

# Pauline Inconsistency:

## Reflections on I Corinthians 9.19–23 and Galatians 2.11–14

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### 1. Introduction

A great deal of energy has been poured into identifying any inconsistency in Paul's thinking, but even when a particular theory is right, it rarely wins consent that is both broadly based and sustained, because the evidence with which we deal is fragmentary, ambiguous and patient of more than one interpretation. The unknowns are considerable, and the antecedent judgments are complex and interlocking. Thus, Drane's<sup>1</sup> reconstruction of Paul's understanding of law depends in part on an early date of Galatians, written before I Corinthians; and conversely the essay by Davies,<sup>2</sup> who sketches Paul's developing thought on the relationship between the church and Israel, depends in part on dating Galatians after I Thessalonians. Moreover, if New Testament scholars criticise a former generation of dogmatists for building resplendent theological structures that do not pay enough attention to questions of context, development and varying outlook in the biblical documents, how many of us are entirely guiltless of creating an entire systematic theology out of *each* New Testament book and pitting it against some other systematic theological reconstruction based on a different document?<sup>3</sup> To what extent do such reconstructions depend on arguments from silence, or on a failure to discern the essentially occasional nature of many New Testament writings?<sup>4</sup> This is not to deny, of course, that the various letters by Paul do indeed betray different emphases on the law. The critical question, however, is whether these differing emphases should be accounted for primarily by the varying circumstances Paul faced, or by substantial development in his own thinking, frequently traced across a mere five years of apostolic writing. To put the matter another way, would Paul have repudiated his epistle to the Galatians by the time he wrote his epistle to the Romans, if he again faced the problem that had confronted him in Galatia? Methodologically, when is it better to read two works admittedly written by the same author (e.g. Galatians and Romans) in the light of each other, and when is it better to read them disjunctively in order to establish a pattern of change and development? Again, how many of the inconsistencies that we isolate depend on some massive but unstated pre-understanding regarding early church history? Antecedent questions about how to write history<sup>5</sup> then clamour for attention. Should

early church history be characterized by unilinear development and by absolute disjunction between Semitic and Graeco-Roman thought—the very things against which, for instance, Ellis<sup>6</sup> and Marshall<sup>7</sup> have protested?

Precisely because the debates on these points are so complex, the recent article by Richardson<sup>8</sup> assumes a special importance. Richardson focuses on two pericopai, viz. I Cor. 9.19–23 and Gal. 2.11–14, and 'tries to explore an inconsistency between what Paul says about his own behaviour (in the former passage) and what he says about Peter's (in the latter)'.<sup>9</sup> It is surprising, as he points out, how seldom these two pericopai have been brought and examined for inconsistency. More important, this sort of study promises better controls than some others in the field. Though it cannot escape ambiguous evidence and disputed judgments, it is more narrowly exegetical than many studies, and therefore offers more hard evidence and the promise of more fruitful debate.

I would like to examine the two passages that Richardson has brought to our attention, in the hope that such focused study, may win a wider agreement about how to understand Paul.

Richardson argues that in I Cor. 9.19–23 Paul sets forth a fundamental principle: he is prepared to adjust his conduct to fit the immediate circumstances 'as long as this adjustment will help to win some to Jesus'.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, in this passage Paul describes his missionary theory 'in somewhat opportunistic ways'.<sup>11</sup> Paul's flexibility here extends even to the question of his submission (or lack of it!) to Torah. Richardson essentially approves the judgment of Barrett, who writes, 'Paul was prepared to abandon [the law] altogether. It is impossible to understand Paul if this fact is not grasped'.<sup>12</sup>

By contrast, the situation in Gal. 2:11–14 finds Paul in the embarrassing position of not living up to his own stated position. In Richardson's words:

The issue, then, is this: if Paul views accommodation as a legitimate principle for himself, and if Peter in Antioch has already shown some measure of adaptability as well, why does Paul reject so vehemently Peter's understanding of the need to adapt once more when some come from James? A similar hypothetical question might be posed: what would Paul have done had a group of Gentile Christians from Galatia visited the Jerusalem church at the very time he was taking the Nazirite vow?<sup>13</sup>

