that indigenous to the sophistic tradition, so Paul distances himself throughout from the pride of rhetoric, as well as from the boasts of the σόφος ("wise person") in the philosophical schools. As two of Malherbe's students have pointed out,[25] Paul's irony in 4:8 uses language familiar from the early Stoics, who coined the watchword μόνος ὁ σοφὸς βασιλεύς ("only the wise person is a king").[26] The philosophical parallels do not explain Paul's emphasis on baptism as the focal point of the divisions (1:14–17) nor all of Paul's references to πνεῦμα (spirit) in chapters 2 and 3, but they are sufficient to show that we do not need to posit a proto-Gnostic movement to explain what Paul is opposing. However rational or irrational was the wisdom the Corinthians thought they received in baptism, Paul identifies their divisive boasting with the "wisdom of the world" set opposite to the "wisdom of God" (1:18–2:5). Thus, he treats the intellectual world of Sophists and philosophers as a negative reference group—even as, in typical fashion, he demonstrates his ability to use the rhetorical devices of that world against it.

The ambivalence is even more vivid in Paul's ironic polemic of 2 Corinthians 10–13, where again he mixes his implied reference groups in a most complex way. He both tacitly appeals to, and sarcastically undermines, the values of the educated elite that apparently underlie the attack on him by the opposing apostles. As Malherbe has shown,[27] Paul employs a familiar tradition to defend the propriety of a philosopher's being ταπεινός, "humble," and to deride the hubris of his opponents. He uses, and at the same time parodies and mocks, the rhetorical strategies of boasting and invective.[28] He equally employs citations of Scripture and allusions to Jewish haggadic traditions (10:17; 11:3, 14; 13:1) and, like his opponents, appeals to indicators of status within Israel (11:22). And, of course, he appeals to peculiarly Christian beliefs and traditions, as well as to his own apostolic autobiography, which itself conforms both to the philosophical use of catalogs of circumstances to prove virtue and, ironically, to the inversion of values in the cross-and-resurrection *kerygma* (especially 11:23–33 and the whole passage on "visions and revelations" [12:1–10]).[29]

Not only are multiple reference groups and individuals implicit in the exhortations of Paul's letters, but in any given instance, several different bases of reference may be operative, sometimes in tension with one another. One of the more complex examples is the discussion of εἰδωλόθυτα ("idol-sacrifices") in 1 Corinthians 8–10. Paul requires the audience of his admonitions to keep in mind a remarkable number of implicit reference groups: the

"knowing" Christians and their social peers among the pagans of Corinth (whose invitations to dinner presumably have precipitated the controversy [10:27]); "the weak," whose consciences these more sophisticated Christians ought to respect; the Israel of Scripture and tradition (especially 10:1–22, but also v. 26); Paul himself as personal example (chapter 9); but above all, the whole Christian community, with its special traditions (for example, 8:6), made up of "brothers for whom Christ died" (8:11). If we had to rank the reference groups to which Paul implicitly appeals, this last would be at the top, yet he does not himself simplify the process of moral formation by stating a hierarchy. It is in the give and take of dialogue that the community itself must work out what is σύμφερον ("advantageous") what οἰκοδομεῖ ("constructs" [10:23]).[30] Most expansive of all are the circles of reference depicted or implied in the Letter to the Romans. All humankind (1:18–3:20; 5:12–21), even all the creation (8:19–22), are brought within the scope of Paul's "gospel." The political order is affirmed in quite traditional terms (13:1–7). The history, scripture, and destiny of Israel are of fundamental importance. All the Christian groups founded by Paul among the Gentiles, the multiple household groups to which the letter is to be read, the church at Jerusalem to which Paul is taking the collection—all are included in the context within which Paul's protreptic discourse is to be heard.[31]

The dominant reference groups and individuals in Paul's admonitions are peculiar to the movement, and outsiders are often a negative reference group, yet the Pauline stance is not simply counter-cultural. The Torah of God, which once worked to keep God's people "locked in" (Gal 3:23) and firmly maintain the "separation" (διαστολή) between Jew and Gentile, has now become in the Pauline groups a witness to the liberation that faith brings and to the unity of Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female in the New Human, Christ. Although God has chosen things foolish and weak in the world to put to shame the σοφοί ("wise") and the δυνατοί ("powerful"), that does not keep Paul from making use of the traditions and strategies of the σοφοί in his moral arguments, nor from depending upon the (relatively) δυνατοί as patrons of his household meetings. However dualistically Paul can sometimes portray "this world," it remains the creation of God that "groans in travail" for its liberation, for its reconciliation, in which the apostle's efforts and the inner life of the Christian groups are implicated.

Notes

1. On the social context of Aristotle's ethical thought, see Jonathan Lear, *Aristotle: the Desire to Understand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), chap.

5. Werner Jaeger's exposition remains the definitive treatment of the *polis* as the context of all Greek ethical thought and of the public character of virtue and conscience, not only in Aristotle but also in the whole classic tradition (*Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948]). For example, "The *polis* is the social framework of the whole history of Greek culture" (1:78). For a superficial survey of some of the problems imposed on this *polis*-ideal in the empires of the Diadochoi and Rome, see Wayne A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 19–39. Eckhard Plümacher, *Identitätsverlust und Identitätsgewinn: Studien zum Verhältnis von kaiserzeitlicher Stadt und frühem Christentum,* BTS, 11 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1987), has sketched a picture of anomie caused by the political changes among the sub-decurional classes and, later, even the urban elites. Some of these people, he argues, found in Christianity an alternative "city" either practically or symbolically.
2. Herbert H. Hyman, "The Psychology of Status," *Archives of Psychology* 269 (1942) 5–38, 80–86; abridged in Herbert H. Hyman and Eleanor Singer (eds.), *Readings in Reference Group Theory and Research* (New York: Free Press; London: Collier-Macmillan, 1968), 147–65. The latter is a collection of the articles that figured most importantly in the development of reference group theory.
3. Harold H. Kelley, "Two Functions of Reference Groups," in Hyman and Singer, *Readings,* 77–83.
4. Tamotsu Shibutani, "Reference Groups as Perspectives," in Hyman and Singer, *Readings,* 103–13; quotations from 105. Further on, Shibutani restates his definition more concisely: "A reference group, then, is that group whose outlook is used by the actor as the frame of reference of his perceptual field" (107).
5. Prof. Susan Garrett helped me to understand this point; I am grateful for her careful reading of this chapter and her helpful suggestions at several points.
6. Norman R. Petersen, *Rediscovering Paul: Philemon and the Sociology of Paul's Narrative World* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 200–286; Martin Hengel, "Hymns and Christology," *Between Jesus and Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 78–96.
7. Abraham J. Malherbe, "1 Thessalonians as a Paraenetic Letter," paper presented to the SBL Seminar on Paul in Los Angeles in 1972; Malherbe, "Exhortation in First Thessalonians," *NovT* 25 (1983) 238–56; Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987). For a detailed treatment of the use of personal examples, see the work by Malherbe's student Benjamin Fiore, S.J., *The Function of Personal Example in the Socratic and Pastoral Epistles,* AnBib, 105 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1986).
8. Abraham J. Malherbe, "'Gentle as a Nurse': The Cynic Background to 1 Thess 2," *NovT* 12 (1970) 203–17.
9. Compare the classic discussion of "nihilation" by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowl-*

edge (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Anchor, 1967), 156–62; and, for a survey of recent studies of conversion and application to conversion in Paul, Beverly Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light: Aspects of Conversion in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), and Alan Segal, *Paul the Convert* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

10. See esp. Malherbe, "Exhortation in First Thessalonians" and *Paul and the Thessalonians.*
11. Abraham J. Malherbe, "'Not in a Corner': Early Christian Apologetic in Acts 26:26," *SecCent* 5 (1985–86) 193–209; A. D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1952).
12. See O. Larry Yarbrough, *"Not Like the Gentiles": Marriage Rules in the Letters of Paul,* SBLDS, 80 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985).
13. See Malherbe, "Exhortation in First Thessalonians," 252, and the references given there.
14. Malherbe, "Exhortation in First Thessalonians," 253.
15. See W. C. van Unnik, "Die Rücksicht auf die Reaktion der Nicht-Christen als Motiv in der altchristlichen Paränese," in his *Sparsa Collecta,* NovTSup, 30 (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 2.307–22.
16. The phrase and, in part, the interpretation are from Gerd Theissen, "Die Starken und Schwachen in Korinth: Soziologische Analyse eines theologischen Streites," *EvT* 35 (1975) 155–72.
17. I take the first eight chapters (at least) of 2 Corinthians to be, in spite of all the oft-noted aporias, one letter, the theme of which is enunciated in the opening blessing: παράκλησις ἐν θλίψει ("comfort in affliction").
18. See, besides the commentaries, Petersen, *Rediscovering Paul.*
19. Ken Berry is currently completing a dissertation on this topic at Yale University, under Professor Malherbe's direction. See also L. Michael White's essay, "Modality between Two Worlds: A Paradigm of Friendship in Philippians." *Greeks, Romans, and Christians.* Ed. David L. Balch, Everett Ferguson, Wayne A. Meeks. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990, 207–15.
20. See Peter Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians,* WUNT, 23, 2d ser. (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1987), 160–62.
21. Robert M. Grant, "Political Ideas in Paul," paper delivered at Haverford College, 4 March 1983; L. L. Welborn, "On the Discord in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 1–4 and Ancient Politics," *JBL* 106 (1987) 85–111.
22. Compare the comment above on 2 Cor 8:15.
23. Peter Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten: Untersuchungen zur Sozialgeschichte,* WUNT 18, 2d ser. (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1987), pt. 5.
24. The extended debate over whether Christ appears here as *Vorbild* or *Urbild* need not concern us; I have tried to address one aspect of that question in a

chapter of a forthcoming book (*The Origins of Christian Morality* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993]).

25. See Stanley K. Stowers, "A 'Debate' over Freedom: I Corinthians 6:12–20," *Christian Teaching: Studies in Honor of Lemoine G. Lewis,* ed. Everett Ferguson (Abilene, Tex.: Abilene Christian University, 1981), 59–71; and John T. Fitzgerald, *"Cracks in an Earthen Vessel": An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence,* SBLDS 99 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988)—another dissertation directed by Professor Malberbe—135–44.
26. Attributed to Chrysippus in *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* 3:81,31 (frag. 332); 158,35 (frag. 617).
27. Abraham J. Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus, and Paul at War," *HTR* 76 (1983) 143–73.
28. Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth,* chap. 9; and E. A. Judge, "Paul's Boasting in Relation to Contemporary Professional Practice," *AusBR* 16 (1968) 37–50.
29. For the way Paul transforms the philosophical use of catalogs of circumstances within this self-reference, see Fitzgerald, "Cracks in an Earthen Vessel."
30. See Wayne A. Meeks, "The Polyphonic Ethics of the Apostle Paul," *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (1988), 17–29, reprinted below, pp. 196–209.
31. See above, p. 176.

II

RESPONDING AND REVISIONING

A HERMENEUTICS OF SOCIAL EMBODIMENT

When Krister Stendahl's article "Biblical Theology" appeared in the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* in 1962, it caused no little consternation in some circles. He insisted that the primary intellectual task of the biblical scholar was to make a clear distinction between what the text *meant* in its original setting and what it *means*. That ran directly counter to the practical aims of the dominant interpretive schools of the day, which wanted, as Karl Barth had once said, to dissolve "the differences between then and now."[1] Today the distinction for which Stendahl argued so lucidly is taken for granted in most biblical scholarship, and the question is whether there can be any significant connection between "then" and "now."[2] New Testament studies threatens to divide into two contrary ways of reading texts. One is a rigorously historical quest, in which all the early

Christian documents alike, canonical and extra-canonical, are treated as sources for reconstructing the diverse and curious varieties of the early Christian movement. The other way of reading cares not at all where the texts came from or what they originally meant; by purely literary analysis it wishes to help text and reader to confront one another continually anew.

The interesting thing is that Stendahl himself has worked both sides of the street he described. He has made the connection, however, not by means of some overarching theoretical model, but practically, by his actions and leadership as a theological educator and churchman. There may be a lesson here, which I wish to uncover by turning to the rather different work of another ecumenical churchman, historian, and theologian, George Lindbeck, in his recent book, *The Nature of Doctrine*.[3]

Lindbeck has proposed a way of thinking about doctrine which puts the dichotomy between historical exegesis and the church's use of scripture into a new perspective. Initially his proposal sharpens the dilemma of those who want to connect the two, but it may start us on a way out of that dilemma. The subtitle "Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age" signifies a rapprochement that has been out of favor since the turn of the century. Theologians, Lindbeck argues, must overcome their allergy to the category "religion," contracted by reaction to the simplistic historicism of Protestant Liberalism and by fear of the relativism of the History of Religions School. They must acknowledge the models of religion that are implicit in their construals of doctrine.

Lindbeck identifies two models that have been dominant in the history of doctrine. The oldest is the "cognitivist" model: what is most important about religion is ideas, and "church doctrines function as informative propositions or truth claims about objective realities" (16). The current favorite is the "symbolic-expressive" model, which "interprets doctrines as non-informative and non-discursive symbols of inner feelings, attitudes, or existential orientations" (16). The former was rendered unsatisfactory for most intellectuals by Kant and his successors and for most well-socialized Europeans and Americans by the "deobjectivication" of religious belief produced by the "individualism, rapid change, and religious pluralism of modern societies" (20, 21). The cognitivist approach, Lindbeck suggests, will have a future only among the sects whose recruits "combine unusual insecurity with naivete" (21). The "symbolic-expressivist" model prevails among the heirs of Schleiermacher (21). In New Testament studies, these would include Bultmann and his pupils above all and, in contemporary hermeneutics, those who look to the phenomenologist Paul Ricoeur. Some Roman Catholic theologians

(Rahner, Lonergan) undertake to combine the cognitive and the symbolic-expressive types.

Against both these understandings of religion Lindbeck sets what he calls the "cultural-linguistic" model. Like the others, it does not comprise a single, tightly connected theory, but a family of perspectives, with forebears as diverse as Marx, Durkheim, Weber, and Wittgenstein.[4] Lindbeck's own exemplars of this family are the sociologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, the cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz, and the philosophers William Christian and Ninian Smart. They understand religions "as comprehensive interpretive schemes, usually embodied in myths or narratives and heavily ritualized, which structure human experience and understanding of self and world" (32). A religion is like a language. It is "a communal phenomenon that shapes the subjectivities of individuals rather than being primarily a manifestation of those subjectivities." It is "correlated with a form of life" and has "both cognitive and behavioral dimensions" (33). Understanding a religion, then, is like becoming competent in a language, and doctrine is to a religion (or at least to the Christian religion) as grammar is to a natural language.

The aim of Lindbeck's book is to argue that the cultural-linguistic model of religion is the most useful one for continuing ecumenical conversation. His case seems to me convincing, but I want to address the different issue posed above. What would adoption of the cultural-linguistic model entail for the conversation between theologians and historical critics of the New Testament?

The question arises with peculiar urgency and promise because within the past decade or two a number of New Testament scholars have adopted the same family of perspectives on religious phenomena that Lindbeck espouses. John Gager's pioneering work, *Kingdom and Community,*[5] while visibly groping for a suitable sociological method, already employed the term "social world" in a way clearly dependent on the work of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. A working group of the Society of Biblical Literature and the American Academy of Religion adopted the term and, at least in part, a similar perspective for its research for several years beginning in 1972. More recently a host of students of early Christianity have taken up similar themes. Among those who eschew the dubious project of becoming sociologists of early Christianity but want rather to be identified as social historians, I may cite as examples my own recent work and that of David Aune.[6] An early pioneer in Germany was Gerd Theissen, but he remained a lonely voice and has recently turned to other sorts of questions.[7] Some interest in socio-his-

torical study of the New Testament is appearing now in Britain: for example, John Riches, who exhibits considerably more knowledge of the philosophical side of Lindbeck's family than do most of the American scholars.[8]

For the historian of early Christianity, adoption of the cultural-linguistic model of religion entails our trying to achieve what Geertz, after Ryle, calls a "thick description" of the ways in which the early Christian groups worked as religious communities, within the cultural and sub-cultural contexts peculiar to themselves. The aim of exegesis would not yet be achieved by translating the words of the text into their English or German equivalents, because meaning is not something words contain, but something they do, or rather something people do with words. In order to determine what a given text *meant,* therefore, we must uncover the web of meaningful signs, actions, and relationships within which that text did its work. Evidently those of us who adopt such a description of our exegetical task and theologians who heed Lindbeck's advice will be traveling on parallel tracks. Describing what a text meant (the "grammar" of the early Christian subculture) and what it means (the "grammar" of ecumenical Christianity today) would follow paradigms whose antecedents and structures are the same.

Unfortunately, parallel tracks do not converge—unless we can discover some Einsteinian revision of our Euclidean intellectual geometry. The trouble is that Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic description of Christian theology includes a way of construing scripture that seems, paradoxically, opposed to a cultural-linguistic way of doing historical exegesis. The magic word is intratextuality, a term which Lindbeck coins (in contrast to the "intertextuality" stressed in certain theories of literature) to signify the immanent location of meaning. For cultural-linguists the meaning of words, things, or actions is not determined by reference to any factor outside the semiotic system to which they belong, but by discovering "how they fit into systems of communication or purposeful action" (114). So long as Lindbeck uses "text" as a metaphor for the entire cultural system of the religious community, a rapprochement with the socio-historical exegete still seems possible. However, Lindbeck is careful to insist that theology is a description which "is not simply metaphorically but literally intratextual." "One test of faithfulness . . . is the degree to which descriptions correspond to the semiotic universe paradigmatically encoded in Holy Writ" (116). "Intratextual theology re-describes reality within the scriptural framework rather than translating Scripture into extra-scriptural categories" (118). "An intratextual reading tries to derive the interpretive framework that designates the theologically controlling sense from *the literary structure of the text itself"* (120, emphasis added).

The theology Lindbeck wants, then, is a biblical theology in a strict though not exclusive sense. The boundaries and context of what is to be interpreted are defined by the canon. This kind of interpretation, moreover, seems to require a synchronic, literary analysis of the canonical texts. Historical exegesis could be, at best, only of incidental help to such a reading (just as Lindbeck himself suggests in the examples on pp. 122–23). The kind of social history now practiced by many students of early Christianity—which gives no special privilege among first- and second-century documents to the texts that would later become canonical, and which wants to treat all those texts as "sources" and "documents" that conceal as well as reveal what the historian wants to know—such historical inquiry could have, it seems, only a negative connection with Lindbeck's theology.

There is perhaps a certain irony in the fact that, while there are a number of New Testament scholars who have been exploring a synchronic, literary analysis of the texts, with few exceptions they tend to adopt a symbolic-expressive style of interpretation and to engage in the kind of cryptoapologetics for liberal Christianity that Lindbeck views with obvious distaste. There seems no internal necessity for either alliance, however, and Lindbeck's project may well offer a more natural theological partner to literary hermeneutics than do the symbolic-expressive theologians.

Something important would be lost, however, if we accepted that apparently obvious solution. The fact that a historian adopting the cultural-linguistic model of religion arrives at results which a theologian adopting the same model cannot use is not merely an unhappy accident. It reveals something intrinsic to the situation of Christian interpreters. The dilemma posed here is not adventitious or merely semantic. It is real and inherent in the peculiar self-definition of Christianity as both historical and canon-dependent. We should therefore not give up too quickly on the possibility of cooperation between historians of the social world of early Christianity and post-liberal theologians, for such cooperation may be able to cast a new light onto the hermeneutical situation.

First of all, a closer look shows that the conflict in aims between the historian who employs a sociology-of-knowledge perspective and the theologian who does the same is not quite so direct as it first appears. Lindbeck's adoption of "intratextuality" as a normative characteristic of Christian theology is an extension of Hans Frei's argument against all forms of "referential" hermeneutics.[9] That argument would seem to apply with obvious force to the social historian, who must practice some form of the "hermeneutics of suspicion." Yet what this historian is searching for is no longer the historical

referents of the texts in the fashion of the post-Enlightenment historical critics whom Frei blames for "the eclipse of biblical narrative." That is, a social historian of this sort is not only or even primarily trying to reconstruct "what really happened" as "objective" reality. She or he is more interested in trying to understand the meaning of what the actors and writers did and said within their culture and their peculiar subculture.

The cultural-linguistic historian and the cultural-linguistic theologian, following their parallel tracks, do come back again to the dilemma which Stendahl described. What the text meant is not the same as what it means. However, we are now in a position at least to state that dilemma more sharply. What Paul's Letter to the Galatians, say, or the Gospel of Mark meant to the Christians gathered to hear it read aloud in some house in a town of the Anatolian highlands or in a Roman insula, or wherever, we can only imperfectly reconstruct and can never duplicate. The reason is that what the Gospel or letter meant—the work it did—belonged to a specific cultural-linguistic complex, which no effort of translation however fine and no act of will however faithful can call again into existence in our so different world.

The ways in which the symbolic universe we inhabit differs from that in which the writers and first hearers of our texts lived are so many they defy cataloguing. Most are factors that affect whole societies and must enter into any historian's attempt to understand any text from antiquity. What interests us at the moment is not these, though it should give us courage to observe that historians who are perfectly well aware of these factors do not in fact stop writing history. They seem rather to find the never-completed task of migrating from one world to another precisely the challenge that makes the game worth playing. We, however, are concerned for the present only with those factors which are peculiar to the situation of the Christian interpreter—or, better, to the interpretation of these texts in and for the Christian community.