Richardson reviews a few of the treatments of the problem, including the attempt by Jerome and some other Fathers to turn the dispute between Peter and Paul into play-acting for the purpose of instructing visitors from Jerusalem. He dismisses all easy solutions, including the suggestion that I Cor. 9.19–23 is merely a temporary

expedient reflecting a transitional missionary situation. After all, at the time of writing it is very doubtful if any 'pure' missionary situation existed; and if it did, its success would soon mean that principles of conduct applicable in the missionary context applied equally to the new converts—i.e. to the church. Even if the principle of accommodation enables the Christian to say, in Paul's words, that 'by all means I might have some', conversion cannot be the only thing in view since the most natural understanding of 'the weak' in the clause 'to the weak I became weak' (9.22) is that it refers to believers. Besides, I Cor. 9.19–23 must be interpreted in the framework of 8.1–11.1. The question of eating food offered to idols links the three chapters together; and this is a problem dividing the factions *within* the church. Certainly when Paul in I Cor. 10.29–11.1 'extends his comments to include others . . . it is quite certain that the point is that their behaviour in the local setting should be influenced by his view of accommodation'.<sup>14</sup>

Turning to Gal. 2.11–14, Richardson acknowledges a central difference between this passage and I Cor. 9.19–23. Although both passages bear on the question of table fellowship, only the Antioch episode is tied up with the place of circumcision. In Antioch the question turns not on the appropriateness of particular foods but on the appropriateness of table fellowship with particular individuals, viz. uncircumcised Christians. Moreover, there can be in Paul's mind no question of 'weaker brothers' in the Antioch episode, since all attempts at identification of such weaker members is problematic. But quite apart from whether or not Paul 'won' in Antioch, the difference between Paul's stated principle of conduct in I Cor. 9 and his failure to apply it to Peter in Gal. 2 is remarkable.

Richardson argues that the inconsistency can be explained along the following lines. First, because the issue in Gal. 2 is circumcision, he begins with Acts 21.17–26 and argues that in all probability the charges against Paul had some basis: the apostle probably did in fact quietly suggest to Jewish believers that they refrain from circumcising their sons. Only in this way could real unity in the church be preserved; and such unity was important to Paul. But in Antioch his principles unravel a little; for here is a situation that does not simply question the applicability of Jewish customs and law in a mixed church, but the applicability of Jewish customs and law *to Jews* in the context of a *Gentile church*. In the presence of Peter and Barnabas and other Jews, Paul is forced to reject certain Jewish customs and laws *because Gentiles are present*. Thus the principle 'to the Jews I became a Jew' seems to be abandoned.

Richardson's second and more important point is that the principle of I Cor. 9.19–23 probably had reference in Paul's thinking *only to apostles*. Not only is the accommodation principle part of Paul's defence of his apostleship, but even in I Cor. 10.32 it is extended to

others only 'in a weaker and more passive way',<sup>15</sup> and is immediately followed by v.33 which returns to Paul's view of himself. In other words, Richardson argues that Paul nowhere means to instruct the rank and file of Christians to 'become all things to all men', but reserves the principle for the apostolate. A quick survey of potential counter-examples in the Pauline corpus confirms Richardson in his opinion.

Applying the Pauline principle of accommodation (now restricted to the apostolate) to the confrontation in Antioch, Richardson suggests that Peter, sharing Paul's principle, at first accommodated himself to the customs of the Antioch church. However, once those from James had arrived, the question arose in Peter's mind whether he should accommodate himself to *them*. He ultimately chose to side with those from Jerusalem 'because that was the sphere in which his own role was primarily played. As an apostle to the circumcision, the demands that circumcision laid on him could not be denied'.<sup>16</sup>

What this reconstruction means is that Paul's charge of *hypocrisy* (Gal. 2.13) is not really justified. The two apostles shared the same principle of accommodation. 'Each is adaptable when not in his own bailiwick and confronted with the demands of his particular missionary enterprise.'<sup>17</sup> Therefore Paul's anger against Peter does not have to do with any breach in the principle of accommodation (for that is common ground), but with territorial claims: i.e. Paul thinks the accord of Gal. 2.7–9 requires Peter to bend Paul's way in Paul's territory, and Peter's failure to do so is an implied affront to Paul.