Foremost among the factors that separate the use, and thus the meaning, of the New Testament texts in the first century from those texts' use and meaning in the church today is this: then there was no New Testament, now there is. How simple and obvious this is! Yet to have made it so is one of the enduring accomplishments of the modern historical-critical enterprise. Every teacher of introductory courses in New Testament has to reenact the discovery and knows how difficult it is, even in this age of ignorance of the Bible, how hard to learn that there are no magi in Luke nor shepherds in Matthew, that "the scripture" cited by those writers was not yet "the Old Testament," that the Christians to whom Paul wrote had not read the Gospel of

John. That the Christian movement existed once without the canon which later became constitutive of it is a fact whose hermeneutical significance has not, even now, fully impressed itself on our theology.

To be sure, concern has been expressed in many quarters about the tendency of historical criticism to dissolve the canon as the context of exegesis, and Lindbeck's discussion of "intratextuality" is in part a continuation of that discussion. What has so far been lacking, despite some excellent work on the development of the canon, is both a social history of canonization and a social description of the canon's functions. "Canon" is a culturally dependent category, not an objective thing. A book or a formal list of documents is not a canon, unless there is a community that takes it as authoritative. This point has been made quite clearly by Charles Wood, who says, "The canonization of Christian scripture is more adequately understood as the bestowal upon these texts of a specific function, rather than simply as their churchly recognition or their exaltation to a higher status." Consequently, "a canon is a canon only in use; and it must be construed in a certain way before it can be used."[10]

We thus confront the curious fact that, despite the vast energies of historical-critical scholarship on the one hand and of theological hermeneutics on the other, there has been in recent years hardly any attempt either to describe or to define the significance of the crucial transition between precanonical and canonical situations. New Testament exegetes stop too soon, leaving us with the diversity of pre-literary traditions and their functions and the variety of compositions in their settings, but little sense of what happened after that. "Canonical" hermeneutics, on the other hand, takes the canon as something given, self-evident, and does not adequately describe its social and cultural dimensions. There is here a task waiting to be precisely defined and carried out.

Certainly one factor that begs for description is the development of that privileged, all-encompassing narrative that Frei and Lindbeck take to be paradigmatic of the way the Bible ought to be construed. That such a narrative came into being and came to have normative force is a fact of extraordinary historical and cultural importance—worthy of precise socio-historical description. How did the church give birth to that narrative which subsequently would form and vivify and correct the church? Was it a series of accidents that produced a Bible whose first words are "In the beginning God created . . . " and which concludes "Come Lord Jesus"? And did that accidental encompassing of aeon and cosmos inspire the revolutionary notion (unprecedented in its scope, so far as I can see, in all the myths of antiquity)

that the whole of human life and history has a "plot" with beginning, middle, and end? Or had the idea of that story, the plot itself, already taken shape in the rituals, preaching, moral exhortation, storytelling, prophesying, and midrash practiced by the early Christians? And did the plot then affect the use and valuing of the new writings and the perception of the old in such a way that it imposed itself on the shape and sequence of the collection that won out? Did the canon make the story or the story the canon?

These are not merely literary questions. One of the problems with the category "intratextuality" is that it sounds too literary—and too academic. Now an academic category is perfectly appropriate in a programmatic book about the conversation among professional theologians, but a cultural-linguistic hermeneutic must perforce look to the non-elite culture. One of the exciting things about Lindbeck's book is that in his final chapter he does range far beyond the academy, to deliver tantalizing fragments of his analysis of our cultural situation and hints about the kind of social setting that might be required for an intratextual theology to succeed. His diagnosis and prescription imply a thesis, a thesis which deserves to become a central focus of the interpretive discussion among theologians and biblical scholars.

The thesis is this: a hermeneutical strategy entails a social strategy. That is true because, on the one hand, texts do not carry their meanings within themselves, but "mean" insofar as they function intelligibly within specific cultures or subcultures. Where an adequate social context is lacking, the communication of the text is frustrated or distorted. On the other hand, to understand the text is, as Charles Wood so lucidly argues, to be competent to use the text in an appropriate way.[11] Perhaps it is not too much to say that the hermeneutical circle is not completed until the text finds a fitting social embodiment. If we do make this extension of Wood's definition, however, we ought also to adopt his cautionary remark: "it is crucial not to identify [understanding and use] in such a way as to imply that to understand a text is to agree with it."[12] We may understand the social embodiment toward which the text moves the community and yet choose not to participate. Perhaps, nevertheless, a participation at least in the imagination, an empathy with the kind of communal life which "fits" the text, is necessary for full understanding.

Thus the hermeneutical process has a social dimension at both ends of that polarity which Stendahl named. What a given text meant ("originally" or at any given time in the past) was the resultant of the dialectic between text and the cultural-linguistic world inhabited by its hearers (roughly equivalent to the linguistic dialectic between *parole* and *langue*). On this

model, the "pre-understanding" is not defined by the supposedly universal structures of individual human existence, but by the whole range of passive as well as active learning which members of a given culture and of particular subcultures within it have absorbed. What the first hearers knew by simply being where they were, it is the task of the historical critic to reconstruct by prodigious effort. On the other end, what the text means, by the same model, entails the competence to act, to use, to embody, and this capacity is also realized only in some particular social setting.

If that is the case, then the interpreter may be obliged to find or to try to help create a community competent to understand, and that means a community whose ethos, worldview, and sacred symbols (to use Clifford Geertz's famous trilogy) can be tuned to the way in which that text worked in time past. Lindbeck addresses this requirement by his provocative assertion that the only kind of Christian community which might respond adaptively and faithfully to the signs of our times is a paradoxical form of sect: intent on its internal norms and forms of life, but open to the world.[13] Whether or not one is persuaded by Lindbeck's "futurology," his attempt to describe the desired community is consistent with the model of religion he has adopted. The goal of a theological hermeneutics on the cultural-linguistic model is not belief in objectively true propositions taught by the text nor the adoption by individuals of an authentic self-understanding evoked by the text's symbols, but the formation of a community whose forms of life correspond to the symbolic universe rendered or signaled by the text.

It is not easy to specify what are the logical status and the logical location of that symbolic universe. Is it in the text? That seems to be where Lindbeck wants to locate it: what remains constant is the "story." Yet he observes that the story is "transformed" over and over again as it fuses "with the new worlds within which it is told and retold" (83). If that is true, then is the communicating structure not rather an aspect of the whole cultural system comprising ethos, worldview, and sacred symbols, of which the text is only one element? If the latter, then to suggest that "the literary structure of the text" or "the story" remains the constant by which succeeding worlds of experience are interpreted may conceal a number of difficulties. Can we hope for a consensus on what "the literary structure of the text" is? Is the identification of this structure as "story" a descriptive or a normative statement? Surely if we look at the uses of scripture throughout the history of the Christian communities, not to mention the Jewish communities, "story" describes only one among a vast number of important construals. The judgment that the controlling pattern is, or ought to be, narrative does not emerge either from

a tabulation of actual uses or from a compilation of the different genres found within the canon. From what, then?

Just at the point of such questioning perhaps the dialogue between theologian and historian can again become helpful. For if it is the formation or reformation of the community that is the goal, then the story of the origins of the community, of the dialectic which produced both church and canon, ought to be suggestive for the present task. This does not mean that the church today ought to try to replicate the social forms of the early church, even if that were possible. Yet the church can learn from that "primitive" history that the clichés of recent biblical theology—*kerygma,* word of God, God acting in history, and so on—are abstractions without flesh until we see the early communities struggling to discover, adapt, and invent appropriate forms of living in the world. Perhaps indeed a conversation between social historians of early Christianity and Christian ethicists, despite the unpromising results of "biblical ethics" in recent years, may be more urgently needed than that between exegetes and theologians. It is time that we took seriously the well-known fact that most of the New Testament documents, including the Pauline Epistles that have provided the central motifs of Protestant theology, were immediately addressed to problems of behavior within the communities, of moral formation and what a sociologist could only call the institutionalization of the new sect. A hermeneutics of social embodiment would find a place for that sometimes embarrassing worldliness and everydayness of the early Christians. It would undertake to define Christian understanding as the acquisition of competence to act appropriately in a world rendered intelligible in a peculiar way by the dialectic between texts and history.

Notes

1. Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans,* trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 1.
2. Krister Stendahl, "Biblical Theology, Contemporary," *IDB* 1:418–32; see the remarks by James Barr in his article on the same topic, *IDBSup* 104–11.
3. George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984).
4. See Lindbeck, *Doctrine,* 27 n. 10.
5. John G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975).
6. Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983); David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); idem, "The Social Matrix of the Apocalypse of John," *BR* 26 (1981) 16–32.

7. A good introduction to Theissen's work is the collection of essays, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), with an important introduction by John H. Schütz.
8. John Riches, *Jesus and the Transformation of Judaism* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1980), and his interesting new work on the parables, so far unpublished.
9. Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).
10. Charles M. Wood, *The Formation of Christian Understanding: An Essay in Theological Hermeneutics* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), chap. 4. Quotations from pp. 90, 93.
11. Wood, *Formation,* chap. 1; cf. Lindbeck, *Doctrine,* 128–34: "intelligibility as skill."
12. Wood, *Formation,* 18.
13. Lindbeck, *Doctrine,* 127–28, and Lindbeck, "The Sectarian Future of the Church," in Joseph P. Whelan, ed., *The God Experience* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1971), 226–43.

THE POLYPHONIC ETHICS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

In *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* Bernard Williams has reminded us that moral conviction is not the same thing as certainty, nor can it be reduced to naked existential decision. What is required for a robust ethical life, writes Williams, is "moral confidence," and moral confidence "is basically a social phenomenon."[1] The study of the work of Paul acquires a new accent if we consider his letters in light of the question suggested by Williams's argument: What is the social process by which a religious movement like that of the early Christians undertakes to instill moral confidence in its members? By far the most common thing that we see happening in Paul's letters is his attempt to form moral communities: to instruct, admonish, cajole, remind, rebuke, reform, and argue the new converts to this strange new cult into behaving in ways "worthy," as he puts it, "of the God who called you." We may

say, then, that the letters of Paul were preeminently instruments of resocialization and evidence of a larger process of resocialization. That process (Paul's word for it is οἰκοδομή, "construction") was forming and reforming moral intuitions; its aim was to create moral confidence—the confidence that obtains when worldview and ethos match.

However, viewing Paul's work from this perspective functions to sharpen the misgivings that arise as, with the results of recent biblical criticism in mind, we contemplate the multiplicity of voices we hear in the letters of Paul. The discovery of these several voices is actually one of the successes of modern biblical criticism, but it is so troubling that many worried critics believe it indicates a failure of the method. Was Paul a schizophrenic? Or an unprincipled religious entrepreneur? Or did he merely change his mind as time passed? Did his thought evolve, or did he vacillate? How can we rescue a coherent Paul from all those contingencies to which he seems to have bent his message? What *is* the constant theological message that emerges from Paul's apparently dialectical thinking?

Perhaps our habit of searching for coherence and constancy in the substance of the message—our expectation of some univocal instruction or fixed pattern—misleads us in our effort to apprehend Paul's purpose and assess his contribution. It may be that the manyness of the voices is essential to the form of communication Paul has chosen. In order to demonstrate the plausibility of such a position, I would like to draw upon the insights of Mikhail Bakhtin, the polymath Russian literary critic and philosopher whose late rediscovery has been causing such a stir in literary circles.[2] Bakhtin was convinced that human identity is essentially dialogical and that only through dialogue do enduring values emerge. He interpreted the history of Western literature as a struggle toward a style in which genuine dialogue—not just dialectical monologues, which are quite a different thing—could come to expression. Bakhtin argued that the appropriate style was found at last by Dostoevsky, who invented "a fundamentally new novelistic genre," the polyphonic novel, characterized by "a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices."[3]

I have two theses, one of which I shall try to argue; the other I shall only assert. The first thesis is that the style of moral argument that Paul adopts is not so much dialectical as polyphonic. The second thesis is a corollary of the first: if we turn to Paul to find a paradigm of the appropriate way to do Christian ethics, we must examine not only the result of the Pauline polyphony (which would be the focus of attention if his ethical style were really dialectical) but also, and more importantly, the process itself, the *transaction*.

In order to try to persuade you of this thesis and its corollary, I will conduct a case study in two parts. The first part examines Paul's answer to the Corinthian Christians who wrote asking him whether it was permissible to eat meat that might have been obtained from some pagan temple. His answer is found in 1 Corinthians, chapters 8–10. The second part of the case study will review Paul's own revision of that answer into a generalized paradigm for other Christians who find themselves in a different time, place, or situation. That revision is found in Romans 14:1–15:13.

ISSUE: EIDŌLOTHYTA IN CORINTH

The story behind 1 Corinthians 8–10 will be familiar to many of you. The Corinthian Christians have sent a delegation to Paul, bearing a letter asking several questions about things that were evidently under dispute in the Christian house-assemblies in that city. Among them is the question whether it is all right to eat meat purchased at public markets or served at private dinners in non-Christian settings. Those who say "Yes!" Take their stand on something that all Christians, they say, "know": there is no God but one and (therefore) the "idols" in the world have no reality. Hence, eating food obtained from the temples and shrines is what we would call a purely secular and social act.

On the other side there are some Christians at Corinth who do not share this cheerful view of the cultic world around them. The images represent to them something quite real and quite dangerous; to partake in any way, however indirect, in the cults of those images is "idolatry."

Paul's reply is anything but straightforward. Indeed, some commentators have found it so disjointed that they want to argue it has been patched together by a clumsy editor from fragments of different letters. Others have found a single goal toward which Paul's zig-zag mental path was leading; deciphering his dialectic, they provide us with the clear maxim that Paul's roundabout diplomacy has obscured. But what if the point is not to arrive at a clear and simple rule to fit this and all similar occasions, but rather to let all the legitimate voices be heard and to encourage all the vociferous speakers to become listeners, too, and then to act within that polyphonic world? What voices can we in fact hear in these three much-disputed chapters? First there is an ambiguous "we": "We know that we all have knowledge" (8:1); "We know that there is no 'idol' in the world and that there is no God but one" (8:4). This, surely, is the voice of one of the factions in the dispute. Most commentators now take these and similar assertions throughout 1 Corinthi-

ans to be "slogans" used by the disputants and here quoted by Paul. Note that, if this is the case, the disputants claim to speak for everyone: "We *all* have knowledge." One of the counterstatements that Paul will make is to deny that claim that there is but one valid voice: "But the knowledge is *not* in all," he says (8:7). Yet initially he joins his own voice with that would-be dominant one: "*We* know . . . " (8:1). Bakhtin, I think, would take this as a strategy of the author to maintain control and thus as failure to advance to real dialogue. It is important, however, to see just what the strategy accomplishes here. By joining his voice with that of the dominant and perhaps most articulate party, Paul gains leverage on them: that "we" can now implicate those speakers in statements that follow logically from their asserted knowledge but relativize their assumed superiority: "Food does not commend *us* to God: neither if *we* do not eat do *we* lack nor if *we* eat do *we* excel" (8:8). And that twist of the "we" softens them up for a sharp separation of voices in the imperatives of the next verse: "Watch out lest this 'authority' of *yours* become a stumbling block for the weak." The plural "you" is replaced in the next sentences by the sharper, apostrophic singular "you" before the encompassing plural returns in verse 12, paving the way for the equally sharp and personal "I" that appears in 8:13–9:27 and repeatedly in chapter 10. Paul thus uses the familiar diatribal style to pull the "we" apart. Accepting at the outset the claim and desire of this "we" to speak for "all," Paul gives voices to those implicitly excluded by the "we," exposing a hidden contradiction. He converts the attempted monologue into a dialogue.

In this way Paul makes room for a second voice, one that does not in fact ever speak for itself: the voice of those who have been excluded from the "all" of the self-defined "knowing" Christians (8:7), the voice of those who are "weak" (8:7, 9, 11), but whom Paul immediately personifies and individualizes as "the brother for whom Christ died" (8:11). Here again, perhaps, Bakhtin would find Paul a less masterful dialogist than Dostoevsky. Would it not be better if he had quoted slogans of the "weak" as well as of the "gnostics"? Does he not, by speaking *about* them and *for* them, connive in their continued weakness? Or is it the case that the "weak in conscience" were also weak in eloquence? Did those who "knew" so much, and who most likely commanded the greater resources of wealth and influence,[4] also possess the skills of rhetoric the Corinthian Christians seem to have admired so much? Or did Paul fear that insidious negating power that weakness as weakness can sometimes claim, at which he hints in 10:29 and more broadly in Romans—that *ressentiment* that Nietzsche by his exaggerations has indelibly stigmatized for us? For whatever reason, deliberate or unconscious,

strategic or principled, Paul speaks *for* and *about* the weaker party and, moreover, lends them not only his own voice, but other voices as well, as we shall see. The result, while falling short of the "dialogism" that Bakhtin prizes, nevertheless is effective. A company of voices makes the case of the weak more powerfully than they could have made it themselves.

The third voice that speaks is a formal and neutral voice that by the matter-of-factness of its indicative statements signals its claim to be authoritative. It corrects, and itself brooks no correction. "Knowledge inflates; love constructs. If anyone thinks he knows something, he has not yet come to know as he ought to know. But if any one loves God, this person is known by him" (8:2f.). "But the knowledge is not in all" (8:7). "Food does not commend us to God" (8:8). And so on. Of course it is Paul, or Paul and Sosthenes, who speaks. Yet formally these statements are quite carefully distinguished from those in which Paul emphasizes his own speaking by the personal pronouns or, as in chapter 7, by his λέγω, "I say." These statements are deliberately impersonal observations; they thus claim the force of reported facts or of maxims or axioms. What is the function of this impersonal voice in relation to the others? As I said, it corrects and challenges, indeed contradicts the "we" who know so much, by speaking as a generalized other who knows more. Yet the contradictions are not simple or absolute. For example, after the sharp challenge to the asserted knowledge in verses 2–3, verse 4 returns to the point of view of the first voice—"we know that there is no 'idol' in the world"—and, by its first-person plural, embraces it again in spite of the intervening contradiction.

The fourth voice is related to the third and can be distinguished from it, if at all, only by its more formal accent. For example, verses 5–6:

> *(but) For us there is one God, the Father,*
> *from whom is the universe and to whom we are destined,*
> *and one Lord, Jesus Christ,*
> *through whom comes the universe and through whom we exist.*

Here early Christian tradition speaks. And it resonates with much older overtones: (1) the "one God" and "one Lord" obviously echo and reconfess the classic Jewish confession of the *šhemaʿ* and imply the Jewish polemic against polytheism, from 2 Isaiah on; (2) yet the phrases "from whom is the universe and to whom we are destined" are echoes of popular intellectual religion, originating in Stoic pantheism; so that diaspora Judaism's long dialogue with and adjustment to Hellenistic culture are taken up into early Christianity's own self-identifying and self-involving language and modified to make them

the Christians' own. Their own—for the second member of the couplet decisively transforms both the Jewish and the broad culture's theologies.

The fifth voice is Paul's own. Paul speaks, explicitly in his own voice, in two ways: as authoritative apostle and as personal example. Many of the imperatives in the three chapters are Paul's own authoritative formulations specific to the occasion. For example the rules formulated in 10:25–11:1, "Everything sold in the public market eat without asking questions of conscience," and so on. Naturally some of these authoritative directives merge with the third or fourth voices. For example, the "Flee from idolatry!" of 10:14 is a widespread early Christian rule, formally codified in Acts 15:29 and parallels, but here Paul makes it his own (note the λέγω ["I say"] of the following verse) and asserts it on behalf of the unheard "weak" Christians.

More important in these particular chapters than the apostolic directives as such, but depending on them for its force, is the apostolic example (8:13–9:27; 10:31–11:1). It has taken New Testament commentators an embarrassingly long time to recognize how integral this example is to the argument of chaps. 8–10, but once seen the connections are obvious. The leitmotifs of chapter 9 are freedom and authority (ἐξουσία). Paul has already pinpointed the use of ἐξουσία to the detriment of the weak as the central issue (8:9). Now he dramatizes the issue by metaphors from the extreme case of authority and its lack: free person and slave. We have to say that when Paul talks about himself, he talks in a very complicated way. The example is elaborately rigged to trip the expectations of the reader. Paul begins by insisting upon his own apostolic freedom and authority—to have a wife as traveling companion and to be paid for his efforts. He hammers out his claim with one rhetorical question after another: "Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? . . . Do we not have authority to eat and drink? . . . If others share this authority of yours, do we not even more?" This crescendo of questions calls upon other examples and incorporates the warranting voices of Scripture and tradition into Paul's own argument. Yet all this is only in order to say that he would rather die than *use* this well-grounded right. His one source of pride (καύχημα) is not the authority, but his freedom not to exercise it (9:15–18). In the following verses he comes daringly close to self-parody, for the free person who makes himself slave of everyone has been since Aristophanes a common and contemptuous description of the demagogue. The voice of Paul speaking of himself is thus, in this instance and in several others (notably 2 Cor. 10–13), an ironic voice. Moreover, as Dale Martin has shown, Paul will be heard differently by different groups at Corinth.[5]

Voice number six belongs to the Scripture and traditions of Israel. These chapters are one of the places in the Pauline corpus where this voice is strongest. Its contributions to the polyphony are by no means simple; indeed this voice is itself perhaps more an antiphonal chorus than a solo. It speaks on both sides of the dialogue, and in several ways. A quotation from a psalm, for example, can provide a warrant for a rule, as in 10:25–26: "Anything sold in the market eat without making discriminations of conscience—for 'To the Lord belong the earth and its fullness.'" Again, a quotation (with the tense of its main verb altered) provides an interpretive naming of the present situation: "What they sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God" (10:20, cf. Deut. 32:17). Earlier and more generally, reference to the scripturally recorded story of Israel has established the horizon of interpretation by identifying the readers with Israel: "Our fathers all . . . " (10:14). Finally, as so often in Christian as in Jewish monitory literature, Scripture provides specific behavioral "types" or exempla, as here in 10:1–13 and 18–20.

The little homily that Paul uses in 10:1–13 provides us with one of the most illuminating instances of real polyphony in the letter. For the homily, centered on Exodus 32:6, does more than is strictly needed for Paul's argument here. That is why commentators so often find this chapter confusing—and too quickly assume that Paul is confused. It is as if Scripture's voice has a certain willfulness, rather like the aging uncle who, once having wedged into the conversation, will tell us the whole too-familiar story, however far it takes us from the point under discussion. So Paul, in order to quote Scripture about idolatry, must cite the classic text, "They sat down to eat and drink and rose up to a play," and then ring all the traditional changes on both "eat and drink" and "play."[6] Yet this apparently rambling voice has a function here. The wide, speculative, almost playful midrash on the several possible meanings of παίζειν ("to play") and the several disasters of Israel's wilderness sojourn exemplifies the multiple forms and consequences of "idolatry." The midrash thus sketches out a broad interpretive horizon within which Paul's specific admonitions and advice on the Corinthians' problem are to be read.

Finally, alongside these traditions peculiar to Israel, the rhetorical commonplaces of popular moralizing pepper Paul's discourse, here as elsewhere. For example, in 9:24–27 the familiar "agon-motif"[7] describes the wise person's progress toward perfection by rationally subduing the body. Construed as a principle, it is not a point we would find easy to fit into place if we were constructing Paul's theological ethics. Yet this cultural commonplace would perhaps strike home with special force to the sophisticated know-it-alls of the Corinthian church, who evidently were concerned not to let supersti-

tious taboos cut them off from the ordinary social occasions of urban high culture. And in and through Paul that culture does speak; that world—however darkly Paul could occasionally consign it to "the god of this world"—has its own valid expression in the Christian polyphony. Self-control was a notion on which Jew, Greek, and Christian could agree.

I hope that by simply describing these seven voices I have demonstrated the major point I have to make. That is, even in this instance where Paul has been asked to give his authoritative directive as founder and apostle, and where he speaks with full consciousness of his apostolic authority, he does so through the curious indirection of polyphony. He gives voice to the speakers of the dispute—reflects back their speaking and himself speaks with as well as to them. At the same time he introduces other voices, from other times and a wider community of discourse, that, when heard, alter the to-and-fro of the dispute into a much more complex conversation. It is by no means a conversation without boundaries; Paul guides firmly and rounds off with rhetorical finesse—some would even say, he manipulates his speakers. At the end, the kind of behavior and the kind of attitude he wants to encourage is clear enough. Yet if we were to reduce his admonitions to rules or to ends, we would have lost something essential of that οἰκοδομή, that construction of moral community, that is happening here. A strong-minded editor could have made Paul's argument much more straightforward, but with reduction of the polyphony, much of the moral force would have been lost.

The claim that Paul's polyphony has a moral force that some other form of discourse, say a simple, apodictic command, would not have may seem excessively strong. I think the claim is justified, however, if we remember again what Williams said about the social dimension of moral confidence. What Paul is undertaking to do in this part of his letter is not merely to secure a particular outcome in the case under discussion. It is rather to help the participants to become more competent moral agents, that is, to help them to achieve a peculiar form of moral confidence that befits their status as believers in Jesus Christ and members of his "body." To have moral confidence is to know what one is doing. The dominant group at Corinth thought they knew exactly what they were doing, but by forcing them to listen to other voices, Paul undertakes to expand their knowledge to include such things as what Israel learned about "idolatry" through its Scripture, its traditions, and its long experience in hostile environments; what the Apostle has learned by revelation and experience; what all the Christian communities have come to understand as foundational beliefs; and finally what the "weak" members of the community think and feel. What the "weak" thought they knew, we

cannot find out precisely, but in the letter they hear a number of things that they might have said, besides having to hear the strong group again but in a new context, with Paul and Scripture and tradition speaking sometimes with the one side, sometimes the other, sometimes not quite with either. The linguistic field that constitutes knowledge relevant to the Christian life is at every moment exceedingly complex, embracing as it does Israel's Scripture, traditions both old and not so old, cultural commonplaces that persist unless specifically overturned, prophetic and apostolic pronouncements, and so on. The groups in dispute at Corinth, if they listen well to Paul's letter, will come to command a larger sector of that ever-expanding field. In what sense then will they be more competent moral agents as a result? Certainly not because they will find decisions easier to make; more likely the contrary. Rather, they will possess a more supple and articulate store of pertinent knowledge. Their moral confidence will have advanced from a shallow self-confidence that purchases its security by excluding inconvenient considerations and inconvenient people, toward a confidence resting on the grace that makes dialogue possible.

TRANSFORMATION OF A PARADIGM: ROMANS 14:1–15:13

Paul's admonitions to "the strong" and "the weak" in chapters 14 and 15 of his letter to the Romans can be particularly instructive for us who seek to interpret him, because he is interpreting himself. And he does two things that we also would like to do. First, he is trying to exemplify the kind of behavior that ought to follow from the vision of God's action in Christ that Paul's gospel proclaims. This is the way faith acts. Second, he is tacitly exploring the way his experience with one specific problem in one Christian congregation, in its peculiar time, place, and contingent circumstances, may contribute to the moral formation of other Christians in quite different circumstances. For, without saying so, Paul has here taken up again and transformed what he said to the Corinthians about idol-offered food.

I will not discuss the details of Rom 14:1–15:13, fascinating though I find them.[8] I want only to point to some of the most important modulations Paul makes of the voices that spoke in 1 Corinthians 8–10 as he adapts them to speak to the Roman Christians. First, he generalizes. The term εἰδωλόθυτα, "idol-sacrificed food," does not appear in Romans, and indeed the whole question of idolatry is unmentioned in this context. Rather, the question is whether some food is "profane" (κοινός), whether one day is different from

another. Now to be sure, the way Paul characterizes the issue between "strong" and "weak" embraces concerns that are specific to Judaism. This may be, as many commentators have argued, because Paul has reason to believe that tensions between Jews and Gentiles were a problem within the Christian communities in Rome. What is more certain is that the relation between Jew and Gentile in the church is Paul's principal theme in this letter; he is preoccupied with it, whether or not his audience is, and therefore it is the context within which he looks back upon the "idolatry" issue at Corinth.

Nevertheless, it is very important to see that "the weak" cannot be simply identified with "Jewish Christians" nor "the strong" with "Gentile Christians." Moreover, though the pertinence of his language to questions about *kashrut* and Sabbath is obvious, Paul does not use those terms, nor any halakic language. That is, he takes pains to state the issue in terms general enough that a former Jew is not necessarily on one side and a former Gentile on the other. Thus 14:2 speaks of those who "eat everything" and those who "eat (only) vegetables," and 14:20 suggests that "it is good neither to eat meat nor to drink wine" if such things would trip up a brother. To be sure, there is a certain degree of rhetorical hyperbole in these sentences, but it is nevertheless significant that Paul chooses expressions that are broader than either the εἰδωλόθυτα of Corinth or food-purity rules. Similarly in the other kind of example that he gives in 14:5–6, Sabbath observance is perhaps the most obvious instance of someone who "judges one day in contradistinction from another," but that need not be the only case. Anyone who has read Theophrastus's or Plutarch's description of the superstitious person will see that there were many reasons for a pagan to judge one day more auspicious or more dangerous than another, and some of those concerns could (and doubtless did) persist in people who were converted to Christianity. Thus, throughout the argument, Paul is describing concerns that every diaspora Jew faced, but using language general enough to include Gentiles, too.

Second, the dialectic between the two mutually distrustful positions becomes more definite in Romans. While "weakness of conscience" is mentioned in Corinthians, the knowing disparagers of the weak are not called "strong." Here they are. The two sides are now explicitly "the strong" (οἱ δυνατοί) and "the powerless" (οἱ ἀδύνατοι) or "weak with respect to faith" (οἱ ἀσθενοῦντες τῇ πίστει). The latter characterization, which appears at the very beginning of Paul's admonitions, is especially striking. "Conscience" is nowhere mentioned in this part of Romans, though there are some verbal expressions that are functionally equivalent. Rather, the weakness has to do

with "faith," which is, of course, one of Paul's central themes throughout the letter. In 1 Corinthians Paul asks that consideration be given to the voice of consciences that are imperfect because they were formed by their recent experience of pagan religion. Here, he asks for the acceptance of those persons whose ways of seeing their fellows and their world have been inadequately "transformed," whose "minds" have been only weakly "renovated" (12:2) by faith. By replacing the word common to popular morality, "conscience," with the word he has loaded with specifically Christian meaning, Paul puts the issue more squarely into the center of what he has been talking about through the whole letter.

Third, the mutual or reciprocal obligation of the weak toward the strong as well as the strong toward the weak—which Paul was groping to express in 1 Corinthians 10:29f.—here becomes explicit. The whole argument is framed by two parallel, imperatival statements, in 14:1, "the person who is weak in faith receive," and 15:7, "therefore receive one another." The imperatives are identical, but their objects are not, and the differences reflect the movement of the intervening argument. Paul begins by assuming an unequal relationship; the "strong" are urged to "accept" those who are "weak with respect to faith." However, 14:2 already introduces a series of statements in antithetical form, which introduce a pattern of reciprocity. That reciprocity is underscored by the "receive one another" that sums up the argument. Paul is aware of the insidious tyranny of the weak-minded that Nietzsche so much feared and that we know all too well from the life of our own churches (not to mention the politics of the free-market religious entrepreneurs).

Finally, Paul in Romans makes the Christological model more explicit: for example, in 15:7 he advises, "Receive one another as also Christ received you" (compare 1 Cor. 11:1), and in the following verses, he offers with scriptural backing the complex example of Christ's service of circumcision, both confirming the promise to the fathers and extending mercy to the Gentiles. The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah reveals the impartial righteousness of the one God, "himself just and justifying" (3:26) without respect of human distinctions. The debate over the eating of meat at Corinth has helped Paul to see what he here explains to the Roman Christians: those acts of judging one another that divide the people of God run directly contrary to the universal judgment of the one God. Until the strong accept the weak and the weak the strong, the liberated and the scrupulous each other, they do not yet understand the implication of the fact that "Christ has received us."

SOME CONCLUSIONS

The voices that spoke in Corinth echo in Rome. The dialogue, however, has changed; the polyphony is different. The new context requires a new speech. All the more, Paul's polyphony comes to us in altered contexts. Not only is our context different from his—we are neither in Rome nor Corinth, we are not in the first century but the twentieth, and so on—but Paul is now in a different context. Each of these letters comes to us not as a self-contained unit, with the oral explanations and supplementations by Stephanas and friends or by Phoebe, but as part of a canon of Scripture larger than Paul's own, set within a long and often conflicting tradition.

One of the primary functions of this double setting within canon and tradition—the intratextuality of our normative texts, as George Lindbeck calls it—is to contain the multiplicity of voices. From the time of Irenaeus, at the latest, one of the most effective ways of limiting the divisive potential of Scripture's diversity was by reading all of it within one master story: from creation to incarnation to judgment, from Adam to Abraham to Moses to Christ. But there have been other ways as well: for example, by hearing all the voices (or all those one chose to listen to) as answering questions asked by Aristotle or by Kant. Much of the recent unhappiness about the theological consequences of historical biblical research has arisen because the latter has tended to dissolve each of the strategies by which the Bible was made to speak univocally. Polyphony has become cacophony.

Cacophony is rightly to be feared. If what the Bible has to say is no more focused than the noise of Punk Rock, then it will have no normative force at all. My plea is only that we not assume that the alternative is to filter out all but a single way of speaking. To return to my examples, it is certainly possible to analyze Paul's advice to the Corinthians in terms of rules or goals or principles.[9] Yet focusing on Paul's deontology or his teleology obscures for us the specific process of ethical formation that ought to have taken place in Corinth if his letter was competently and effectively heard there. Even to say that Paul's rules and goals are best understood within the context of his implicit Christological narrative,[10] while a step in the right direction, may have the effect of narrowing prematurely the scope of the things we ought to listen to in the texts.

Thus in the present ethical debate, insofar as I understand it, I find myself siding with such writers as Stanley Hauerwas and Jeffrey Stout in their attacks on foundationalism. Yet I fear that "narrative ethics" threatens already to become a slogan that either must be stretched beyond all ordinary senses

of narrative or else will unduly limit the elements of the biblical account to which we need to pay attention.[11] Certainly I do not intend to suggest that "polyphony" is a better slogan that ought simply to replace "narrative." Perhaps "polyphony" is best understood as a "self-consuming metaphor."

I have argued that Paul had a special purpose in view when he chose to write to the Corinthians in such a multi-vocal way and when he repeated that indirect way of speaking, with significant alterations, in his sample, self-introductory letter to the Roman Christians. He was not just longwinded; nor did he have any trouble making up his mind. He employed this polyphonic style because the kind of ethic demanded by the action of God in the crucified and risen Messiah is one in which all these voices get a hearing. Acknowledgment of that event had for Paul broken open the limitation of Israel's hopes to Israel alone, but it would also break open the inevitable presumption of Gentile Christians to own God's salvation in disregard of Israel. God's judgments are too unsearchable (Rom. 11:33) for any single voice to presume to pronounce them.

Time fails me to do more than hint at the hermeneutical implications that I think may be discerned in cases like these. What is at work here is something more than the intertextual character of all discourse, particularly the discourse of people like Paul and ourselves who live in pluralist cultures,[12] although historically it was only within such a nexus of cultural fusion that the Pauline polyphony could be voiced. What we may learn from Paul is that the development of a coherent and distinctively Christian pattern of moral discernment is a continual process, simultaneously interpretive and social. Social, because personal and social identities, the normative community and the community of norms, are dialectically related. Interpretive, because Christianity transforms but does not annihilate the norms it inherits. Our fundamental ethical question—How can we have moral confidence when our world is constantly changing beneath us?—is a question that Paul, in Rom. 9–11, faced as radically as any of us can. If God by manifesting his grace in the crucifixion of his Son has shocked the sensibilities of those most loyal to the revelation God himself had previously given, how can one trust such a God not to play equally astonishing tricks on us in the future? Paul says "Yes" both to the reliability of God and to his unpredictability. The polyphonic ethic undertakes at the same time to make sure that the community continues to hear and heed the norms and stories voiced in the past and at the same time engages in the transformative, interpretive work that is required to discern also what may be valid in the new voices from outside and from the future.

The openness of the polyphonic ethic is an eschatological dimension. In

describing Paul's eschatologically-aimed polyphony, I can hardly do better than to quote Dostoevsky's description of Shakespeare's poetics: "Reality in its entirety is not to be exhausted by what is immediately at hand, for an overwhelming part of this reality is contained in the form of a still *latent, unuttered future Word.*"[13]

Notes

1. Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).
2. Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).
3. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson, Theory and History of Literature, no. 8 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).
4. Gerd Theissen, "Die Starken und Schwachen in Korinth," *Evangelische Theologie* 35 (1975): 155–72; English translation in Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth,* ed. and trans. with intro. by John H. Schütz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 121–43.
5. Dale B. Martin, "Slave of Christ, Slave of All: Paul's Metaphor of Slavery and 1 Corinthians 9" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1988), upon which much of the discussion in this paragraph depends.
6. Wayne A. Meeks, "And Rose Up to Play: Midrash and Paraenesis in I Corinthians 10:1–22," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 16 (1982): 64–78; reprinted above, pp. 139–52.
7. V. C. Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif,* Novum Testamentum Supplements, 16 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967); Abraham J. Malherbe, "The Beasts at Ephesus," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 87 (1968): 71–80.
8. Wayne A. Meeks, "Judgment and the Brother. Romans 14:1–15:13," in Gerald F. Hawthorne with Otto Betz, eds., *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of E. Earle Ellis* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1984, 290–300; reprinted above, pp. 153–66.
9. Sally Barker Purvis, "Problems and Possibilities in Paul's Ethics of Community" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1987).
10. Purvis, "Problems and Possibilities."
11. Paul Nelson, *Narrative and Morality: A Theological Inquiry* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 1987).
12. Richard B. Hays to Wayne A. Meeks, letter, November 17, 1987.
13. Fyodor M. Dostoevsky, *The Notebooks of F. M. Dostoevsky* (Moscow, 1935), quoted by Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 90. Emphasis original.

ON TRUSTING AN UNPREDICTABLE GOD

A Hermeneutical Meditation on Romans 9–11[1]

One of Paul Meyer's colleagues has shown us how important is the issue of finding a "coherent" Paul among the Apostle's varied responses to the "contingencies" of his situation.[2] Yet, for anyone who still hopes to find some guidance from the Bible in trying to form a Christian life today, there is a more urgent question: not whether Paul is consistent, but whether God is. This question is at the center of Romans 9–11, and Paul Meyer has clearly articulated it: If God's action in Christ was as radical as Paul (and subsequent Christian faith) claims, "what then becomes of God's faithfulness, that very reliability on which human trust, beginning with Abraham's, can alone depend?"[3]

Many modern commentators on the letter to the Romans have supposed this problem to be uniquely Paul's, a personal and individual issue arising

only in the case of the "convert."[4] Such a reading not only misconstrues the genre and rhetorical shape of this letter, it has the effect of confining Paul's climactic assertions to the safe realm of "religion," understood usually as either abstract doctrine or personal feelings. The stakes for Paul were much higher than those terms suggest, and if we confront the full audacity of his claims, he may provide us, by analogy, with hints about a way Christians might respond to the quite different cultural situation in which we find ourselves today.

How can faith continue to be faith—that is, neither replaced by skepticism nor converted into dogmatism—when the web of culture that has embodied that faith has been torn or dislodged from the social forms that anchored it?[5] The Christian's dilemma is a special case of a more general cultural upheaval. In the domain of ethics, for example, the philosopher Bernard Williams, for whom the age of Christianity is simply past, inquires how we can preserve that moral confidence that is necessary for the humane functioning of society when we must accept that certainty is beyond our grasp.[6] To put the question in those terms makes it obvious how very different our problem is from the one addressed by Paul. Nevertheless, the difference is not absolute, as we shall see as we turn to Paul's argument in Romans 9–11.

A STUMBLING BLOCK FOR THE READER

Recent critical discussion of Romans 9–11 has at length recognized that these chapters are not a mere "appendix" or "excursus."[7] Even now, however, the connection with what immediately precedes is not so clear. There is, as everyone notices, a sharp break between 8:39 and 9:1. The chain of inferential particles (ἄρα νῦν, ἄρα οὖν, γάρ, κτλ.) is interrupted for a moment, only to resume immediately in v. 3. Nevertheless, the asseverations of 9:1–2 are perfectly at home in the diatribal style that has dominated the discussion since chapter 6 and continues in 9–11, and the specific theme of the latter chapters, which 9:1–5 dramatically introduces, is an essential counterpoint to the theme that has just reached its crescendo in chapter 8. The latter theme, announced triumphantly at the beginning of chapter 5 and defended in chapters 6 and 7 against misunderstandings, declares the confidence that all those who are "justified" can have in God. Chapter 8 begins with a statement of that confidence in the forensic terms appropriate to the argument of chapter 7: "Thus there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." There follows a discourse on the ways in which the gift of the Spirit

(interchangeably called the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ) confirms that confidence by pointing forward to the eschatological liberty and δόξα ("glory") for which not only the believers but the whole creation yearns (vv. 5–30). A reprise of the forensic language in vv. 31–34 prepares the way for the climax in a small rhetorical circle, introduced by the question of v. 35, "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?" and concluded by the answer of vv. 38–39, "[Nothing] will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The modulation from question ("love of Christ") to answer ("love of God in Christ") is important; it hints at a point to which we shall return.

Having so carefully and forcefully declared the confidence in God that is the very substance of faith, Paul then astonishes his hearers by solemnly swearing that his own heart is full of the opposite of confidence: "great sorrow and unceasing anguish" (9:2, RSV), and, moreover, he "would have vowed"[8] to be banned from the very love from which he has just told us nothing in heaven or earth could separate us (v. 3).[9] By waiting to name the objects of his anxiety until v. 3b, Paul heightens the power of his reversal. Once he has named them, however, he emphasizes the objects with his solemn, polysyndetic list, which at the same time shifts attention from his personal connection ("my brothers, my kinsfolk by flesh") to the objective and universally significant gifts that belong to "Israelites" (vv. 4–5a). This shift is essential, because the disruptive issue is not merely an accident of Paul's personal history; it goes to the heart of what is to be believed about God. The formulaic blessing that rounds off this sentence implicitly acknowledges this point,[10] but it is hardly enough to allay the unease that Paul has induced in his readers. That the stumbling block Paul has placed in our path is deliberate is confirmed by the more elaborate liturgical piece that concludes the whole of this portion of Romans: it is precisely the inscrutability of God's judgments, the unsearchableness of his ways, the unknowability of his mind that are celebrated (11:33–36). These are hardly qualities that reinforce confidence.

The function of chapters 9–11 is thus not to continue but to disrupt the smooth assurances of confidence that have capped the whole argument of chapters 1–8. The reader is not to be allowed to think that confidence depends on knowing just how God will act in the future (that confidence is the same as certainty, as Bernard Williams would put it[11]). Paul has already hinted at that false step in 8:24: "Hope made visible is not hope." Now the paradigmatic challenge to a confidence that would depend on our knowing has to be faced: the trick that God has played on Israel. For if Christians are to

accept Paul's assurance that "nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God," they must face the fact that the Jews have rested upon exactly the same assurance, and the radicality of Paul's claims throughout the letter so far has undermined that assurance. Does the collapsing of the διαστολή (distinction) between Jew and Gentile (chapters 1–3) not mean the canceling of Israel's election? Has the word of God "fallen away" (9:6)? "Is there injustice with God?" (9:14). "Has God rejected his people?" (11:1). If God has abandoned that "chosen people" and taken another—as later Christian interpreters, beginning with Matthew, would claim—then how can we really be sure that God will not eventually do the same with this "new Israel"—as later interpreters, but never Paul, would call the church? These are all objections—and misunderstandings—that must be answered. Hence there is a tight internal logic in Paul's taking up at just this point the question of the continuing relationship between "Israel after the flesh" and the God who, like Abraham, "did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all" (8:32).