In brief, these are Richardson's arguments. It remains to examine the text afresh with these arguments in mind.

## 2. Limitations on Paul's Principle of Accommodation (I Cor. 9.19–23)

The contrast between I Cor. 9.19–23 and Gal. 2.11–14 depends in part on taking the principle of accommodation in a fairly unbounded way. The more flexible Paul is understood to be, the more surprising it is that he adopts the stern stance against Peter reflected in Gal. 2–11.14. Conversely, if there are obvious constraints on Paul's principle of accommodation, it becomes important to ask if in Paul's view the confrontation at Antioch lies outside the bounds to which he would apply his principle.

The question may be extended to ask how far Paul's principle of accommodation reflects his own heritage. Richardson<sup>18</sup> endorses the study of Daube,<sup>19</sup> who argues that the Rabbis had already formulated maxims to express this method of outreach. But the Talmudic passages cited do not prove so much. If Hillel accepts into the fold a Gentile who refuses to acknowledge the oral law, and another who acknowledges no law beyond the most fundamental ethical prin-

ciple (B.Shab 31a; A.R.N. 15), it is with the intent (as Daube himself admits) ‘subsequently to instruct them and get them to see the absurdity of adhering to the written Law only, and the importance of rendering ethics practicable by means of a detailed code.’<sup>20</sup> But that is precisely what Paul does *not* do. True, as Daube points out, ‘the fact remains that, at the decisive moment of conversion, [Hillel] fell in with the notions of the applicant and declared himself satisfied with the recognition of the written Law or a single, basic moral precept’;<sup>21</sup> but ‘falling in with the notions of the applicant’ does not mean that Hillel *lived* as did the applicant, but only that he was prepared to agree with the applicant in order to win his confidence and thereby eventually to instruct him in what were, to Hillel, the bountiful legal entailments of such a position. Even if Daube is right when he argues that the maxims advocating that Jews live a lifestyle as indistinguishable as possible from that of their surrounding culture were originally formulated as ‘advice for intercourse with prospective proselytes’,<sup>22</sup> it is not at all clear that Hillel meant to go as far as Paul and declare, ‘I myself am not under law’ (I Cor. 9.20).

Paul thus transcends his heritage, but this fact returns our original question more sharply: what are the limitations Paul imposes on his own principle of accommodation? The answer lies less in Paul’s heritage than in what he himself stipulates.

### 2.1 Accommodation is not absolute antinomianism

In a stimulating article published almost thirty years ago, Chadwick<sup>23</sup> argued that Paul’s ‘all things to all men’ can be used as a key to explain a great deal of Paul’s method.

Paul’s genius as an apologist is his astonishing ability to reduce to an apparent vanishing point the gulf between himself and his converts and yet to ‘gain’ them for the Christian gospel . . . Very different is the psychological attitude of the defender of orthodoxy; he must make as wide as possible the distance between authentic Christianity and deviationist sects against whose teaching the door must be closed with all firmness.<sup>24</sup>

Chadwick is surely right, at least as far as Paul’s general attitude goes. Nevertheless, two cautions must be entered. (i) Paul sometimes casts *himself* in the role of defender of orthodoxy—not only in the Judaizing controversy in Galatians, where he is prepared to pronounce his apostolic *anathema* on his opponents (Gal. 1.8–9), but also in regard to the views he opposes in Colossians and in II Cor. 10–13 (cf. esp. 11.4,13–15). As flexible as Paul may be, this suggests he is not infinitely elastic, and that he sees no necessary antithesis between the role of accommodating apologist and defender

of orthodoxy. Rather, each role must be applied to the appropriate circumstances; and that means the principle of accommodation must be limited to certain situations. (ii) On the face of it, the gulf between Paul and his converts or prospective converts is never reduced to ‘vanishing point’ on every front, or else Paul’s stated purpose—‘that by all possible means I might save some’—becomes ludicrous. If *all* differences are made to disappear, then it is impossible to encourage a conversion or to establish a checkpoint that shows the other person has been ‘saved’ or ‘won’. To make any contextual sense out of I Cor. 9.19–23, therefore, one must suppose that Paul is willing to be accommodating on some points, but not on others.