Moreover, the logical dilemma is not only an intellectual one. It is not only the ideas that his readers hold about God that Paul wants to straighten out, but also the forms of communal life that embody those beliefs. For that reason the themes of Romans 1–11 continue to echo in the admonitions that follow in 12:1–15:13.[12] In one respect, however, circumstances make the task of social embodiment impossible to complete. There is, from Paul's perspective, a fundamental anomaly in the existence of the household-based groups that Paul and other Christian travelers have established. They are anomalous because they are the ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ (God's assembly) and the "Israel of God" (Gal 6:16), yet they exist in complete isolation from the organized Jewish communities in the same cities.[13] This is an anomaly that Paul himself was unable to resolve, and no subsequent interpreters who have left any trace in the history of Christian exegesis have even sensed the problem.[14] Within this letter, Paul attempts only to point toward an eschatological resolution and, within the household ἐκκλησία alone, a fitting communal ethos (Rom 14:1–15:13).

A STRATEGY OF PARADOX AND MISREADING

The tricks Paul plays on the Christians listening to his letter force them to think about the trick God has played on Israel. Two determinative features of his rhetorical strategy are his use of paradox and his peculiar interpretation of scripture.

Paradox

Paradoxical statements are not uncommon in Paul's letters, but they are especially thick in Romans 9–11. Consider the following examples. First, there is Paul's impossible vow in 9:3, directly contradicting what he has said immediately before, as we have already observed. Second, the transitional verses 9:30–31, drawing out the lesson of the scriptural catena cited in vv. 25–29, are formulated as a paradoxical antithesis. The Gentiles, not striving, have succeeded, where Israel, striving, has failed. The point, in different language, is repeated in 10:20–21 and 11:7. Third, immediately after, in 9:32–33, comes what Paul Meyer calls "one of the most remarkable of Paul's OT quotations because of what it attributes to God: placing in the midst of his people a base of security that is at the same time an obstacle over which they will stumble."[15] Finally, there is the summation of Israel's present status in chapter 11, which brings to a climax the almost unbearable tension that Paul has generated in chapters 9 and 10 and leads to his remarkable statement, in 11:11–32, of the double reversal of status of Jews and Gentiles before God. Israel has indeed "stumbled," but they have not "fallen" (11: 11). Most of them have suffered a "hardening" that puts them into the same category as the rejected Ishmael and Esau and even the prototypical enemy, Pharaoh (9:6–23). Indeed, this majority who have rejected Jesus as Messiah—because of their zeal for God's Torah—are classed not with that prophet whose zeal for the law was the Deuteronomist's paradigm, but precisely with Elijah's opponents, the followers of Ba'al (11:2–5). Nevertheless, their gifts and calling from God are ἀμεταμέλητα ("irrevocable," 11:26). Israel is simultaneously "enemies" (κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ["in regard to the gospel"], 11:28) and "beloved" (κατὰ τὴν ἐκλογήν ["in regard to the election"], 11:28).

We could, of course, call Paul's argument "dialectical" rather than paradoxical, but we must avoid two popular misunderstandings hidden under that term. One attributes to Paul a logical process in which two partial insights are placed over against each other only to be transcended by a more comprehensive truth. We may eventually decide that we need to make some such move in order to appropriate Paul's thought for ourselves, but it is important to see that Paul himself does not do this.[16] His paradoxes rather set up work for the reader to do. The other way of conceiving Paul as a dialectician is simpler and more pernicious—and more common. The dialectic is seen to operate between succeeding stages of the history of salvation. The history of Israel is encompassed entirely under *Unheilsgeschichte* ("history of condemnation"), which continues to have importance for Christians only

as the symbol of that condemnatory function of the law that, in pietist and evangelical schemes, must precede and prepare for the reception of the gospel, the *Heilsgeschehen* ("salvation event") which supplants all that went before.[17] Against such a reading, Paul's paradoxes bespeak the inscrutability of God's actions in present and future as well as in the past. The expectations upon which Christians, both Jew and Gentile, place their hope are set about with the mystery of yet undisclosed dimensions of God's grace, and that mystery also pervades the history of Israel. Consequently, Paul's reading of scripture is also fraught with paradox.

Misreading

In their recent books, very different in method and aim but effectively complementary, Dietrich-Alex Koch and Richard B. Hays have advanced our understanding of Paul's use of scripture well beyond previous studies of this relatively neglected topic.[18] Both give special attention to these chapters of Romans. Koch lists 66 instances of Paul's use of citations introduced by explicit introductory formulas. Of these, exactly a third, 22, occur in Romans 9–11. Including all seven of his categories of unequivocal citations, the list comes to a total of 89, of which 27 (30%) are in Romans 9–11. Reflecting on these facts, Hays argues that the whole letter ought to be read as "an *intertextual* conversation between Paul and the voice of Scripture,"[19] a judgment especially appropriate to chapters 9–11. In what follows I depend on the detailed textual analyses of Koch and especially on the penetrating literary and interpretive insights of Hays. Accordingly it will be sufficient here to mention only a few examples of Paul's extraordinary readings of his Bible.

Hays argues that Paul's use of scripture is not rightly defined by any of the terms that have been in vogue among NT scholars, like "proof-texting," "allegory," "typology," or "midrash." Rather, much of the range of Paul's ways of using his Bible resembles the way in which modern poets "echo" their precursors.[20] A corollary is this: often when Paul refers to a passage of scripture, a reader who knows the context of that passage will discover in Paul's argument more or less subtle resonances of that context. As Hays recognizes, it is impossible to know whether any of the Roman Christians who first heard Paul's letter read to them would have caught these echoes. It is not easy to decide whether Paul really *intended* them. We can say only that in several instances the whole of Paul's rhetorical strategy gains depth and subtlety when we become aware of the unspoken contexts. A good example is in Rom 9:25, where Paul cites two verses from Hosea initially quite against their context. Paul takes the prophet's words, addressed to Israel, to refer to *Gentiles* (very

much as the author of 1 Peter does in 1 Pet 2:10). It is Christians from pagan origins who are the "non-people" who have become the people of God, the "unloved" who have become "beloved." Yet for a reader who knows the prophetic text, it is obvious that the same dialectic that Paul will make explicit in chapter 11 is the contextual sense of Hosea 1–3. The prophet declares that God, by "divorcing" Israel, has made them a "non-people," but as surely as Hosea obeys God's command to "Go again and love" an adulterous wife, God will reclaim Israel for himself. Thus while Paul's use of the text in Rom 9:25–26 is on its face a mere "proof-texting," atomistic and arbitrary, it already hints—to the knowing auditor—of that peripeteia of Paul's argument and of Israel's destiny toward which we are being carried as we listen.[21]

The same ambiguity affects the quotations from Isaiah that follow; indeed it is because Isa 10:22 begins with a clause almost identical to Hos 2:1 that Paul can link the two together by a mixed citation in Rom 9:27b. Initially, it sounds as though Paul is contrasting the promise made to the Gentile "non-people" with Isaiah's threat against Israel. That, and the antithesis implied between the protasis and the apodosis, seem to justify the insertion of "only" before "a remnant," as the RSV and most other modern translations do.[22] However, Paul immediately proceeds to add to his chain of quotations Isa 1:9, which does not issue a threat but assures miraculous (and gracious) salvation. Linked with the quotation from Isa 10:22–23 by ἐγκατέλιπεν's ("he left") reprise of ὑπόλειμμα ("a remnant"), this new citation also adds something else to Paul's advancing argument. It reintroduces the word σπέρμα ("seed"), which Paul has loaded with semantic freight in 9:6–9. Further, the recurrence of that word here brings a corrective to the earlier passage. There, Paul was dividing Israel: not all belong to the promise, not all deserve the name "seed." Here, he emphasizes the other side of the coin: nevertheless, God has promised to leave to Israel "seed." In light of this further development, then, we see that we would have been wrong to read "only a remnant" in v. 27—not because the negative judgment implied by the "only" is absent from the Isaiah passages as Paul reads them, but because the "only" would foreclose the other side of the prophet's word, the promise that Paul also hears there.[23]

The most brazen of Paul's "misreadings" of scripture, as all commentators recognize, often with embarrassment, is his transformation of Deut 30:12–13 in Rom 10:6–8. Here Paul explicitly cites a text that speaks unmistakably of the Torah and makes it speak instead of Christ and "the word of faith that we proclaim." His exegetical τοῦτ᾽ ἐστιν ("this is . . . " or "this corresponds to . . . "), which has rightly reminded recent commentators of the interpre-

tive rubrics in the Qumran *pesharim,*[24] emphasizes the deliberateness of the shifted referent. Just here, where the informed reader must make the most severe adjustment, Paul forces us to pay attention.

In order to understand what Paul is up to here, we have to notice that he has framed this exegetical *tour de force* with double brackets, which together establish 9:30–10:21 as the centerpiece of his argument in chapters 9–11.[25] The broader *inclusio* is established by using two verses from Isaiah 65 in Rom 10:20–21 to repeat the antithesis stated in Paul's own words in 9:30–31: Israel, running hard, have not reached the finish line. They remain disobedient and resistant. The Gentiles, not even in the race, like the tortoise in the fable, have won; not seeking or inquiring, they found the prize, received the revelation. The quotation from Isa 65:2, however, adds another note, which prepares for chapter 11: God's hands are still extended to the "disobedient and contradictory people." Nested within this *inclusio* is another, created by repeating in 10:11 the quotation from Isa 28:16 introduced, in expanded and revised form, in 9:33. We have already noticed, following Meyer's observation,[26] the paradoxicality of the longer quotation. The apostle created the paradox by substituting for Isa 28:16's phrase λίθον πολυτελῆ ἐκλεκτὸν ἀκρογωνιαῖον ἔντιμον ("a precious, chosen, honored corner stone") a version of the threatening phrase in Isa 8:14, λίθον προσκόμματος καὶ πέτραν σκανδάλου ("a stone that trips and a rock of offense").[27]

What is the stone that both trips the one who runs ὡς ἐξ ἔργων ("as from works") and is the ground of confidence of everyone who puts trust in it? Nearly all commentators assume that it signifies Christ and point to the similar combination of texts in 1 Pet 2:6 as evidence for a Christian tradition of joining "stone" texts into christological testimonia.[28] Meyer, however, points out that there is nothing in the context to require a christological interpretation, nor any hint that the reader ought to hear the echo of yet a third "stone" text, crucial in the later christological exegesis, Ps 118(117):22. Instead, Meyer urges, the natural sense of the context "suggests that the Torah is the rock placed by God in Zion."[29] This does fit admirably with Rom 9:31 and 10:3–4, but creates difficulties in the context of the second citation of Isa 28:16, in Rom 10:11. Following the explicit christological content of the "confession" and "believing in the heart" of vv. 9–10, must not ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ be translated "on him," meaning "on Christ"? Not necessarily. While the Christian confesses, "The Lord is Jesus," the corresponding trust in the heart is "that God raised him from the dead" (v. 9). It is ultimately God's action on which the Christian's faith, like the Jew's, rests; otherwise v. 12, returning to the theme of chapters 1–3 that there is no more διαστολή ("distinction") be-

tween Jew and Gentile, would have no clear connection with v. 11 and would be robbed of its full weight. Therefore, at least in Rom 10:11, it would be better to understand Paul as reading Isa 28:16 to say, "Everyone who puts his trust in God will be vindicated." Perhaps it is a mistake to suppose that the "stone" of the text must have, in Paul's mind or in the work he sets the text to do for his readers, a single referent, as if Paul were constructing a simple allegory or, in the usual sense of the word, typology. Here Hays's comparison with the poetic trope "echo" or "metalepsis" is most helpful,[30] for it suggests a range of connections and meanings within which a text may resound. Thus we need not choose whether it is Torah, Christ, or God himself that is signified in the verse about a rock that is both obstacle and reliable foundation, as if one excluded the others.

But surely we do have to choose between Torah and Christ? That seemed to be the message of the letter to the Galatians, despite Paul's undeveloped disclaimer in Gal 3:21, but in the non-polemical context of Romans Paul's reflection on the problem is much more nuanced. We can see the difference, for example, in 9:31, where, on the usual reading of Romans, we would expect the direct object of the first verb to be not "law of righteousness," as Paul has written, but the reverse, as in the egregious mistranslation of RSV, and the object of the second to be "righteousness," not "law." Paul's surprising choice of words proclaims that the righteousness promised in the law but unattained is not the δικαιοσύνη ("righteousness") that stands in opposition to the righteousness of God (10:3)[31] but is God's righteousness itself, to which Torah and Prophets bear witness, even though it is manifested finally χωρὶς νόμου ("apart from law" [3:21]). Because the Torah genuinely did promise God's righteousness, and because God sent his Son "that the just demand of the law (δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου) be fulfilled among us" (8:3–4), 10:4 can only be understood as saying that "Christ is the goal and completion of the law."[32]

We must note one more connection between 9:33 and other parts of Romans before we return to the issue of Paul's provocative exegesis of Deut 30:12–13. The final clause of 9:33, following as it does Paul's bold assertions about God's δικαιοσύνη ("righteousness") in vv. 30–31, strikingly echoes his thematic assertion in 1:16–17. As Hays says of the latter passage, "Paul is 'not ashamed' in relation to the gospel precisely because the gospel is God's eschatological vindication of those who trust in him—and consequently of God's own faithfulness."[33] And, in one of his most provocative and persuasive insights, Hays argues that Paul's introduction of Hab 2:4 into this context already foreshadows the fundamental theme of chapters 9–11 for any reader

who recalls the context of Hab 2:1–4, which is precisely the question of God's faithfulness to Israel.[34] Thus we are not allowed to perform the ellipsis that nineteen centuries of Christian reading have silently perpetrated on Rom 1:16, i.e., taking "to the Jew first" to mean only "to the Jew who has become a Christian." That misreading is disallowed because of the formidable pressure of the texts that echo here, texts that through centuries had expressed Israel's agony over God's righteousness and faithfulness—and God's agony over Israel's unfaithfulness.

Thus Paul has set his exegetical tripping stone at the center of an elaborate filigree of argument and scriptural allusion. We cannot dismiss it as an interpretive bauble decorating an argument whose weight lies elsewhere. The brazenness of his commandeering Moses' words about the Torah to be spoken by "the righteousness from faith" is transparent; no one who has read the original text can ignore it. Nor does it get Paul off the hook to observe that later rabbis sometimes play equally outrageous tricks with the words of Torah: when they do, it is not because they care nothing for the plain meaning of the texts or assume that their readers do not care. On the contrary, the overt misprisions are giant winks that say, "Pay attention!"

Is the function of Paul's misreading then a deliberate violation of everything that "is written," in order to supplant all merely scriptural authority with "the message of justification as the decisive criterion" of "a theologically reflected Christian hermeneutics"?[35] Or, by silently contradicting the plain sense of Deuteronomy in order to set it against Lev 18:5, to define two radically opposed kinds of "righteousness"?[36] If so, then everything I have said up until now is wrong.

If, however, we assume that Paul means what he says in 3:12b (the law and the prophets are witnesses to God's righteousness) and 3:31 (faith does not abolish but confirms the law) and chapter 7 (the law is spiritual and holy and the commandment holy, just, and good), and if 10:4 is read with rather than against those earlier statements, then Paul's parody of Deut 30:12–13 has quite a different force. Instead of abolishing the plain sense of the Torah's words, Paul requires that plain sense as the strong but unspoken counterweight to his christological confession. The resultant tension is quite specific in any reader who knows what Deuteronomy says. The plain sense that Paul suppresses, like the plain sense of Hos 2:25 and 2:1 in Rom 9:25, lodges in the mind of the competent reader as a provocation, pressing toward resolution. It is characteristic of Paul's interpretive strategy that the resolution will not come with a stroke; it is never simple.[37]

Here there are at least three steps to be taken toward resolving the tension

and thus hearing the whole of what Paul is saying. First, we must remember the positive things Paul has said about the law and thus perhaps, by a kind of second hearing, revise our understanding of Paul's antitheses.[38] Second, the unresolved tension in chapter 10 prepares us for the dramatic double reversal of Jews and Gentiles in chapter 11, the climactic declaration in 11:26 that "all Israel will be saved," and the concluding doxology on the depth and inscrutability of God's wisdom.

Third, Paul's heavy-handed plucking of those Deuteronomic verses may set other Deuteronomic lines ringing in our memory. For example, memory may complete the quotation of Deut 9:4 that Paul used out of context to introduce his citation of 30:12–13: "Do not say in your heart . . . 'On account of my righteousness [plur. in the LXX] the Lord brought me in to inherit this good land . . . ,'" and further, v. 5: "it is not because of your righteousness nor because of the holiness of your heart that you enter to inherit their land, but because of the impiety of these nations that the Lord will destroy them before your face, and in order to establish his covenant, which he swore to your fathers, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob," and more of the same.[39] Indeed, a *Leitmotiv* in Deuteronomy is that it was not because of Israel's strength, or number, or military prowess, or piety, or righteousness that God chose them "to be a people peculiarly his own, beyond all the nations that are on the face of the earth," "but because the Lord loves you and keeps the oath that he swore to your fathers" (Deut 7:6,8 LXX). The theme sounds so persistently that we can readily understand how Paul could think that "the righteousness from faith" speaks Paul's own gospel through the words Moses wrote. Again, as in his use of Hosea and Habakkuk, Paul holds in reserve the very theme of the texts that he appeared initially to suppress. When the suppressed motif resurfaces, it is radically changed. The gospel spoken to Israel in Deuteronomy affirms the destruction of the ἔθνη ("Gentiles" or "nations," i.e., in Canaan) and requires for Israel's purity isolation from "the nations." Paul's gospel is that the very same divine love that chose Israel has now reached out to call a people "not only from Jews but also from Gentiles (ἐξ ἐθνῶν) (Rom 9:24), and there is to be "no separation" between them. Nevertheless, however radical this change, the gospel spoken to Israel in the words of Torah still stands firm.

DARE WE LEARN HERMENEUTICS FROM PAUL?

If there are any lessons we can learn from so idiosyncratic an interpreter, it will not be by any direct imitation. Still less can we distill from Paul's multi-leveled strategy a method, a set of rules. We may nevertheless agree that

there are three significant dimensions to Paul's use of scripture, in the sample we have in part analyzed, that will properly characterize Christian reflection even in our time. Paul's theological reflections are, first, *interpretive* in the specific sense that his rereading of the scripture and traditions of Israel is constitutive of his argument, not merely illustrative. Second, Paul's interpretation is *social,* in both context and aim. Third, it is *eschatological.* Let me briefly suggest directions in which an elaboration of these dimensions might take us.

Interpreting the Text that Interprets Us

Paul presents us with an acute instance of that dilemma which every community possessing a normative body of traditions or texts embodies: the norm must be interpreted and, by interpretation, changed. Unacknowledged, the dilemma easily produces duplicity or bad faith; acknowledged, it too often brings forth cynicism or nonchalant relativism.

In the very places where Paul most astonishingly subverts the plain sense of the ancient text, we have found that the plain sense continues to exert its more or less covert pressure, creating a dialectic with the new reading that finally brings to light a more complex and inclusive angle of vision. Paul's interpretive freedom and the return of the repressed plain meaning rest on the same foundation: confidence in the reliability of God's promises, where "confidence" (we recall) is not the same as certain knowledge. Only the recovery of that confidence might enable the postmodern interpreter, not surely to replicate the peculiar dialectic of Paul's interpretive moves, but to discover an analogous kind of dialectic. To describe what this dialectic might look like would require discussion of a number of complicated issues, such as the status of the canon.[40] At minimum, however, the dialectic would have to include the polarity between the historical meanings and functions of the texts that are reconstructed by the modern critic, on the one hand, and the premodern figural and postmodern theological readings of the same texts. My modest proposal is that historical-critical exegesis could thus play a role analogous to that of the plain sense, as Paul's contemporaries understood it, vis-à-vis his charismatic misreadings. That is, historical exegesis would relinquish its modernist role as umpire, no longer authorized simply to declare contemporizing interpretations "safe" or "out." Instead, it would act as a kind of *advocatus diaboli,* standing up for the past in a dialogue between Then and Now. There would be a certain poetic justice in this form of dialectic, for it was the triumph of modernist exegesis in redefining the plain sense in historical, referential terms that brought about the fateful rupture between religious and academic readings that is now so thoroughly institutionalized.[41]

A Community of Interpretation

The interpretive process we see in the letter to the Romans is a social process in two senses.[42] First, obviously, interpretation takes place within a community and is only possible at all if there are shared elements of knowledge and practice upon which the three-way communication among texts (including traditions), interpreter, and readers can depend. Second, community is not only the context but also the goal of interpretation. Interpretive practice constitutes the community, forms and reforms it. Both sides of the dialectic are evident in several ways in Paul's dialogue with the Roman Christians.

The argument of the letter can be understood by the recipients only if they are a certain kind of group that shares a number of things with Paul. For example, they share a special group language. They share a certain set of practices in which the specific interpretive practice required to understand the letter is embedded. Among these practices are rituals to which Paul can make specific allusion (chapter 6) and even the custom of assembling regularly in household groups (some of which are named in chapter 16), where the letter will be read aloud, within the context of familiar, customary activities.

These groups occupy a certain social space, constituted by the households within which they have been formed. Among the practical consequences of this arrangement are some that bear on Paul's principal theme in the letter and its corollary that he takes up in these chapters: the relationship between "Israel after the flesh," which is embodied in Rome in several large synagogues, and the Christian groups comprising "Jew and Greek" without διαστολή ("distinction"). The groups to which Paul writes consist predominantly of Gentiles, but several of the individuals he mentions by name in chapter 16 are Jewish Christians, and there must be a significant minority of them in at least some of the household groups. Thus, even though I do not share the opinion of many commentators that the letter is written primarily to deal with tensions between Gentiles and Jews in the Roman congregations,[43] it is clear that the groups in some measure embody the situation Paul presupposes in chapters 9–11, whether or not it is for them a "problem." The larger social whole within which those Christian groups are embedded also affects the communication between Paul and his audience in complex ways. As one example, consider the communities of discourse implied by Paul's using not only the Greek language but also rhetorical conventions.

On the other hand, the functions as well as the context of the letter to the Romans are communal. The letter itself is an instrument for initiating a direct

relationship and enlarging an indirect relationship between Paul and the Roman Christians. To this end, it interprets Paul's own career (1:5–17; 15:14–29) and "his gospel." However, it obviously does much more than is strictly necessary for Paul's personal self-introduction. The letter interprets God's action in Christ in such a way that a coherent practice is the appropriate response to that action. For that reason, chapters 12–15 follow naturally and necessarily on chapters 1–11.[44]

The obstacles in the way of a community-centered and community-forming interpretation today are formidable, but not insuperable. First, the churches must find ways to overcome the absence of even the most rudimentary knowledge of the contents of biblical texts that now prevails in all but a few fundamentalist denominations. A more difficult obstacle is the structural distance between professional interpreters and the life of the churches that has been built into our academic and ecclesiastical institutions. This distance did not first arise with the recent growth of departments of religious studies in secular universities and the consequent creation of peer communities of professionals with values distinct from those of religious groups, although that development has obviously exacerbated the division. A deeper root of the problem lies, ironically, in earlier professionalization of the Reformation emphasis on "the Word of God" into the belief that the only appropriate mode of interpretation was "theological." The concept of religion implicit in this development was cognitivist.[45] Its social matrix was a professional hierarchy whose apex was in a theological seminary. Exegetical scholars determined the correct meanings of scripture. Theologians reflected on these meanings and produced correct theological beliefs, which they taught to preachers. Preachers retailed the product to religious consumers. Whether the occupants of the hierarchy were "conservative" or "liberal" made little difference to the structure itself. Romantic reactions to idea-centered religion, whether pietist or existentialist, were potentially more interested in the life of the community, but this potential was blocked by the dominant subjectivism and individualism of those movements.

If the present distance of the biblical texts from the world of the laity is to be overcome, it will be by efforts within the congregations themselves. However, some changed perspectives visible here and there in the professional hierarchy may help. On the part of biblical specialists, there are reasons to hope for some boundary-crossings between the two most innovative directions in current scholarship, the one aiming to reconstruct the social history of early Christian movements, the other a text-centered literary reading. Conversation between social historians and literary critics is by no means guaranteed

to produce readings directly helpful for religious communities, but at least the results may not be simply irrelevant. On the theological side, there are calls for recognition that the proper context and aim of interpretation are not merely ideas or attitudes but ethos and practice.[46] Thus the possibility for a creative dialogue may be emerging.

Reading Eschatologically

The phrase "but now" that introduces decisive points in Paul's arguments (like Rom 3:21) reminds us that for him what justified his novel interpretations was the conviction that God had done a new and final thing. The meaning of the past is therefore gathered and refocused on the present moment and on the community it has brought into existence (1 Cor 10:6, 11; Rom 15:4).[47] Yet how can that conviction have the same force for us, living nearly two millenia after Paul died? Beker's insistence on the literalness of Paul's belief that the Parousia of Christ would come in his own time and on the inextricability of that belief from the whole of Paul's theology is a necessary warning against the ease with which we gloss over the problem, too large to handle here.[48]

Nevertheless, language about final things does a number of different kinds of work for Paul as for every apocalyptic writer. It will be enough for the moment to observe what such language is doing in Romans 9–11. The most prominent instance of what John Gager calls "end-time language"[49] in these chapters is obviously Paul's statement that Christ is the τέλος of the law (10:4). I have argued above, following Paul Meyer, that "end" in this sentence cannot merely mark the close of a period of time nor can it announce the termination of the validity of Torah. What it does is transform the way in which Torah, and therefore also the history of Israel, is to be read. That new way of reading is precisely what Paul's paradoxes in Romans 9–11 are designed to exemplify, and the course of his argument shows that the τέλος is at the same time a new beginning.

Because the End does not signify a Stop, but a new dialectic, the other prominent use of end-time language in these chapters, in 11:25–32, signals that this present time when the End has been manifested is not yet "final." It cannot be final because it has introduced a social contradiction, in Paul's understanding of God's purpose, that must yet be resolved. The contradiction is this: Christ as the End of the law has brought together Jew and Gentile into one community of the one God, abolishing the διαστολή that separated them—but in such a way that the novelty has "offended" (as the stone of stumbling) Israel-according-to-the-flesh. Thus the unity of Jew and Gentile

within the church is purchased at the price of separation between the believers in Christ and empirical Israel. Paul does not allow that reversal of calling and privilege to remain the last word. The reversal itself becomes a model of God's way of acting mercifully, and thus guarantees (11:30–31) that there will be a precisely analogous reversal, in the future, of Israel's standing. He reserves God's freedom to act, yet again, in an unexpected way.

In that case, however, we are squarely up against the problem that, as Hans Frei says, "has been mentioned by commentators from Gotthold Ephraim Lessing to Frank Kermode." The problem is whether the NT narratives of Jesus are "unsurpassable," or whether their "literal sense" only "prefigures a still newer reading that displaces it in turn."[50] At this difficult point the example of Paul's dialectical reading may save us from having to choose between relativism and fanaticism. We can hardly doubt that the Christ narrative (as Paul construed it) is unsurpassable—but in the same way that God's election and promises to Israel are "irrevocable." It is within this context that perhaps we can try to understand and to make fruitful for our present situation Paul's isolated and astonishing statement in 1 Cor 15:24–28, which says quite explicitly that the time will come when the reign of Christ will be surpassed, and "God will be all in all."

Is it possible for us, as it evidently was for Paul, to hold fast to Christ as the image of God, the πνεῦμα ("spirit") that takes away the veil from the heart and from the reading of scripture, the goal of the Torah, the embodiment of the wisdom and the righteousness of God—and still affirm with equanimity that not Christ but God is ultimate? In the necessary and desirable pluralism of the world we have now irreversibly entered, this is a question of fundamental significance. The alternative to pluralist relativism need not be fanaticism, although evidence for that kind of religious and cultural polarization is all around us. A faithful hermeneutic of the Pauline kind, however, requires confidence in the God who, determined to have mercy on all and to bring into being the things that are not, will astonish those who are loyal to the story of God's past actions, but will not abandon them.

Notes

1. Wayne A. Meeks is Woolsey Professor of Biblical Studies Emeritus at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.
2. J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), chap. 2 et passim.
3. Paul W. Meyer, "Romans" in *Harper's Bible Commentary,* ed. James L. Mays (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 1154.

4. Even as perceptive a commentary as that by Ulrich Wilckens, despite his emphasis on *heilsgeschichtlich* elements in Paul's argument and the ecumenical and interfaith sensitivities of his commentary, falls into the individualizing mode of interpretation by construing the whole letter as essentially an apology vis-à-vis a (hypothetical) "jüdischer Gesprächspartner" (*Der Brief an die Römer,* EKK, VI/2 [Zurich, Einsiedeln, Cologne: Benzinger; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1980], passim).
5. For an acute diagnosis of this dilemma, see Nicholas Lash, "Theologies at the Service of a Common Tradition" in *Theology on the Way to Emmaus* (London: SCM, 1986), 18–33.
6. Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995). Compare Jeffrey Stout, *The Flight from Authority: Religion, Morality, and the Quest for Autonomy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981) and of course, with quite a different project in view, Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory,* 2d ed., (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984). In his more recent book, *Ethics after Babel: The Languages of Morals and Their Discontents* (Boston: Beacon, 1992), Stout argues vigorously and interestingly that acknowledgment of the cultural relativity of all kinds of justification does not commit us to moral skepticism or relativism.
7. See, e.g., Wilckens's criticism of Dodd (*Römer* 2:181 and n. 804).
8. Most commentators take the imperfect ηὐχόμην as conative or else as the expression of a wish, or some combination of both. Richard B. Hays has recently argued for a habitual sense, "I used to pray" (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989], 162) but that seems to me not to fit the context as well.
9. John Chrysostom captures the astonishing turn with a rhetorical question that paraphrases Paul: τί λέγεις, ὦ Παῦλε; Ἀπὸ τοῦ χριστοῦ τοῦ ποθουμένου, οὗ μήτε βασιλεία σε, μήτε γέενα ἐχώριζε, μήτε τὰ ὁρώμενα, μήτε τὰ νοούμενα, μήτε ἄλλα τοσαῦτα, ἀπὸ τούτου νῦν εὔχῃ ἀνάθεμα εἶναῖ; (*Hom. in epist. ad Rom.* 16, *PG* 60:549A).
10. All the more reason to punctuate 5a with a full stop after κατὰ σάρκα, as most recent commentators agree. Cf. the discussion in Wilckens, 199; Käsemann, 259–60; Hans Lietzmann, *An die Römer,* HNT 8 (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1933), 89–90; C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans,* MNTC (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), 152–53. Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer,* KEK, 4, 10th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1955), 197–99, offers a cautious argument for construing ὁ ὤν with χριστός while admitting to ultimate uncertainty. C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans,* HNTC (New York and San Francisco: Harper, 1957), 178–79, leaves the question open. However, C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans,*

ICC 27, 6th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975–79), 2:464–70, thinks the case for a christological referent "overwhelming."

11. *Ethics and the Limits,* chap. 9.
12. See Wayne A. Meeks, "Judgment and the Brother: Romans 14:1–15:13" in *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of E. Earle Ellis,* ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1987), 290–300; reprinted above, pp. 155–66.
13. See Wayne A. Meeks, "Breaking Away: Three New Testament Pictures of Christianity's Separation from the Jewish Communities" in *"To See Ourselves as Others See Us": Christians, Jews, "Others" in Late Antiquity,* ed. Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985), 93–115, esp. 105–108; reprinted above, pp. 115–38.
14. There have doubtless been Christians through the ages who did sense the anomaly, but they are mostly voiceless in the record. Ironically, the "Judaizers" at Antioch whom John Chrysostom railed against in his homilies *Adversus Iudaeos* in 386–397 C.E., seem in practice if not in theory to have intuited that something was lacking in a Christianity separated from Israel, but the leaders of the churches were still too insecure to see anything positive in such practice. See Wayne A. Meeks and Robert L. Wilken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era,* SBLSBS, 13; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978) and Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century,* The Transformation of the Classical Heritage, 4 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983).
15. Meyer, "Romans," 1157.
16. Compare the remarks of Paul W. Meyer, "Romans 10:4 and the 'End' of the Law" in *The Divine Helmsman: Studies on God's Control of Human Events, Presented to Lou H. Silberman,* ed. James L. Crenshaw and Samuel Sandmel (New York: KTAV, 1980), 70.
17. The commentary of Wilckens is still explicitly dominated by this dialectical scheme—surprising when one considers his ecumenical intention and many profound exegetical insights. Käsemann has come much closer to freeing himself from it.
18. Dietrich-Alex Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus,* BHT 69 (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1986); Hays, *Echoes.*
19. Hays, *Echoes,* 35, emphasis his.
20. Hays, *Echoes,* chap. 1.
21. For a similar analysis, see Hays, *Echoes,* 67.
22. The case is well argued by Käsemann, *Romans,* 275.
23. Hence I agree with the cogent arguments of Meyer, "Romans," 1156, and Hays, *Echoes,* 68.

24. Koch, *Schrift als Zeuge,* 319–20, exaggerates the differences between Paul's interpretations and the *pesharim,* though it is obvious, as Koch says, that Paul's eschatological timetable is different from that of the Qumran texts.
25. Cf. Hays, *Echoes,* 74–75. James D. G. Dunn, "'Righteousness from the Law' and 'Righteousness from Faith': Paul's Interpretation of Scripture in Romans 10:1–10" in *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament* (ed. G. F. Hawthorne; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1987), 216–28, has not paid enough attention to the context of 10:1–10 and therefore arrives at an interpretation that is very nearly the antithesis of what I am arguing here.
26. See above, n. 15.
27. See the discussion in Koch, *Schrift als Zeuge,* 60, 69–71, 80.
28. For a recent argument that Rom 9:33 presupposes such a tradition, see Koch, *Schrift als Zeuge,* 161–62, elaborating an argument already advanced by Käsemann, *Romans,* 278–279, summarizing previous discussion. Koch seems unaware of objections mounted against this hypothesis. See Meyer, "Romans 10:4," 54–65 and n. 18.
29. Meyer, "Romans 10:4," 64; his comments in *HBC* are more ambiguous. C. K. Barrett, "Romans 9:30–10:21: Fall and Responsibility of Israel" in *Essays on Paul* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 132–53, earlier made a similar suggestion, but with the difference that he takes the same passage in 10:11 to refer to Christ, on the grounds that 10:4 means that Christ has abolished the law "in the sense that he replaces it" (144).
30. Above, n. 20.
31. Dunn's tortuous exegesis in his attempt to prove the contrary shows how unnatural his construal of the text is, but it is representative of many ("Paul's Interpretation," 222–23).
32. Meyer's argument in "Romans 10:4" ought to lay this issue to rest, but to hope so would betray too sanguine a view of NT scholarship.
33. Hays, *Echoes,* 39.
34. Hays, *Echoes,* 39–41.
35. So Käsemann, *Romans,* 287.
36. Koch, *Schrift als Zeuge,* 291.
37. Compare his parenetic method in 1 Corinthians: Wayne A. Meeks, "The Polyphonic Ethics of the Apostle Paul," *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (1988), 17–29; reprinted above, pp. 196–209.
38. For example, the antithesis in 10:5–6. Hays, *Echoes,* 76, goes so far as to say that "the righteousness from the Law" and "the righteousness from faith" here are synonymous. That, I think, is going too far, but it is closer to Paul's meaning than the flat contradiction that most commentators read here.
39. Cf. Deut 8:17 and see Hays's discussion, *Echoes,* 78–79; Dunn's comments on these verses are much to the point as well ("Paul's Interpretation," 223–25).
40. Paul's own "canon," in the sense of those parts of the Bible he used or alluded

to, is both quite selective—mainly Genesis, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Job, the Psalms, and the Twelve (Koch, *Schrift als Zeuge,* 345–46)—and loose, in the sense that he formally cites texts that are not in our canon and in some cases not even identifiable.

41. Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974). See, too, his further reflections in "The 'Literal Reading' of Biblical Narratives in the Christian Tradition: Does It Stretch or Will it Break?" in *The Bible and the Narrative Tradition,* ed. Frank McConnell (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 36–77. My proposal is very close to that of George Lindbeck, "The Story-shaped Church: Critical Exegesis and Theological Interpretation" *in Scriptural Authority and Narrative Interpretation,* ed. Garrett Green (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 161–77, although I find the canonical witness more disparate and the needed dialectic more ambiguous than he.
42. The point I am making is different from Hays's description of Paul's interpretation as "ecclesiocentric" (*Echoes,* chap. 3), though the two are related. He means that the People of God is the central character, along with God, in Paul's scriptural story. For the notion of "the hermeneutic community" with a somewhat different profile than the one I would draw, see John Howard Yoder, "The Hermeneutics of Peoplehood" in *The Priestly Kingdom: Social Ethics as Gospel* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 15–45.
43. For a variety of views on this point, see, e.g., the collection of essays in *The Romans Debate,* ed. Karl P. Donfried (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977).
44. See Meeks, "Judgment and the Brother."
45. See George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984).
46. Lindbeck, "Story-shaped Church"; Nicholas Lash, "Performing the Scriptures" in *Theology on the Way to Emmaus,* 37–46; Michael G. Cartwright, "The Practice and Performance of Scripture: Grounding Christian Ethics in a Communal Hermeneutic," *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (1988) 31–53. See also Wayne A. Meeks, "A Hermeneutics of Social Embodiment," *HTR* 79 (1986) 176–96; reprinted above, pp. 185–95.
47. Cf. Hays, *Echoes,* 169–73.
48. Beker, *Paul the Apostle.*
49. John Gager, "Functional Diversity in Paul's Use of End-time Language," *JBL* 89 (1970) 325–37.
50. Frei, "Literal Reading," 42. Frei raises the question in connection with his criticism of phenomenological hermeneutics, particularly as practiced by David Tracy, but it is clear that the "unsurpassability" (50) of the *sensus literalis* is central to his own constructive aims. He argues that hermeneutical theory cannot protect the irreplaceable Jesus story, while a less theory-laden narrative reading can. Cf. Lindbeck, "Story-shaped Church," 164.

VISION OF GOD AND SCRIPTURE INTERPRETATION IN A FIFTH-CENTURY MOSAIC

Sometime in the reign of the iconoclastic emperor Leo V "the Armenian" (813–820), a monk named Senouphios "in the hills of Nitria in Egypt" heard a voice from heaven directing him to go "to the monastery in Thessaloniki called 'of the stonecutters' (Λατόμων)." Senouphios "had been begging God for a long time to be allowed to see him as he would come to judge the earth"; hearing this clear answer to his prayer, he set off at once with only his cloak and staff. After many adventures he arrived in the distant metropolis, only to be told by the monks that there was no image in Thessaloniki like the one he was seeking. Dejected by the thought he had been deceived by the Devil, the old monk returned to Egypt—only to have the heavenly oracle repeated more urgently. Once more he trudged the long way back to Thessaloniki. This time he was rewarded. As he sat alone one day in the sanctuary of the Stonecutters' Monastery,

> Suddenly there was a storm and an earthquake and, moreover, thunder and such a disturbance that it seemed the very foundations of the sanctuary were shaken. And immediately the mortar and the brickwork with the ox hide that overlay the sacred representation of the Lord . . . were stripped off and fell to the earth. Those sacred features of Christ appeared, shining with fiery appearance like the sun in the midst of the cloud. When the old monk, standing in the midst of the sanctuary, saw this, he cried aloud, "Glory to you, O God, I thank you," and relinquished his blessed soul.[1]

The story of Senouphios's vision, the "Miracle of the Latomou," became an important part of Salonican lore. In the twelfth century a certain Ignatius, abbot of another monastery, wrote it down.[2] Sometime after 1430, when the Turks captured Thessaloniki, the monks abandoned Latomou Monastery[3] and it vanished from the records. After the restoration of Thessaloniki to Greek rule in 1912, Latomou was listed among the city's monasteries that no longer survived. The Saluca Mosque that stood in northeastern Thessaloniki was identified in 1917 as the former Church of Hosios David ("the Blessed David"), and in 1921 the building, now severely damaged, was reconsecrated to that local ascetic. Andreas Xyngopoulos, Superintendent of Byzantine Antiquities, explored the church. When he first examined the apse in March 1921 and saw a portion of the mosaic where the thick Turkish plaster had fallen, Xyngopoulos's astonishment must have approached that of Senouphios more than a millennium earlier. Fortunately, Xyngopoulos's soul was not required of him, and he conducted a detailed investigation of the mosaic and of the other features of the site. Charles Diehl recognized that the mosaic was exactly the one described vividly in Abbot Ignatius's "Edifying Account" and that the church must accordingly be that of the former Latomou monastery.[4] The date of the mosaic has been debated ever since its rediscovery, and no certainty has been achieved. However, most art historians place it sometime in the fifth century.[5]

THE IMAGE

What was this image that brought such rapture to the ninth-century monk and such excitement to art historians of the twentieth century? Still startling today in its sheer beauty, it obviously deserves Diehl's ephitet, "un chef-d'oeuvre de l'art chrétien," remarkable not only for its location in a small, undistinguished building and for its early date, but also for its unusual

[To view this image, refer to
the print version of this title.]

1. The Apse Mosaic of the Church of Hosios David (Latomou) in Thessaloniki.

combination of iconic motifs (see fig. 1).[6] A youthful, beardless Christ sits on a rainbow within a bright, circular *clipeus,* which is also streaked with multicolored clouds, their lines forming a counterpoint to the downward curve of the rainbow. His golden nimbus is inscribed with a cross in red outline. His hair, shoulder-length, repeats the circle of the nimbus in a mass around his roundish face; his expression is serene but somber. He wears a crimson *chiton* decorated with two full-length gold stripes, the left one visible only at the hem, just above golden sandals, and a purplish-blue *himation* that covers his left shoulder and arm and the lower part of his body. His right arm is extended, with the palm open, upward; the left holds an open scroll, on which is inscribed the slightly-modified text of Isa 25:9–10: "Behold our God, on whom we put our hope, and we have rejoiced in our salvation, for he will give rest to this house."[7] The *clipeus* is translucent; through it we see parts of the wings of four creatures that support it: clockwise, beginning by the right hand of Christ, a human figure, an eagle, a bull, and a lion, realistically modelled. Each carries a large, red, jewel-encrusted book. The human figure wears a nimbus; the others do not. The wings are full of eyes, outlined in gold. The wings of the bull are divided by lengthwise lines into three segments each.