What, then, are the limitations Paul places on his own principle of accommodation? *First*, Paul cannot mean that all distinctively *Christian* demands are negotiable, not only because of the phrase *Ennomos Christou*, but also because elsewhere in this epistle he lays out some specific elements without which Christianity is no longer Christianity. He indicts the Epicurean worldview, for instance, as a denial of the promise of eternal life (I Cor. 15.32); and he insists on the reality of the resurrection of Christ, even to the point of staking both his apostolic reputation and the truthfulness of the gospel itself on it (I Cor. 15.12–19). Paul may feel himself free from the Jewish law; but he still views as essential to the gospel certain elements of ‘a particular Jewish apocalyptic ideology’.<sup>25</sup> Thus Beker, commenting on I Cor. 9.19–23, correctly remarks:

First Corinthians 15 provides us with an impressive example that the coherent center of the gospel is, for Paul, not simply an experiential reality of the heart or a Word beyond words that permits translation into a multitude of world views. Harry Emerson Fosdick’s dictum about the gospel as an ‘abiding experience amongst changing world views’, or Bultmann’s demythologizing program for the sake of the kerygmatic address of the gospel, is in this manner not true to Paul’s conception of the gospel. However applicable the gospel must be to a Gentile in his contingent situation, it does not tolerate a world view that cannot express those elements in the apocalyptic world view . . . that to Paul seem inherent in the truth of the gospel . . . And far from considering the apocalyptic world view a husk or discardable frame, Paul insists that it belongs to the inalienable coherent core of the gospel . . . It seems that Paul sacrifices dialogical contingency to dogmatic necessity by imposing a particular world view on Hellenistic believers. And if Paul imposes a dogmatic interpretative scheme on the ‘core’ of the gospel, he seems to require not only faith as *fiducia* but also faith as *assensus*.<sup>26</sup>

It is not only something close to the heart of the gospel (that which is ‘of first importance’, I Cor. 15.3) that Paul lays out as non-

negotiable, but even matters of conduct which some might well have preferred to remain among the *adiaphora*. For instance, in I Cor. 8–10, although he can allow the believers the *right* to eat meat offered to idols (though the principle of accommodation seems to curtail that right in certain situations), Paul will *not permit* Christian participation in the pagan cultic meals (I Cor. 10.14–22):<sup>27</sup> i.e. the principle of accommodation cannot be stretched so far, but has built-in limitations that spring from the gospel itself.

*Second*, although Paul distances himself from the law, he is careful to insert a *caveat*. We must not of course minimise how great a breach Paul is prepared to allow. It is large enough that in one sense Paul does not see himself as a Jew: rather, he *becomes* like a Jew in order to win Jews (I Cor. 9.20), an ambiguous expression he hastens to explain. He says that to win those under the law he puts himself under the law, he becomes like one under the law—even though he is not himself under the law (I Cor. 9.20b). Hillel never would have said that. Paul refuses to present himself as a Jew who accommodates himself to Gentiles. Rather, whether he ‘becomes like a Jew’ or ‘becomes like a Gentile’ it is in *both* cases an act of accommodation. The use of *hōs* is symmetrical: the apostle occupies a *third* ground.<sup>28</sup>

But this third ground is binding on him. He may not be *hypo nomon*, but that does not mean he is *anomos theou*: any such charge the apostle emphatically denies. Rather, he is *Ennomos Christou* (I Cor. 9.21). This means, at the least, that Paul refuses to *identify nomos theou* with the law of Moses; and more, that the particular fashion in which he is himself obedient to the law of God is in the context of his relationship with Christ.