In rocky landscapes on either side of the Christ are two human figures in grayish-white *himatia* over blue-gray *chitones.* Both heads have nimbuses. On Christ's right stands an old man with long, pointed beard. He bows deeply from the waist, and his hands are thrown up close beside his face, each palm open forward and thumbs extended near his eyes. Opposite him sits a beardless man of uncertain age, legs crossed, right hand supporting his chin and left holding an open codex. His contemplative pose forms a stark contrast to the agitated stance of the other. The book's inscription reads: "This most honorable house [is] a life-giving, welcoming, nourishing spring for the souls of the faithful." The same text stretches, in large silver letters on a red band, along the lower border of the whole mosaic, with the dedicatory addition, "Having made a vow, I attained [the object of my prayer], and having attained, I fulfilled [my vow]. For her vow, whose name God knows."[8]

Just above the border inscription meanders a great, green river, extending from just below the feet of the left-hand seer to just below the seated figure on the right. Left of center, just beneath the lion, the conventional personification of the river strikes an unconventional pose. As green as the river and almost indistinguishable from its waves, this bearded figure reclines, visible only from waist up, and with staring eyes and upraised hand appears to react with terror to the vision above. The gesture resembles that of the human fig-

ure on our left; the river person could almost be taken as the seer's reflection in the water. Three large, colorful fish swim in the river. In the center, directly beneath Christ's feet, five spits of land divide the waters, four central streams that are marked off as if by islands from the main river.

BIBLICAL MOTIFS

When Xyngopoulos first examined the small area of the mosaic visible to him in March 1921—the winged lion, the edge of the *clipeus,* and the upper hand of the left-hand seer—he immediately judged that "the whole composition in all likelihood had as its theme the vision of the prophet Ezekiel, with the description of which (Ezek 1:4ff.) it agrees almost entirely. The old man beside the lion appears to be Ezekiel himself, seeing the vision."[9] Xyngopoulos held fast to this interpretation when he had completed the cleaning of the whole apse in 1929, reinforced now by his knowledge of the twelfth-century "Edifying Narrative," which identified the two seers as Ezekiel and Habakkuk respectively.[10] Moreover, a fourteenth-century icon in the National Archaeological Museum in Sofia, originally in the Poganovo monastery, clearly depends in some way on the Salonican mosaic and identifies "Ezekiel" and "Habakkuk" with labels.[11] Most commentators agree that Ezekiel's "Chariot" vision is constitutive, though the identity of the two seers, especially the "Habakkuk," is still debated. Nevertheless, there are obvious problems with the supposition that the mosaic *represents* Ezekiel's vision.

First of all, the "chariot" and its elaborately described wheels are missing from the Latomou mosaic, as indeed is a *throne* of any kind. Comparison with the depictions of the vision in the monastic chapels of Bawit, Egypt, otherwise strikingly similar, and with the Ascension in the Rabula Gospels Codex shows how these features could be emphasized if the text of Ezekiel were more in control of the image.[12] Second, the four living creatures that support the light-globe within which Christ sits are not the four-faced "tetramorphs" seen by Ezekiel and often represented in later Eastern Christian art (including the Rabula Ascension, which however shows only one of them), but the four symbols of the Evangelists, derived from the rewritten or revisioned apparition in Revelation 4. The latter, and indeed any influence by the Apocalypse, are unusual in art of the early Eastern church, so that one reviewer categorically denied the possibility of their presence in Thessaloniki. They are, nevertheless, unmistakable.[13] The puzzle grows when we remember that the one direct quotation from scripture in the mosaic's inscriptions is neither from Ezekiel nor from Habakkuk, but from Isaiah—yet there is no

feature of the composition that recalls Isaiah's great theophany (Isa 6:1–5). (The Poganovo icon "corrects" this anomaly by providing an Ezekiel quotation—but in the hand of the figure it labels "Habakkuk"!)

Before we can get further in understanding the biblical allusions in the composition, we must rid ourselves of the Western (and especially Protestant) assumption that early Christian art *illustrates* the Bible ("the Bible of the poor"). Christa Ihm has collected a half dozen examples of apse decorations that parallel the Latomou mosaic. She concludes "that none of the apse images follows a specific [biblical] report; rather each time motifs from Ezekiel are freely combined with others from Isaiah and John [of Patmos]."[14] She argues that the imagery is mediated by the liturgy, which had already merged the theophanies of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the Apocalypse and freely varies their details—just as the iconography does.[15] This insight surely puts us on the right track. However, we may also doubt whether the function of the apse decoration was primarily to illustrate the liturgy any more than to illustrate the Bible. If illustration had been its central purpose, we would be hard put to understand the passion on both sides in the iconoclastic controversies. Rather, liturgy, art, and preaching worked together to mediate an experience of worship. Biblical motifs, if not always particular biblical narratives, richly inform all three. We can still see the tradition of biblical allusion alive in the language of Abbot Ignatius's twelfth-century "Edifying Narrative."

The legend of Senouphios may also contain a clue to the way we should understand the unique melding of motifs in our mosaic. What the aged monk prayed for above all else was *a vision of God.* There is, of course, a long biblical and post-biblical tradition about the possibility of seeing God and about what those ancient worthies who are said in the Bible to have seen the deity really saw. Before we consider the connection of that tradition with the Latomou mosaic, it will be useful to list the mosaic's most important motifs and the biblical texts that might have suggested each of them.

The *clipeus,* the translucent globe of light that surrounds the Christ, is a central feature of the composition. As Thomas Mathews points out, it is not at all like the Roman shield image, *imago clipeata,* which has given this motif its common designation among art historians. The earliest extant Christian example is on a mosaic in the Catacomb of S. Domatilla in Rome, dated by Mathews between 366 and 384. Because of striking parallels in earlier images of the Buddha, Mathews thinks the motif may have been borrowed from India or Central Asia.[16] Be that as it may, the form it takes at Latomou vividly recalls Ezekiel's initial vision, which was of "a great cloud" borne by a north wind, with "splendor [φέγγος] around it and fire flashing, and in its

midst as it were an appearance of electrum in the midst of the fire and splendor in it" (Ezek 1:4 LXX).[17] After describing the appearance of the four animals, the prophet says further that, "above their heads, the heads of the animals, there was something like a firmament [στερέωμα] like the appearance of crystal, stretched out above [or, upon] their wings above" (v. 22). It is surely this description that, directly or indirectly, suggested to the artist the translucency of the globe, which he has produced by technically brilliant modulation of the colors of the *tesserae*.[18]

Fire and light typically accompany biblical theophanies; they are particularly associated with the "glory" of God, and Ezekiel summarizes his vision, "this is the appearance of the likeness of the glory [δόξα] of the Lord" (v. 28, cf. 10:19). So in Israel's classic theophany, at Sinai, "The form of the glory of the Lord was like flaming fire [πῦρ φλέγον] on the brow of the mountain before the sons of Israel" (Exod 24:17 LXX). The Greek version of the theophany reported in the "Prayer of Habakkuk" (Hab 3) reduces the light imagery in comparison with the Hebrew original, but it retains the line "his brightness [φέγγος] is like light [φῶς]" (v. 4) and the consternation of sun and moon at the brightness of God's weapons (v. 11). Dan 7:9 compares the throne to a "flame of fire" (φλὸξ πυρός); a river of fire flows forth from before God (v. 10). John of Patmos sees a throne from which come lightning and thunder, but the constant flame now is confined to "seven lamps burning before the throne" (Rev 4:5). Of all these, Ezekiel's description has most in common with the mosaic.

At the center of Ezekiel's vision, as of the Latomou mosaic, is a human figure, which Ezekiel describes with great circumspection: "the likeness, as it were, of the form of a human person above" (ὁμοίωμα ὡς εἶδος ἀνθρώπου ἄνωθεν), upon "the likeness of a throne" that resembled "the appearance of sapphire stone," standing on the crystal firmament (v. 26). This corresponds to the description of the Sinai theophany in Exod 24:10, though there the throne is not mentioned, and the sapphire is a "pavement [ἔργον πλίνθου] like the appearance of the firmament of heaven for clearness." That God was seen as a human figure in the theophanies seems generally to be taken for granted, though seldom explicitly stated—after all, humans had been created "in [God's] image, according to his likeness" (Gen 1:26). Only later Jewish interpreters would find anthropomorphism a problem, the human figure in heaven a puzzle, and especially the two figures of Daniel 7 ("an Ancient of Days," vv. 9, 13, "like a human's son," v. 13), both enthroned, a dangerous notion. All these anomalies were welcome, of course, to Christian inter-

preters; Abbot Ignatius calls our composition θεανδρικός εἰκών, "a God-manly image." These are matters to which we shall return.

The throne is visible in most of the biblical theophanies: beside Ezekiel and Daniel, Isa 6:1; 1 Kings 22:19; and throughout John's Apocalypse (cf. also Heb 8:1; 12:2). It is also a frequent motif in depictions of Christ in Christian art. But in Latomou there is no throne. Christ "perches on a most unsubstantial rainbow."[19] This is one of the most original aspects of the Latomou composition, and it has no precise counterpart in the biblical descriptions. The source is most likely Ezekiel 1:28, which says that "the nature [στάσις] of the brightness around [the human figure]" was "like the appearance of a bow [τόξον], when it is in the cloud on a rainy day." This in turn clearly alludes to God's covenant with Noah and his offspring: "I place my bow [i.e., the weapon of war] in the cloud. It shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth" (Gen 9:13; cf. vv. 12–17). In John's description of his vision, the allusion to the covenant is obscured by his use of ἶρις instead of τόξον. The rainbow is now "around the throne," and it also borrows from Ezekiel's throne "the appearance of emerald" (Rev 4:3).[20] In none of these instances is the figure *seated on* the rainbow.[21]

The four winged animals who bear the translucent aureole also recall Ezekiel's vision (Ezek 1.5–11, 15, 19, 20, 22–24; cf. 10:8–22, where they are identified as "cherubim"), but with significant differences, as we have already noticed. In Ezekiel each creature has four faces, of man, lion, bull, and eagle respectively. It is the Apocalypse that has revised this to four different creatures, one each like man, lion, bull, and eagle (Rev 4:6–8). In the Prayer of Habakkuk (which is also one of the Odes of the Greek church) God is made known "between two animals" (ἐν μέσῳ δύο ζῴων, Hab 3:2), recalling the two seraphs of Isa 6:2. Psalm 67:11 LXX also speaks of God's ζῴα, which dwell in his inheritance; this Psalm also speaks of God's "chariotry" with which he appears at Sinai (v. 18).[22] The animals of Ezekiel's vision have each four wings (Ezek 1:11), while Isaiah's seraphs have six, as do the creatures seen by John of Patmos. The Latomou creatures have two.[23] The cherubim of the tabernacle and of the Jerusalem temple also seem to have had only two wings (Exod 25:20; 1 Kings 6:23–27; 2 Chron 3:11–12; we are not told whether the cherubim on the walls of the new temple envisioned by Ezekiel had wings, though they had each two faces, of a man and of a lion: Ezek 41:18–19). The wings of the creatures on our mosaic are full of eyes, corresponding to Rev 4:8. In Ezek 1:18 it is the backs (νῶτοι) that are full of eyes, while in Ezek 10:12 the wings also are full of eyes, but so are backs, hands,

and wheels. We may wonder whether these mysterious eyes were identified with the "eyes of the Lord" that, according to 2 Chron 16:9, oversee the entire earth, and which are represented by the seven lamps on the golden lampstand in Zechariah's vision (Zech 4:10).

At the center of the meandering water on the lower border of the composition, five irregular bars of land divide the flood into four small channels—while the larger river goes on its way around them. The motif, found in many examples in early Christian art, recalls the account in the creation narrative of a river that flows from Eden and divides into four streams (Gen 2:10–14).[24] If we were not familiar with this motif, we would be tempted to count six rather than four streams here, for the large river does not so much divide into the others as contain them—as if two motifs were being merged. The upward curve of the river and of the five land spits, accentuated by the curve of the wings of lion and bull, suggests the shape of the hill from which the rivers flow in many other representations. But of course Christ does not stand or sit enthroned on a hill here, but above the mountainous landscape in his aureole. It is plausible that the artist has seen examples of the hill of paradise with its four streams and incorporates it here, but adapts it to a different schema in which the great river full of fish is the dominant feature. Those interpreters who take the mosaic simply to represent Ezekiel's first vision are content to regard this as the River Chebar (Greek Χοβαρ), scene of that vision (Ezek 1:1, 3).[25] But something more is going on here.

Several biblical texts take up the river image in eschatological contexts. In Zech 14:8, "living water" will flow from Jerusalem "in that day," in which "the Lord will become king over all the earth." In Joel 4:18, a spring (πήγη) will flow "from the house of the Lord." In Rev 22:1, "a river of the water of life, bright as crystal," flows "from the throne of God and of the Lamb" through the New Jerusalem. But perhaps closest to our scene is the river Ezekiel sees in his temple vision (Ezek 47:1–12), which has contributed to the final vision of John's Apocalypse as well. The water flows from "beneath the threshold of the temple [οἶκος]" (v. 1). It becomes a river too deep to cross (v. 5), which makes healthy all water it touches and makes alive every animal it comes upon (v. 9). Its fish are "a very great multitude, like the fish of the Great Sea" (v. 10). We remember the double inscription that describes this church itself (οἶκος) as "a life-giving, welcoming, nourishing spring."

There remains the peculiar personification of the river, the green, grimacing figure who emerges from the water just below the lion and mirrors the gesture of the prophet to the left. Of course the river god or personification is a familiar feature of Hellenistic and Roman art, and it was widely adopted by

the early Christians. But one has only to compare, for example, the powerful, serenely seated figure of the Jordan in the Arian Baptistery of Ravenna to see how different this one is. As J.-M. Spieser says, "We are far from the Jordan, witness of baptism; on the contrary, we have an image of the Jordan as pagan divinity, indeed as a demon that turns away and flees before the conquering Christ."[26] Ihm points out that the Jordan could take on this "demonic" guise on the basis of Psalm 114:3 (LXX 113:3), "The sea looked and fled, the Jordan turned back."[27] The motif of hostile waters, ultimately derived perhaps from the common ancient Near Eastern myth of the chaos-dragon, appears also in the theophany report in the Prayer of Habakkuk: "Were you angry with rivers, Lord, or was your wrath against rivers, or your rage against sea?" (Hab 3:8). "You rode your horses into the sea, greatly troubling the water" (v. 15). On the other hand, the beneficent river Ezekiel saw flowing from the new Temple could also be identified with the Jordan, as in a fragment by Severus of Antioch (ca. 465–538) quoted by Neuss.[28]

Our survey of biblical passages to which the motifs of the Latomou mosaic might allude amply vindicates Ihm's observation, that it does not illustrate a particular text. On the other hand, it is not a pastiche of the three great theophanies Ihm cites, Isa 6:1–5, Ezekiel 1, and Revelation 4. There are more features of the composition that recall Ezekiel's vision than any other, but elements of the Apocalypse are undeniable, and there are more or less probable allusions to many other texts, most of them also theophanic. Yet, despite the quotation from Isaiah on the codex held by the prophet, there is no element of Isaiah's vision report that is recognizable here. Biblical allusions abound; they are combined with great freedom yet with compelling visual logic. We are presented, not with a copy of Ezekiel's vision or John's vision, but with an extraordinary artist's vision that certainly was intended to respond to the desire of worshippers, like the monk Senouphios, to see God.

VISUALIZING THE UNSEEABLE

When Moses asked the same favor as Senouphios, God replied, "You cannot see my face, for no human person shall see my face and live" (Exod 33:20). Yet other texts of the Bible seem to contradict this prohibition. Earlier in the same chapter we are told that "the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as one would speak to his friend" (33:11; cf. Num 12:8; Deut 34:10), and Moses and his companions, including seventy elders, "saw the God of Israel"; "God did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; also they beheld God, and they ate and drank" (Exod 24:10–11, NRSV). The Septuagint

translators, doubtless troubled by the contradiction, emended the last-cited passage to read "they saw *the place where God stood.*" But there were other perplexing passages as well; for example, both Isaiah and Micaiah said simply, "I saw the Lord, seated on his throne" (Isa 6:1; 1 Kings 22:19), and the Old Greek translators left the scandal unchanged.

We have noticed how circumspectly Ezekiel described his vision at the river Chebar, with his "as" and "likeness" and "appearance." Nevertheless, that description exercised a powerful and sometimes troubling fascination over subsequent generations of interpreters and, perhaps, mystics, creating the elusive "Merkava tradition."[29] What was the "likeness as of a human form above" that Ezekiel saw "on the likeness of the throne"? Was it the same as that enigmatic "one like a human son" that Daniel saw enthroned with "the one ancient of days"? What was a human figure doing in heaven? If God could not be seen or imaged, what did these prophets and their predecessors see? We know something about the ways Jewish interpreters from antiquity to the early middle ages tried to solve those puzzles and others that arose from the theophanic texts. We know, for example, that Philo could find in visions of the Pentateuch and in descriptions of the Ark and the Cherubim appearances, not of God himself, who revealed himself to Moses simply as "the One who Is," ὁ ὤν, but of God's Logos and his Powers.[30] We know that "the Lord" seen by Moses, Isaiah, Micaiah, and the others could be understood as the highest angel, the one of whom God said, "My name is in him" (Exod 23:20–21).[31] We know that sometimes that angelic figure could be identified as the heavenly counterpart of Israel, either seated on God's throne or engraved as an image on that throne.[32] We know that in later speculation this figure could become "the little Yahweh" or "Yaoel" or "Metatron," and we know that some rabbis worried over those who might think there were "two powers in heaven."[33]

For the careful reader of the biblical stories of God's appearances, there were at least three problems. One was that, though it was either forbidden or impossible to see God, nevertheless a number of important personages claimed to have done so. The second was the appearance of a human figure in heaven, sometimes apparently equated with God, sometimes alongside God. The third was that there was no consistency among the appearances: details of the heavenly scene vary wildly from one report to the next. In some circles the second problem could be construed as a solution of sorts to the first. One could not in fact see God; the "Lord" seen by Isaiah, Micaiah, and Moses was God's subaltern, the highest angel who bore God's own name. That solution, of course, created new problems for those Jews who wanted to

assert a more absolute monotheism, and it further complicated the chimeric variation of the reported heavenly scene.

Christian interpreters early on discovered in the contradictions a christological opportunity. "No one has ever seen God," the Fourth Gospel affirms; "a unique one, also 'God,' who is in the bosom of the Father—he has brought out the knowledge [of God]" (1:18).[34] And that Gospel's Jesus could tell his disciple, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (14:9). Even earlier Paul had read the Genesis creation story in the light of Ezekiel's and Daniel's visions to identify the risen Christ with "the second Adam," "the man from heaven," "a life-giving spirit"—that same human figure that appeared in the theophanies.[35] Elements of the visions of Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah, and Zechariah blend freely together in John's description of his vision on Patmos (Rev 4–5). Once the sect of the followers of Messiah Jesus began in their practice to discover the impulse to worship Jesus (e.g., Phil 2:10–11), to expect from him forgiveness of sins (e.g., Mark 2:5–9), to anticipate his "day" of vindication before the world (e.g., 1 Thess 5:2), a day in which he would judge the world, as the Son of Man (e.g., John 5:27)—once, in short, their practice implied that functions and names of the risen Christ were also functions and names of God, then those most ambiguous and troubling accounts of theophanies in the Jewish scriptures became the most welcome grist for the Christian reinterpretive mill.[36] Justin Martyr found the preincarnate Logos "another God" not only in the theophanies, but in appearances of angels and archangels and in many odd-looking references to the Lord that might be other than God the Father.[37] Many others would take up the same quest for visions of Christ in the scriptures that were coming to be known as "the Old Testament."

Though occasionally Ezekiel's vision played a key role in the christological development, on the whole it did not attract much attention among patristic writers—at least in the surviving remains. The story of the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37) was treated more often as an obvious support for the belief in the resurrection of the dead. The chariot vision was usually assimilated in the West to that of Revelation 4 and, beginning with Irenaeus, the four creatures were taken to represent both the powers of God or Christ and the Gospels.[38] Origen, however, wrote a 25-book commentary on Ezekiel, only small fragments of which survive, as well as a number of homilies, of which fourteen are extant in Latin.[39] One of Origen's interpretive moves was to make Ezekiel himself a type of Christ, so that the vision represents Christ's vision at baptism (and Chobar then is equated with the Jordan) of a greater baptism he must undergo "in the course of the aeons."[40] David Halperin has

shown that, though most of Origen's allegory is quite unlike Jewish exegesis, it has important connections with the "Visions of Ezekiel" found in the Cairo Geniza. From the latter, along with fragments found in midrashic collections, Halperin reconstructs a cycle of synagogue homilies that he thinks were preached in Caesarea around the festival of Shabu'ot in the third century and were at the core of the developing "Merkava" tradition.[41] There is other evidence that Origen carried on an extensive, if partly covert, dialogue with the Caesarean rabbis of his time, centering on the interpretation of scriptural texts.[42] If Halperin is right that Ezekiel's chariot vision was one of them, that dialogue marks an important intersection of Jewish and Christian readings of the theophanic texts. There appears, in the fragmentary remaining evidence, no direct road from that third-century dialogue in Caesarea to the fifth-century vision in Thessaloniki. There are enough clues, however, to enable us to surmise two parallel tracks: one leading on to further development of the merkava tradition into more speculative forms, including the so-called *Hekalot* texts, and its exploitation for magical and mystical aims; the other to the manifestation of the heavenly Christ, borne on the chariot of the cherubim, to worshippers assisted by image, liturgy, music, and the transformation of the host at the climax of the Eucharist.[43] Both tracks were in fact multiple, with many local variations. What the Jewish and Christian tracks had in common was preoccupation with roughly the same set of problematical texts, together with a powerful drive to visualize what heaven was really like and what that vision promised for human hopes. "Behold our God," proclaims the Christ of Latomou, "on whom we put our hope, and we have rejoiced in our salvation, for he will give rest to this house."

The variety of the theophanic texts, which as we have seen is reflected in the ambiguity of reference of the Latomou composition and has thus led to such diversity in modern attempts to pin down just what that composition purports to image, has its own intentional meaning for theological interpreters. In the fourth century, Cyril of Jerusalem makes the point directly in a comment on John 1:18: "Having said, 'No one has ever yet seen God,' the Evangelist showed us that everything which the prophets spoke, such as Isaiah, that he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, Ezekiel, upon the Cherubim, and Daniel, on a throne, and certain others of them about beholding him—all those things belonged to condescension, not as though the naked essence itself were seen. For if they had seen the nature itself they would not have beheld it in different forms; for it is simple, formless, uncompounded, unlimited, and neither sits nor stands. For all these attributes belong to bodies, and neither any of the angels nor of the archangels sees him, much less

any human being."[44] Chrysostom appealed to Ezekiel's vision in his treatise "On the Incomprehensibility of God," presenting an opinion common among the Antiochene exegetes.[45] Irenaeus had already made a similar point two centuries earlier. None of the prophets, not even Moses, ever saw God "face to face." Rather, they saw only "economies [or, modes of accommodation] through which humankind would see God, as was said also to Elijah [1 Kings 19:11–12]," and "likenesses of the glory of the Lord" (*similitudines claritatis Domini* = ὁμοίωμα δόξης Κυρίου, Ezek 1:28). After discussing the cases of Moses, Elijah, and Ezekiel, Irenaeus concludes, "And the Logos himself, revealer [ἐξηγητής] of the Father, whose being is rich and manifold, was not beheld in a single form or a single character by those who saw him, but according to the accommodations of his activities."[46]

The Greek theologians understood that the incomprehensibility of God does not entail refusal to image him at all, for he has given us his own theandric image in Jesus Christ. That understanding is what the "iconodules" were defending in the great controversies of the eight and ninth centuries. Rather, the very multiplicity and ambiguity of the images, even those in the Bible itself, go to teach us that the holy triune God transcends human power to perceive and to conceive, yet comes near to us "by condescension." When the theophanies of the Old Testament were read as visions of Christ, then, as Irenaeus observed, conceptions of Christ, too, became multiple and ambiguous. The art historian Thomas Mathews has sharply observed the polymorphic portrayals of Christ and offered a challenging interpretation. If the apocryphal acts and gospels could report different people seeing Christ in quite different forms—one, a child, another, an old man, another, a beardless youth—why could not the ambiguity of visual images serve the same ends? Mathews' conclusion to his chapter on "Christ Chameleon," deserves quoting at length:

> We who live in a post-Christian world think we have arrived at a certain objectivity about Christ. We have assigned him his place in history books and assessed his impact on the course of human development. The new converts of the fourth and fifth century did not find it so easy. To them he was still utterly mysterious, undefinable, changeable, polymorphous. In the disparate images they have left behind they record their struggle to get a grasp on him; the images were their way of thinking out loud on the problem of Christ. Indeed, the images are the thinking process itself.[47]

The most controversial aspect of Mathews's interpretation is likely to be his insistence that some of the early representations of Christ, including that

in the Latomou church, are feminized or androgynous.[48] The case is very strong in many of the examples, over a considerable time period. Whether a fifth-century worshiper—or the anonymous woman who commissioned it—would have seen the Latomou Christ as feminine is less clear.[49] Still, Mathews has challenged us to see features of this portrait that have been obscured for us by a controlling tradition in art history that for half a century has insisted that the Christ of Byzantine apse Mosaics is "the imperial Christ," modeled on features of the Roman and Byzantine court portraiture. Mathews demonstrates that the "imperial mystique" was based on a series of mistakes and misreadings, some of them egregious. Art historians will probably continue to argue whether, after all, this motif or that may owe something to the imperial portraiture, but Mathews's argument as a whole is impressive in quality of evidence and in clarity.[50] The Christ who meets us in the Latomou mosaic is not a stern warrior king, but a long-haired, gentle-faced, soft-featured youth, dressed, however richly, yet as a philosopher, who gestures as if to invite us to a discourse on wisdom. If he is not effeminate, he is certainly no model for royal *machismo.*

Nevertheless, there is something undeniably majestic about this gentle figure who stares so patiently at the viewer and holds out the message of hope, salvation, and rest. His are a philosopher's robes, but what philosopher is this who wears crimson, gold, and purple, whose golden nimbus is set with a jeweled cross, and who sits on God's bow on the crystal, cloud-bedecked disk of light borne by the four divine beings of God's chariot? Here we see just that paradox of power-in-weakness that the apostle Paul already understood to be the center of the gospel. While the western church took up Paul's chief focus of that paradox in the scandal of the cross, so that eventually the crucifix became its central image, in the East it was the Johannine notion of incarnation, the manifestation of the God-Man, that became the center of awe and contemplation. That is what the anonymous artist of the Latomou monastery tried to show.

We have not solved the puzzle of the two side figures in the apse. There are no exact parallels, to my knowledge, in extant early Christian or Byzantine art. I am inclined to agree with Spieser that they represent quite specific personages, and that absent some new discovery we shall never know who those personages were.[51] The attitudes of the figures, however, is quite clear. The posture of the "Ezekiel" figure is not that of the *orans,* though there is some superficial resemblance. Rather, as Xyngopoulos recognized from the beginning, everything about his stance expresses awe, awe engendered by the vision itself. And the other figure's posture is even easier to read, for it

is the classic pose of the ancient philosopher, not as teacher, but as the θεωρητικός, deep in contemplation.[52] Whoever these figures were supposed to be in the fifth century, their reactions to the vision of the gentle but majestic, polymorphous but unmistakable God-man, were the reactions every worshiper ought to have when that figure came to meet them "on the chariot of the cherubim" at the climax of the Eucharist: awe and contemplation.

"The miracle of the Latomou" has repeated itself. It is nothing less than a miracle that this little gem of early Christian art has survived a millennium and a half, through iconoclasm, earthquake, war, and conquest, twice plastered over, twice recovered. The "rest" it promised to the little house in which it stands has at best been ironic, but Christian theology, when true to its roots, has always understood that the ἀνάπαυσις promised to the faithful is as paradoxical as the power of the gentle and suffering Christ. Perhaps the true miracle of the Latomou is that even in our cynical age this relic of an ancient faith can still evoke awe in the viewer and its mysteries lay claim on our contemplation.

Notes

My wife, Martha F. Meeks, and I did the research for this essay jointly. Although she did not live to participate in the actual writing, I have been able to draw on many of the notes she had taken, as well as many conversations about the Hosios David church, which began when we first saw it in Thessaloniki in 1993. The finished essay is the poorer for want of her editorial skill, her art historical judgment, and above all her extraordinary vision, but I hope it remains a fitting expression of the enthusiasm she shared with me for offering a gift to Rowan Greer, a friend of—can it be?—more than thirty-five years.

1. "Edifying Account concerning the Divine-human Image of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was revealed in the Monastery of the Stonecutters in Thessalonica, composed by Ignatius, monk and Abbot of the Akapnios Monastery," in *Varia graeca sacra,* ed. Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus (Zapiski Istoriko-filologicheskago fakulteta Imperatorskago S.-Petersburgskago Universiteta, 95; Saint Petersburg: V. F. Kirshbauma, 1909), 102–13, quotation from 111–12, my translation.
2. See previous note. Papadopoulos-Kerameus found the story in two manuscripts, one in the Kosinitza Monastery, the other in Moscow. The latter is dated to the twelfth century (Venance Grumel, "La mosaïque du 'Dieu Sauveur' au monastère du 'Latome' à Salonique [découverte en août 1927], *Echos d'Orient* 33 [1930] 165). The legend itself is probably much older. Indeed, Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis has argued that Agnellus of Ravenna, writing around 831, borrowed the story whole and transposed it to Classe in the time of Bishop Peter I (Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, "Agnellus of Ravenna and

Iconoclasm: Theology and Politics in a ninth-century Historical Text," *Speculum* 71 [1996] 571). This would put circulation of the tale very close to the reported events. (My thanks to Peter Brown for calling my attention to the Deliyannis article.) The second "iconomachy," explicitly mentioned in the "Edifying Narrative," section 9, is an important subtext of the legend. However the legend explains the covering of the mosaic not as reaction to iconoclasm, but as a means of hiding from the wicked emperor Maximian (A.D. 285–305) the image, which had miraculously appeared in the church that his daughter Theodora, new convert to Christianity, had constructed in the guise of a bath. Does this most improbable part of the tale also allude covertly to the iconoclasm controversy? The coincidence of name of Maximian's (step)daughter with that of the widow of Theophilus, who in the year 843 restored the icons after the second period of iconoclasm, must at least have been very welcome to the author. On the latter Theodora's role, see George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, revised ed., trans. Joan Hussey (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1969), 219–23.

3. Although the "Edifying Account" uses the plural, all other records report the monastery's name in the singular.
4. A. Xyngopoulos, "Τὸ Κεραμεντὶμ-Τζαμι Θεσσαλονίκης," Ἀρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον 6 (1920–21) 190–94. He published a full report of his findings, after extended work on the site in 1927 and 1929, in "Τὸ Καθολικὸν τῆς μονῆς Λατόμου ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ ψηφιδωτόν," Ἀρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον 12 (1929) 142–80. After cleaning of the mosaic was complete, in August 1927, it was described briefly, without prior knowledge of Xyngopoulos, by Jean Papadopoulos, "Mosaïque byzantine de Salonique," *Comptes Rendus de L'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres* (1927), 215–18. Charles Diehl, in October of the same year, appears to have been the first to call attention to the significance of the "Edifying Narrative" (ibid., 256–61), as he insists in "A propos de la mosaïque d'Hosios David à Salonique," *Byzantion* 7 (1932) 333–34. The "Edifying Narrative" suggests that the church was once dedicated to Zechariah. However, the "Life of Joseph the Hymnographer" (early ninth century) by John the Deacon (date uncertain) reports that the original name of the monastery was "God the Savior," which would certainly accord with the apse mosaic and inscription, and that it was renamed "Latomou" from the miracle that occurred there (ἐκ τοῦ γεγενημένου θαύματος; cited by Grumel, "La mosaïque," 167, from *PG* 105: 945b). Grumel goes on to guess that "Latomos" must have referred to some particular "stone-cutter," not a quarry as the "Edifying Narrative" says, and that the stone-cutter was Senouphios himself, whose skeleton he thinks was one found wearing "the iron belt of an ascetic" in the church (169, 173–75). But dates of the burials are uncertain, and nothing in the tradition connects Senouphios with quarrying or masonry. To compound confusion, the mosque into which the damaged church was converted after the fifteenth century also

is known by various names in the modern literature, but that need not concern us here.

5. Xyngopoulos initially dated the mosaic to the fifth century, but that was contested by C. R. Morey, who argued for a seventh-century date ("A Note on the Date of the Mosaic of Hosios David, Salonica," *Byzantion* 7 (1932) 339–46. Morey's argument was vigorously refuted by Diehl in the same periodical ("A propos la mosaïque"). In 1964 Gerke published a detailed stylistic and compositional analysis, which argues persuasively for a date early in the fifth century, and that view has won wide acceptance, though Spieser, insisting that the Latomou mosaic must be later than those of the St. George Rotunda, argued in 1984 for a date around the middle of the sixth century. (Friedrich Gerke, "Il mosaico absidale di Hosios David al Salonico," *Corso di cultura sull'arte ravennate et bizantina* 11 (1964) 179–99; J.-M. Spieser, *Thessalonique et ses monuments du IVe au VIe siècle: Contribution a l'étude d'une ville paléochrétienne,* Bibliotèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 254; Athens: École Française d'Athènes, 1984), 157.
6. Diehl, "A propos de la mosaïque," 335. The photograph is supplied through the kindness of the Department of Byzantine Antiquities of Thessaloniki, whom I thank for permission to reproduce it. I am especially grateful to my colleague, Maria Georgopoulou, who generously arranged for me to obtain the photograph. The apse mosaic is reproduced in color on the dust jacket of the present volume.
7. Ἰδοὺ ὁ θ(εὸ)ς ἡμῶν, ἐφ᾽ ᾧ ἐλπίζομεν κ(αὶ) ἠγαλλιώμεθα ἐπὶ τῇ σωτηρίᾳ ἡμῶν, ὅτι ἀνάπαυσιν δώσει ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον τοῦτον. Isa 25:9–10 reads: καὶ ἐροῦσιν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ᾽ *Ἰδοὺ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, ἐφ᾽ ᾧ ἠλπίζομεν καὶ ἠγαλλιώμεθα,* καὶ εὐφρανθησόμεθα *ἐπὶ τῇ σωτηρίᾳ ἡμῶν. ὅτι ἀνάπαυσιν δώσει* ὁ θεὸς *ἐπὶ* τὸ ὄρος τοῦτο. The inscription omits the third verb in the series and substitutes "this house" for "this hill," equating the church with Mount Zion.
8. +Πηγὴ ζ[ω]ητική, δεκτική, θρεπτικὴ ψυχῶν πιστῶν ὁ πα[νέντιμος οἶ]κος οὗτος· [εὐξαμ]ένη ἐπέτυχα καὶ ἐπιτυχο[ῦσ]α ἐπλήροσα+ +ὑπὲρ εὐχῆς [ἧς οἶδεν ὁ θεός τὸ ὄνομα].
9. "Κεραμεντιμ-Τζαμι," 193, my translation; note his sketch in fig. 6.
10. "Καθολικόν," 158–59; "Edifying Narrative," section 6, Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 106–7.
11. The Poganovo icon bears an inscription identifying its theme as "Jesus Christ in the Latomou Miracle" (ΙΣ ΧΣ Ο ΕΝ ΛΑΤΟΜΟΥ ΘΑΥΜΑ), so there can be no question of its ultimate source. At the same time, it differs from the mosaic in some ways: "Habakkuk" is here a bearded old man, not the "handsome youth" of the Latomos mosaic; he carries a scroll, not a codex, and its inscription is from Ezek 3:1 (!), υἱὲ ἀνθρώπου κατάφαγε τὴν κεφαλίδα ταύτην (T. Gerasimov, "L'icone bilatérale de Poganovo au Musée Archéologique de Sofia," *Cahiers Archéologique* 10 [1959] 279–88, quotation from 280). It also lacks the four

streams of paradise and substitutes for the river a rocky pool with fish (cf. André Grabar, "À propos d'une icone byzantine du xive siècle au musée de Sofia," *Cahiers Archéologique* 10 [1959] 289–304). Noting that these variants agree both with the "Edifying Narrative" and with what remains of a third parallel pointed out by Gerasimov, a much-damaged fresco in a funeral chapel in Bačkovo, Bulgaria, Xyngopoulos thinks it more likely that the immediate prototype of icon and fresco was a miniature illustrating Ignatius's "Narrative" and probably contemporary with it, made in Thessaloniki (André Xyngopoulos, "Sur L'icone bilatérale de Poganovo," *Cahiers Archéologique* 12 [1962] 341–50).

12. Jean Clédat, *Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouît* (Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut français d' archéologie orientale du Caire, 12, 39; Cairo: Institute français d'archéologie orientale, 1904, 1916); see especially Plates 59 and 90 in vol. 12. See also Jean Maspero, "Rapport sur les fouilles enterprises à Baouît," *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres* (1913) 287–301, and idem., *Fouilles exécutées à Baouît* (Mémoires . . . , 59; Cairo: Institut Français, 1931). The Rabula Codex, containing the Gospels in Syriac and dated A.D. 586, is now in the Laurential Library in Florence. Its ascension scene is often reproduced, e.g., in André Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of its Origins* (The A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, 1961; Bollingen Series 35.10; [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968]), Pl. I.
13. Edmund Weigand, in a review of a 1930 article by V. Grumel and the 1927 notes by Papadopoulos and Diehl, insists that "die griechische Osten hat sich aber in Übereinstimmung mit seiner ablehnenden Haltung gegenüber der Johannesapokalypse auch die abendländische Deutung der τέσσαρα ζῷα als Symbole der Evangelisten lange nicht zu eigen gemacht" (*Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 31 [1931] 194–95). He vigorously reiterates his position two months later in reviewing Xyngopoulos's major publication of the site and a debate by Morey and Diehl about its date (ibid., 33 [1933] 212); he does not explain why Ezekiel's four creatures should have only one face each and be carrying books. At the opposite pole, James Snyder, "The Meaning of the 'Maiestas domini' in Hosios David," *Byzantion* 37 [1967] 143–52, insists that the whole vision is based primarily on Revelation 4–5, not on Ezekiel (p. 150). Snyder points out that Thessaloniki's connections with the West were strong; it was the seat of the Roman vicariate in the East from the time of Pope Damasus (fourth century; p. 152). N. Thierry, "Apocalypse de Jean et l'iconographie byzantine," in *L'Apocalypse de Jean: Traditions exégétiques et iconographiques IIIe–XIIIe siècles,* ed. Yves Christe, et al. (Acts du Colloque de la Fondation Hardt 29 février—3 mars 1976; Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1979) 319–39, denies any significant influence by the Apocalypse on Byzantine art, but he does not discuss the Latomou mosaic.
14. Christa Ihm, *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei vom vierten Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts,* Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte und

christlichen Archäologie, 4 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1960), 45, my translation. The Latomou mosaic is the earliest of the examples of the "Liturgical Maiestas" schema of apse decoration, one of the eight in Ihm's taxonomy. Other examples are paintings in two of the chapels of the Apa Apollo monastery in Bawit, Egypt; two frescoes in the Jeremiah monastery in Sakkara, a village west of Memphis in Lower Egypt; the apse fresco of the David-Garedja Cave Church in Dodo, Georgia; and S. Miquel in Egara (Tarrasa), Catalonia (43–44; descriptions in her catalogue of extant monuments, 192, 199, 204, 206–07).

15. Ibid., 47–51, following the earlier suggestion by Wilhelm Neuss, *Das Buch Ezechiel in Theologie und Kunst bis zum Ende des XII. Jahrhunderts, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Gemälde in der Kirche zu Schwarzreindorf: Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Typologie der christlichen Kunst, vornehmlich in den Benediktinerklöstern,* Beiträge zur Geschichte des altern Mönchtums und des Benediktinerordens, 1–2 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1912), 82–84.
16. Thomas F. Mathews, *The Clash of Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 117–18 and fig. 92 on p. 122.
17. All translations of biblical passages are my own unless otherwise noted and, for the OT, follow the LXX.
18. For descriptions of the mosaic technique, see especially Xyngopoulos, "Καθολικόν," 161–71, and Gerke, "Il mosaico."
19. Mathews, *Clash of Gods,* 118.
20. The rainbow appears around the head of the "strong angel" of Rev 10.1.
21. Ihm, *Programme,* 45, finds the source of the Latomou rainbow in Isaiah, presumably thinking of Isa 66:1, "Heaven is my throne," but that does not really explain the motif. Neither τόξον nor ἶρις occurs in Isaiah at all. Another instance of Christ seated on a rainbow, within a *mandorla* filled with stars, is an icon from Mt. Sinai, probably from the seventh century: Georgios A. and Maria Soteriou, Εἴκονες τῆς Μόνης Σινα, Collection de l'Institut Français d'Athenes (Athens: Institut Français d'Athenes, 1956–58) 1: fig. 8, discussed 2:23–25; also reproduced in Grabar, *Christian Iconography,* fig. 287. Later the rainbow throne shows up occasionally in the middle ages: in the dome of San Marco, Venice, ca. 1200; in an illuminated Psalter of Shaftesbury Abbey, twelfth century (now in the British Museum), which has Christ and the Father sitting together on the rainbow; and in a relief on the bronze door of Saint Sophia in Novgorod, dated 1151–54. For the latter two, see Gertrud Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1966–70), vol. 3, figs. 677 and 710. David Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision,* Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum, 16 (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1988), 250–61, observes that some rabbis had qualms about mention of the rainbow in Ezek 1.28. This, he argues, stems from an earlier, Palestinian synagogue tradition identified with R. Joshua b.

Levi, which identifies the rainbow as a visible manifestation of God and prescribes a blessing to be spoken when seeing one. R. Joshua taught that when one sees a rainbow, one ought to fall on one's face as Ezekiel did (bBer 59a, cited by Halperin, 255).

22. On the importance of this psalm in rabbinic speculation about the *merkava,* see Halperin, *Faces of the Chariot,* 16–18. The word "chariot" does not in fact appear in Ezekiel's description of his vision, but the LXX inserts it in the retrospective note in 43:3, and Sirach 49:8 calls his vision ἅρμα χερουβιν. The phrase "chariot of the cherubim" also appears in 1 Chron 28:18. God is often said to be "seated upon the cherubim," 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kings 19:15; 1 Chron 13:6; Ps 79:2 [80:1]; 98[99]:1; Isa 37:16; Dan 3:55.
23. Snyder, "Meaning," finds six wings on each of the Latomou animals (150), because he thinks the "two large wings . . . are subdivided by lines of gold into six appendages" (148). There are such lines (but not of gold; the eyes are outlined in gold, but the striations are dark blue or black) on the bull's wings, but they do not seem to depict separate wings; striations in the wings of the other three figures are less regular and in none of them seem to define separate "appendages."
24. The motif of the four rivers, usually flowing from a hill on or above which Christ's throne sits, is widespread. One of the best-known examples is in the apse mosaic of San Vitale in Ravenna; one of the earliest (fourth century), the apse mosaic of Old St. Peter's in Rome, known now from a fresco copied from it before its destruction. Also from the fourth century, the motif occurs in one of the small apse mosaics of Santa Costanza: see Walter Oakeshott, *The Mosaics of Rome: From the Third to the Fourteenth Centuries* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1967), pp. 64, 67–69, and figs. 29, 40, 41.
25. David Halperin points out that Genesis Rabbah 21:9 uses Ezek 10:20 to interpret Gen 3:24, for Chebar = כבר, "already, long ago," = מקדם. "Certain rabbis may have equated the two words, and assumed that Ezekiel saw his visions by 'the river of Long-ago.' They may have gone on to equate this river with the 'river flowing from Eden' of Genesis 2:10; or, perhaps, with the primordial waters in general" (*Faces of the Chariot,* 229). It is unlikely, but not impossible, that a Christian interpeter might be acquainted with this ingenious midrash.
26. Spieser, *Thessalonique et ses monuments,* 158, my translation. Contrast Grabar, "Icone byzantine," 291, who says "Il s'agit sûrement du Jourdain, le fleuve 'évangélique' qui s'ajoute aux quatre fleuves du Paradis de la Bible: ces quatre sources dominées par le Jourdain sont le pendant allégorique à l'image au-dessus, où le Christ apparaît entouré des quatre symboles des évangelistes." In one of the Apa Apollo Frescoes of Bawit, often compared with the Latomou mosaic, there may have been some such demon figure beneath the wheels of the divine chariot, though the shape is indeterminable in the watercolor copy in the publication. Jean Clédat writes, "Sous les roues du char, il semble qu'il

ya it une figure humaine couchée," and he speculates that it could be vanquished Satan, as in Rev 20:7–10. But there is no river motif here (Clédat, *Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouît,* 12:137 and n. 3).