So much, I think, is reasonably clear. Moreover, I concur in part with Dodd to the effect that this phrase, *Ennomos Christou*, is likely related as well to *ho nomos tou Christou* in Gal. 6.2, and expresses not merely submission to subjective promptings of the Spirit but even more to a corpus of ordinances or demands given by Jesus himself.<sup>29</sup> Some of these occur in I Corinthians (e.g. 7.10, 9.14); and an impressive array of Jesus/Paul links can be tentatively established.<sup>30</sup> My hesitation with Dodd is that it is probably too narrow: if Paul is *Ennomos Christou* he is bound not only by certain teachings of Jesus, but by all that Christ accomplished and represents. Paul does not have the freedom to pass beyond certain bounds—or, better, in submission to this *nomos* is perfect freedom.

Part of the problem of understanding Paul lies in how he envisages the relationship between Torah and the law of God, or between Torah and being *Ennomos Christou*. However, that topic is beyond my primary focus. It is enough to establish that Paul’s principle of accommodation is limited by his own submission to the law of God in Christ as he understands it. He is free from any necessary submission to Torah; that is the requisite undergirding for the flexibility of his

principle of accommodation. But that flexibility is not unbounded. It might be argued against this exegesis that in Romans 9.1ff. and elsewhere, Paul makes much of the fact that he *is* a Jew. How then can he be saying in I Corinthians 9:19–23 that he must become a Jew? But when Paul identifies himself as a Jew or gives thanks that he is a Jew, he invariably does so from the perspective of the *antecedent* blessings Jewish people have known: the Scriptures, the election of God, the covenant and so forth. None of this has immediate bearing on his understanding of his current spiritual position. At that juncture he invariably writes as a Christian. It is that stance, and that stance alone, that permits him the flexibility presupposed by his theory of accommodation.

*Third*, Paul’s principle of accommodation is limited by the form in which it is expressed. Two features stand out: (i) Quite apart from the question as to how Paul intends this principle to be related to the surrounding chapters, the *immediate* application is limited to Jew (= person under the law), Gentile (= person without the law) and weak. In one sense, of course, once you have specified Jew and Gentile, you have embraced all humanity. In that sense Paul rightly says he makes himself a slave to *everyone* and becomes all things to *all men*. Nevertheless there is a restriction in the kind of category used: racial, with special reference to Torah. It is difficult to conceive of Paul saying, for instance, ‘To the adulterer I became as an adulterer in order that I might win the adulterer’; or ‘To the idol-worshipper I became as an idol-worshipper in order that I might win the idol-worshipper’. In that sense Paul does *not* mean by his principle of accommodation that he becomes all things to all men.<sup>31</sup> (ii) His *purpose* in practising such substantial accommodation is ‘to gain the more’ (I Cor. 9.19), to gain the Jews (I Cor. 9.20), to gain those under the law (I Cor. 9.20), to gain those who do not have the law (I Cor. 9.21), to gain the weak (I Cor. 9.22)—indeed, by all means to save some (9.22) so that he too might share in the blessings of the gospel (9.23). Richardson in another publication goes so far as to conclude, ‘Paul’s behavior is rescued from being unprincipled by one thing alone: his goal.’ That is too limiting; we have already detected several other things that limit Paul’s principle of accommodation, and we shall discover one or two more. Nevertheless Richardson’s point is important: Paul’s willingness to accommodate is not some calloused affirmation of freedom from law, but a servant’s role that asks, ‘How can I most effectively gain men and women for Christ?’ Moreover, Paul feels himself so constrained to practise this kind of accommodation that he implies he is doing it for his own benefit (9.23). Has he not just insisted that he is under a curse if he fails to preach the gospel (9.16–18)? Therefore if he is to share in the blessings of the gospel, he must go beyond mere necessity and refuse to exercise the rights that belong to his commission. For this reason

he makes himself a slave to everyone, in order to win as many as possible (9.19).

Paul's principle of accommodation is far removed from absolute antinomianism. Even when *nomos* = Torah, Paul's position is not so much antinomian as a-nomian. But for Paul the equation *nomos* = Torah is not the only option, and the result is a principle of accommodation severely bounded by a number of important internal and contextual constraints. Therefore when we look at the Antioch episode, we must ask if all of these constraints are met. If not, there is no particularly good reason for thinking that Paul's principle of accommodation *should* have been applied to that case.