27. Ihm, *Programme,* 46.
28. Neuss, *Das Buch Ezekiel,* 86: "the Jordan, into which the seed of baptism has fallen," quoting a fragment published by A. Mai from catenae, *Scriptorum veterum nova collectio* IX (Rome 1837), 740. Cf. the comments by Theodoret of Cyrus, *Interpretatio in Ezechielem,* in *PG* 81, 1240–47.
29. It was the pioneering work of Gershom Scholem that brought this tradition into the light of modern scholarship: see Gershom G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism,* 3d ed. (New York: Schocken, 1961 [originally published in 1941]); idem., *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1954). Since Scholem's death, several scholars have both extended and revised his insights, among them Ithamar Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism,* Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Judentums und des Urchristentums, 14 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980); Peter Schäfer, ed., *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literature,* Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum, 2 (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1987); idem., *The Hidden and Manifest God: Some Major Themes in Early Jewish Mysticism,* SUNY Series in Judaica (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992). It is especially David Halperin who has emphasized the exegetical core and popular connections of the tradition: *Faces of the Chariot,* cited above, and his earlier revised dissertation, *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1980).
30. Philo, *Cher.* 27–28; *Fug.* 101; cf. *Mos.* 2.97; *Heres.* 166. Neuss to the contrary notwithstanding (*Das Buch Ezekiel,* 29–31), there is little if any evidence of influence from the Ezekiel vision on Philo's exegesis. Though he does speak of the Archangel as the "chariot driver" (ἅρματος ἡνίοχον, *Som.* 1.157; Neuss, 30), there is no trace in this passage of any influence from Ezekiel. The Cherubim for Philo are always two in number.
31. Much of the evidence is gathered conveniently in Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 94–113 ("The Development of an Exalted Angel in Apocalyptic Literature"), with abundant secondary literature up until the time of writing.
32. See Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Prayer of Joseph," in *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough,* ed. Jacob Neusner, Studies in the History of Religions, 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 253–94, and his introduction and notes to his translation in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 2:699–712.
33. Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism,* Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity, 25 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977).

34. I translate the Nestle-Aland[27] text, from P66, א*, B, C*, L, Irenaeus, Origen, Didymus, et al., in the way that v. 1 seems to require. Later copyists simplified the statement by inserting the word "son."
35. See Jeffrey Earl Peterson, "The Image of the Man from Heaven: Christological Exegesis in 1 Corinthians 15:45–49" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1997).
36. My teacher and colleague Nils Dahl saw this process more clearly than anyone else I know and has described elements of it in many essays, published and unpublished. Some of the most important are gathered in *Jesus the Christ: The Historical Origins of Christological Doctrine,* ed. Donald Juel (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991).
37. E.g., Justin, *Dial.* 59–62. Justin does not make use of Ezekiel's vision reports, however.
38. The survey in Part I of Neuss, *Das Buch Ezekiel,* remains authoritative, though there are many details that must be updated.
39. Neuss, *Das Buch Ezekiel,* 34–42; Halperin, *Faces of the Chariot,* 327–37. In the GCS edition of *Origenes Werke,* the fragments are collected in vol. 8 (GCS vol. 33, 1925), ed. W. A. Baehrens.
40. *Hom.* 1.6, GCS 33 (1925), 331: "'secus flumen' istud gravissimum saeculi." Cited by Neuss, ibid., 37.
41. Halperin, *Faces of the Chariot,* 262–358.
42. Reuven Kimmelman has shown that comments on the Song of Songs by Origen and R. Yohanan of Tiberias form, as it were, two sides of a polemical conversation: Ronald Reuven Kimmelman, "Rabbi Yohanan of Tiberias: Aspects of the Social and Religious History of Third Century Palestine" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1977). See also Halperin, *Faces of the Chariot,* 322–26, on "Origen and the Jews," with further references.
43. On the importance of the chariot in the liturgy, see Neuss, *Das Buch Ezekiel,* 63–65 and 82–84. He especially emphasizes the *cherubikon,* the solemn hymn that accompanies the introduction of the prosphora for its transformation (83), and notes that in the Armenian liturgy, Christ arrives on the "chariot of the cherubim" (84).
44. From *Catenae Graecorum Patrum in Novum Testamentum,* ed. J. A. Cramer (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967), 2:189, on John 1:18. I owe the reference to Jaime Clark-Soles, and I have used her translation, slightly modified.
45. Neuss, *Das Buch Ezekiel,* 54, citing *PG* 48, 725–26. Gregory Nazianzus also takes the vision to demonstrate the ineffable nature of God, for even the prophet's depiction of the cherubim is impossible to grasp (Neuss, 42–44).
46. Irenaeus, *AH* 4.20.9–11; quotations from 20.10 (*Sources Chrétiennes* 100 [1965], 657) and 20.11 (*SC* 100, 272–73), my translations.
47. Mathews, *Clash of Gods,* 141.
48. Ibid., 119–41.

49. One cannot, I think, appeal, as Mathews implicitly does on p. 115, to the legend included in Ignatius's "Edifying Narrative," that the mosaic miraculously and overnight replaced an image of the Mother of God commissioned by Princess Theodora, for the astonishment of the artist is that his composition has been replaced by "a likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ in masculine form" (ἐν εἴδει ἀνδρικῷ). But of course that tells us only how it was conceived in the twelfth century, and in any case this point is not a material part of Mathews's argument
50. *Clash of Gods,* chapters 1 and 2 and passim.
51. Spieser, *Thessalonique et ses monuments,* 160. I cannot agree with Spieser, however, in seeing the two as companions of Christ, as in other apse programs (he rightly rejects Grabar's proposal, based on such parallels, that they are Peter and Paul). Though it is true that the right-hand figure is not in fact looking at the vision, I do not see how the left-hand figure can be read in any other way than as reacting to the christophany. And, as Spieser says, there is "hardly any parallel" to the iconography of the two (159).
52. Cf. Gerke, "Il mosaico," 185, "un antico filosofo in pura contemplazione."

AFTERWORD

Wayne A. Meeks

The essays collected here illustrate some of the tasks that my generation of New Testament scholars have found before us: the retrieval of the ordinary out of the silence imposed by centuries, exploring the dialectic between surviving fragments of ancient language and the other social forms in which they were once embedded, discovering the ways by which emerging communities invented moral practice and moral intuition, understanding the multifaceted Jewishness of the early Christian movement. The New Testament scholar's vocation thus came to intersect with a variety of exploratory and revisionist movements in the humanities, embracing social theory, history, anthropology, and literature. Cross-fertilization with these other fields has produced some exciting developments, even though the immediate result is a fragmentation of what was once a much tidier field of study.

The fragmentation faced today by students of the New Testament has at least two sources. First, by trying to place the earliest Christian writings back into the cultural context within which they were written and first used, we have vastly expanded the list of things we need to know in order to understand them. The complexity of life in the various provinces of the Roman empire forces itself upon us as never before, and with it the ambiguities of the evidence. How very much harder it is today than when I was in graduate school to achieve a basic competence in all those subdisciplines that are needed if we are even to begin to understand what it was like "to become and be an ordinary Christian in the first century." The textbook descriptions are under constant challenge; there is no substitute for deep immersion in the primary evidence—but how vast the relevant data have become! Bodies of literature once lurking on the periphery of our vision demand immediate attention, from collections of magic spells to medical textbooks, from handbooks of rhetoric to inscriptions on stone, from manuscripts literally dug from the earth to artifacts long buried in museum basements. How can one person master the varied techniques, not to mention the languages, to read these texts competently, or to ascertain the social facts implicit in the pattern of rubble in a thousand archaeological sites?

Still, if there are hours enough in the night and colleagues patient enough, one can yet perhaps learn the surface topography of all these bodies of evidence sufficiently to decide which of them to mine deeply for oneself. The second source of our malaise is more worrisome: the shadow that lies athwart our confidence in the very process of knowing. The inflated optimism that began the twentieth century gives way in many of our intellectual circles to a postmodernist cynicism. Clarity of method has not guaranteed truth. All our rationality is tainted by interest. Decrying the ideological mote in the eye of our predecessors we are forced to confess the beam in our own. Looking back over my desire to be something like an ethnographer of the past, I marvel at my naivete. When I have learned all I can about the social world of those strangers in the land of the dead, with the greatest efforts of disciplined imagination I can still scarcely enter it with the linguistic and social competence even a small child would have had then and there. Yet do I presume to say what really was the case among those strangers? "If it is true," as an eminent anthropologist has written about a different discipline, "that all 'etics' are really 'emics,' then cross-cultural psychology is no more than cultural arrogance, since it foists our cultural constructs onto others as if they had some inherent superiority."[1] If all history is constructed, if every fact of consequence is a fiction, at least in the etymological sense of something *made,* as

we *make* sense of the world around us, then how do we distinguish good history from bad history, the real from the convenient? Not *quite* in the same way as we can tell a good novel from a mediocre one or good poetry from doggerel, but the difference is not so absolute as it once seemed.

Hard thought as well as hard work is thus needed, and I am happy to leave most of it to the next generation, but I see no cause for paralysis. The sorts of questions that beset the student of Christianity's beginnings are being fiercely discussed in many fields of academic endeavor today—even on the fringes of the "hard" sciences. If we reach across the defensive bulwarks that we are wont to throw up around our specialties, these are good if difficult times for interdisciplinary conversation.

There are, to be sure, hazards in interdisciplinary work, and the danger of dilletantism is only the most obvious of them. More insidious is the awe we are tempted to feel before fields of learning that, seen from without, look less messy than our own, and our accompanying fear of being thought "unscientific." Perhaps it is because my own early training was in physics that I am less impressed than some of my colleagues by appeals to the methods of science occasionally made or implied by historians and exegetes to guarantee the validity of their conclusions. I also believe that the really hard problems in the history of ancient Christianity cannot be solved at the theoretical level. There is still considerable confusion in the ways that humanists and social scientists talk about theory and in the ways they use models derived from their theories. One of the goals of interdisciplinary discussion ought to be to try to clear up as much of that confusion as we can.

I often hear it said, in meetings of biblical scholars, that "everyone has a theory, it just needs to be made explicit." I think that is simply wrong. What the speaker presumably means is that we all have presuppositions, like as not unstated, that guide or even control our investigations. Rudolf Bultmann pointed that out half a century ago, in a famous article called "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?"[2] But presuppositions are not theory; nor are prejudices or ideology, although we know that prejudices and ideology distort all our applications and even our delineations of theory. To become conscious of our prejudices and honest about our ideologies and to do what we can to correct the distortions of vision that they cause is a salutary enterprise. It is clear that *theoria* in the broad, Aristotelian sense—that is, self-awareness and honest, rational self-reflection—is indispensable in that enterprise. However, what counts for theory in the "hard" sciences—quantum theory, for example, or string theory—is rather more precise and special than that, and the way such theories work in the formation and correction of

knowledge is accordingly also different. If we elide the differences between the broad and the specific notions of theory, we are bound to muddle our communication with one another. The envy that humanists and social scientists so often exhibit as they look to the natural sciences, that longing for an impossible certitude of mathematical precision and—let us tell the truth—authority, is entirely misplaced. On the other hand, the difference between the natural and the human sciences is not absolute. Both philosophers and practitioners of science are becoming more and more aware of the social dimensions of scientific knowledge. Surely the professional interpreters of texts also need to wrestle with the social construction of science, including whatever dimensions of history and exegesis may be construed as more science than art.

I have compared the situation in today's university with the setting imagined by Italo Calvino in one of his novels. Lone travelers, exhausted by trials and dangers they have faced in a thick forest, arrive at the safety of a castle. They are eager to tell their individual stories—but they have all been struck mute. When supper ends, however, the lord of the castle places on the table a deck of tarot cards. Slowly the travelers realize that, by selecting and arranging certain cards from the deck, each of them can suggest the story they wish to tell. As enthusiasm mounts, the travelers snatch at the cards, each eager to relate his or her own story. The lines of cards laid out on the table begin to intersect, to be juxtaposed, to be read in reverse, until a vast, intricate design covers the table. In the process, we discover how fluid are the possible meanings of each card, depending upon sequence, context, and the ingenuity of the interpreter. Yet the possibilities are, in a certain sense, sharply bounded by the number of cards available, by the traditional portrayal of each, and by the details of a particular artist's rendition of the characters. It is this astonishing variety of interpretive possibilities, teased out of a finite and well-defined text by strategies that, freely imaginative as they are, still pay strict attention to the text's smallest details, which reminded me at once, when I first read *The Castle of Crossed Destinies*, of the arcane and ancient art of biblical interpretation.[3]

In one sense the strategy of the tale-tellers in the castle is the inverse of our own. They are each trying to tell their own stories, but—at least as the narrator "hears" them—they are not only limited by the artificial language imposed by the tarot cards, they are also invested with the echoes of more ancient narratives that force themselves into these newer stories. So the travelers reenact bits and pieces of the stories of Roland and Astolpho, of Perseus and the Amazons, of Oedipus and Lear, of Hamlet and Macbeth, of Faust and

Mephistopheles, all blended and transformed in the retelling. We, on the other hand, have set out to tell just the ancient stories, proud of our own disinterested distance from them—yet, in our confusion, it turns out that we have involved ourselves in the telling, that it is really our stories that, often as not, shape the retrieval of the ancient other. Thus, although we start with opposite intentions, our mute narrations turn out to be not so terribly different.

Our situation differs in yet another respect from that of Calvino's imagined travelers. There are people outside. Outside this castle in which we academics take refuge, outside the magical and dangerous forest, of the parlous quest and the intense labor, the long training in the skills of doubting and surmising, that terrible discipline by which we attained the relative safety of the castle, there are people: multitudes of people for whom the Bible itself, this book in which we have such a proprietary interest, *is* the castle seen from afar. However much they know or don't know or mistakenly think they know, believe, or disbelieve, this book with which we experts in our secure refuge busy ourselves is still somehow a castle and still somehow magical. For many of these people the castle may seem as impenetrable as Kafka's. For others it is only an ancient ruin, a haunt of jackals and demons. For most of them the curious tales we exchange with one another, in the artfully constructed argot that we use as the token of our having arrived in the castle, our own set of tarot cards, as it were, is as soundless and as useless as the stories of Calvino's travelers.

However far afield the tasks exemplified in the essays above have led me and my colleagues, their central focus has nevertheless remained that small book, that odd collection of ancient texts, the New Testament. My job description began with the reading of texts, and even though the horizons of my discipline became vastly and disconcertingly wider, the central task remains that of learning how to read more perceptively and more honestly. We will not be able fully to register the significance of these texts unless we appreciate the fact that there is a unique duality in our engagement with them. The Enlightenment of the eighteenth century taught us to construe them as "sources," from which the techniques of scientific historiography could draw out clues to the way things "really were" before the facts were encrusted with the churches' multilayered interpretive tradition. Yet we are able to use these texts as sources only because they were preserved for centuries for quite other purposes. Moreover, we are fascinated with the beginnings of Christianity as it "really was" and therefore pursue our intensive archaeology of these sources only because those other uses of these texts have had such an enormous impact upon our history and the shape of our sensibilities.

At least one reason for recent reactions against the "historical critical method" of modern biblical scholarship has been the desire to redress the balance in favor of those other uses of the Bible, uses by the religious communities for which it is not only "sources" but "scripture." In the essays collected here, I have been groping toward an interpretive stance that could, without abandoning the critic's skepticism, give more weight to the *variety* of ways in which these texts have functioned, not only in the beginning, but in their subsequent history of forming and being formed by the communities that both defined them and submitted to them.

It has become popular to malign the naivete of the Enlightenment's pretensions to rationality, objectivity, and universality of perspective. The critic's privileging of the rational allied itself with the Western church's preoccupation with doctrine to reinforce that cognitivist conception of religion of which I spoke earlier. Both that cognitivism and its existentialist antitype have led us far away from the places where most people live their lives. Worse, our rationality as well as the structure of those existential selves also look as if they are "constructs" and as historically contingent as any of those elusive social facts we have been seeking from the past.

Nevertheless, despite all the failures of modernism, the generations of patient, meticulous labor over those "sources" have left us a treasure of knowledge that we would be both foolish and ungrateful to disparage. Objectivity may be beyond our grasp, but the attempt to be resolutely honest about our own past remains, however inevitable its shortcomings, a noble endeavor. Moreover, while it is easy now to mock the "hermeneutics of suspicion"—a phrase that may be taken broadly to name the central strategy of the Cartesian realignment in Western thinking—the appropriate criticism may be not that we have doubted too much but that we have doubted too little. We have learned that there is good reason to suspect the perennial human propensity to delude ourselves and to harm one another in the name of religion. If we add now a further doubt whether the assumptions on which we based those suspicions are themselves well grounded, it does not follow that we are defenseless in the face of any and every assertion or formation that is labeled "religious." I still believe, accordingly, that even though no historical construction can ever be *final,* historical claims are *corrigible,* both by new evidence or evidence newly attended to and by a society's experience of life as that experience gets constellated into new perspectives on the meaning of events. Any religion that bases central claims, as Christianity and Judaism do, on historical or history-like narratives consequently needs the help of historical inquiry and of historically sensitive interpretation of its founda-

tional texts. Historical exegesis cannot be, as an earlier generation of critical scholars seemed sometimes to claim, the ultimate arbiter of what a religious community is allowed to say. Nevertheless, it does help to keep us honest if we are reminded, for example, that a text we routinely assert to mean one thing in the context of our religious discourse would most probably have meant something entirely different to a competent hearer in the first century. And most Christians would still agree that honesty and even humility are virtues.

But what about *faith?* Among the several hundred undergraduates who have sat in my classes, both believers and nonbelievers have often expressed an assumption that, therefore, I take to be widely held in our culture: that, if one interrogates *these* documents and their writers and first readers in the same way one would question, say, Cicero's speeches or the histories of Tacitus or Josephus, then the questioner must be without faith. Of course, if faith means gullibility, docility in the face of authority, or a lazy resting on easy nostrums, then critical inquiry and skepticism are its enemies. A robust faith, however, boldly embraces doubt.

In the central theological tradition of the Christian churches, if not always in their practice, faith is a gift, not an achievement. At the center of the Christian form of life is that peculiar and miraculous complex of relationships that we call "grace." It is one of the most important parts of a theologian's job—perhaps, indeed, it is the whole job—to try to describe the structure of that complex for each new generation. I am not a theologian, but even if I were I would not attempt a *definition* of grace, for reasons I have alluded to above. An adequate description of grace just will not go fully into the propositions of ordinary language. It requires, in addition, poetry and song, story and architecture and art; it requires ritual speech and action; it needs the constant and often messy struggles of communities of men and women to discover and rediscover a grace-shaped pattern of social forms and institutions, of moral intuitions and expectations and ways of living. Yet in all those media there are perceptible variations on a recurrent theme. In the foundation documents of the Christian movement, the theme is expressed in paradoxes, which point to actions of a central character—variously named, but whom we usually call "God." This character delights in upsetting the apple carts of human pretensions, especially, it seems, of those who, in the stories, have reason to believe they are specially chosen to be God's *own* group. The identity of "God" is rather elusive in the biblical account: every representation of this character tends to become an "idol," which God abhors. On the other hand, the human characters have a most alarming propensity to self-delusion and pride, lead-

ing to harm to themselves and others. God, however, will not leave them alone, holding them to impossible standards of rectitude and frequently threatening them with destruction if they do not behave better. Every time they think they have it right, God changes what they thought were the rules. On the other hand, every time they think all is lost, this same God rescues them from the results of their own obstinacy and stupidity. God's power looks like weakness, God's wisdom, like foolishness. All this is the story of grace. My only point here is that faith that is created by that grace had better be ready for some surprises, that, indeed, such faith will embrace rather than fear a certain kind of skepticism. May we not say in fact that for a Christian the structure of doubt is exactly analogous to the structure of grace? It may be that faith can never rest easily with the necessary skepticism of a good historian, but the two need not be enemies. Hence I still believe that people of faith need the kind of scholarship that I have tried to pursue and which will be taken in new directions by my students and successors, however diverse the motivations, goals, and methods of the scholars and however imperfect and unstable our findings—"for we walk by faith, not by what we can see."[4]

Notes

1. Malcolm R. Crick, "Anthropology of Knowledge," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 11 (1982): 290.
2. Rudolf Bultmann, "Ist voraussetzungslose Exegese Möglich?" *Theologische Zeitschrift* 13 (1957): 409–17. An English translation exists, in Rudolf Bultmann, *Existence and Faith,* edited by Schubert M. Ogden (New York: World Publishing, Meridian, 1960), 289–96.
3. Italo Calvino, *The Castle of Crossed Destinies,* trans. William Weaver (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1979). Apologies and thanks to James Kugel, for it was his book, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), that stimulated me to think along these lines, and it was in a symposium on that book at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in 1999 that I pointed out the similarity of Calvino's travelers to ourselves, in remarks that are reproduced in part here.
4. 2 Cor 5:7, my translation.

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