### 2.2 Accommodation is not to be applied carelessly

How does Paul apply the principle of accommodation he has just enunciated? We have seen that Richardson takes two crucial steps at this point. First, he argues that as far as *situation* is concerned, Paul means the accommodation principle to extend beyond the missionary setting and serve as a fundamental arbiter of disputes within the church. Second, he argues that as far as its applicability to *people* is concerned, it is restricted to the apostles. My reading of the evidence prompts me to adopt a rather different position. Paul's principle of accommodation certainly extends beyond the missionary situation—here Richardson is surely right—but the extension is primarily in terms of the treatment of the weak by the strong in the case of *adiaphora*; and thus applied, the principle is valid for all believers, not just apostles.

It is best to begin with common ground. Paul's principle of accommodation cannot be restricted to missionary situations for the following reasons: (i) The natural way to understand 'the weak' in I Cor. 9.27 is as a reference to Christians whose consciences trouble them about matters not in themselves wrong (as in I Cor. 8). This is contextually more likely than the suggestion that 'the weak' should be taken as a reference to non-Christians, as in Rom. 5.6.<sup>32</sup> But that inevitably means that the verb *kerdainō*, used five times in these verses, cannot refer exclusively to conversion. The broader meaning is likely enough: the verb can refer both to winning someone from paganism or Judaism to Christianity, and to winning someone from faltering or inadequate Christianity to a more robust faith.<sup>33</sup> (ii) Brunt<sup>34</sup> has convincingly shown that, contrary to Weiss and those who followed him,<sup>35</sup> I Cor. 8.1–11.1 constitutes a unity. I shall not repeat Brunt's arguments; but if he is right, then it is wrong to interpret I Cor. 9.1–23 on its own, without reference to I Cor. 8.1–13 and 10.1–11.1. It follows that I Cor. 9.19–23 cannot be taken as nothing more than Paul's missionary strategy.

However, Richardson wishes to extend Paul's principle of accommodation as follows. He argues that, 'If Paul's comments have any

application to the Corinthians it is in the ongoing circumstances of their own struggling and somewhat fragmented group of Christians.'<sup>36</sup> But Paul's clauses express *his* purposes and goals. The *application* of the principle of accommodation cannot be direct, for Paul is not offering practical counsel on how to live the life of an apostle, but explaining how in his apostleship the principle of self-abnegation, the principle of servanthood—in short, the principle of the cross—operates in his own experience. Perhaps Paul's apostleship was under attack when he wrote this chapter; but the chapter's repeated thrust is that Paul does not make a habit of using his rights, his *Exousia* (cf. 9.4,5,12,15). Paul's principle of accommodation is an expression of his commitment in his apostolic ministry not to use all his *Exousia*; and so the question raised by I Cor. 8 does not touch on the principle of accommodation *per se*, but on the willingness to abandon personal rights, of which Paul's principle of accommodation is a prime example.

The same sort of argument applies to Richardson's treatment of I Cor. 10.29–11.1. Paul clearly 'extends his comments to include others', Richardson writes, and therefore the principle of accommodation 'applies to church-related problems as well'.<sup>37</sup> True enough; but *how*? Paul's conduct remains the *standard* of the imperative to the Corinthians: 'Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God [a fairly clear reference back to 9.19–23—the imperative has to do with not giving offence, a reference to the problem raised in I Cor. 8]—even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good, but the good of many, so that they may be saved [and here Paul reverts to himself and *his* aims, so that the clause *hina sōthōsin* has primary reference to *his* mission]' (10.32–33). The relation between model and imperative is reminiscent of passages like Mark 10.43–45: the disciples of Jesus are to seek to serve one another, not in the sense that they are to give their lives a ransom for many, but in a way which seeks to live up to the standards of sacrifice set by the Son of Man. Cf. similarly I Peter 2.13–25. Thus Richardson is right to say that I Cor. 9.19–23 has implications for situations beyond the pure missionary setting; but it is less clear that the principle of accommodation is being *directly* applied to the problem of the weaker brother. It sounds as if Paul's missionary service is producing a superior model for voluntary restriction of personal rights in the church.

The irony is that although in his discussion Richardson recognises that Paul rarely if ever advises his followers to adopt the principle of accommodation, he applies this observation in a doubtful way. He argues strongly that 'I Cor. 9.19–23 applies unreservedly to Paul as an apostle'.<sup>38</sup> Paul never instructs others to be all things to all men, and his view of his own licence to do this 'is connected intimately with his view of his apostolic office.'<sup>39</sup> True, Richardson concedes, I

Cor. 10.32–33 ‘does extend the principle of his conduct to his congregation, but in a weaker and more passive way.’<sup>40</sup> From this Richardson deduces that the principle of accommodation was restricted entirely to the apostles, among whom it was an agreed (if variously applied) prerogative. This generates his argument that the principle of accommodation is broad with respect to *situation* (it extends beyond the missionary setting to church relationships) but narrow with respect to *persons* (it is restricted to the apostolate); and this synthesis in turn generates Richardson’s reconstruction of the Antioch episode.

Richardson’s position seems internally unstable. Many of the questions he raised about the applicability of I Cor. 9.19–23 to its context return to haunt us when we consider his proposal to limit the principle of accommodation to the apostolate. He argued, for instance, that if these verses apply only to a missionary situation they would have little relevance to the problem faced by the Corinthians in I Cor. 8; but would that not also be true if the principle of these verses were understood to be exclusively apostolic?

Yet Richardson has raised a valid point: the principle of accommodation is not enjoined on the Corinthian readership. But this is not because Paul holds this principle to be exclusively apostolic, but because Paul is simply providing a personal example of the principle of self-denial which he *does* enjoin on the Corinthian readership. Perhaps if some of the Corinthians became involved in evangelism and church planting, Paul would extend the principle of accommodation to them more directly (as, according to Acts 16.1–3, he extends the principle of accommodation in a rather practical way to Timothy!); but here his purpose is not to instruct church planters but to enjoin all Christians to follow his example and refuse to stand on their rights if the well-being of their fellow-believers is called into jeopardy.

If this exegesis of the text is essentially correct, then Paul is not arguing that the apostles alone have the right to obey or disobey Torah at will, for the sense of the gospel. Rather, he presupposes that any Christian Jew is similarly free, since this freedom owes its origin not to the unique status of apostles but to a new relationship to *nomos theou*, viz. being *Ennomos Christou*. This exegesis also means that I Cor. 8.1–11.1 is not as far removed from Rom. 14.1–15.6 as some have thought. In the Romans passage, it is argued, Paul urges toleration, not accommodation. Yet Paul’s purpose in I Cor. 9.19–23 is not to urge accommodation *tout simple*, but self-denial (which of course necessarily involves some sort of accommodation). The toleration urged on the Romans extends to a willingness not to hinder a brother along with a foundational belief that everything is clean. It is hard to see how this is very different from the application Paul wishes to make of his principle of accommodation in I Cor. 9.19–23.

### 3. The Jerusalem leaders’ understanding of Paul (Acts 21.17–26)

Before turning to the Antioch episode itself, we must pause at the extraordinarily difficult passage, Acts 21.17–26, and ask what light it sheds on Paul’s instruction to Jewish converts regarding the law; for this has a bearing on Richardson’s final synthesis. That many Jews in Jerusalem should have heard that Paul was telling diaspora Jews not to circumcise their children and not to live according to Jewish customs is not surprising; but neither is it decisive as a guide to Paul’s actual practice. Certainly there is no text that tells us Paul openly advocated that Jewish Christians abandon the law; and in the Antioch episode (Gal. 2.11–14) it is often judged remarkable that Paul offers no rebuke to those from James who refuse from the beginning to eat with Gentile believers, but only to those who switch. This argument from silence can be abused, as we shall see (cf. section 4.3, *infra*); but the silence itself is curious.

Much more problematic is Acts 21.24. Paul is counselled to pay the relatively expensive fees of four men taking Nazirite vows in order to establish his solidarity with Jewish customs. This action, he is told, will announce to everybody that the rumours about him are untrue *and that he himself is living in obedience to Torah*.

It is this last point that is so difficult. Many scholars cannot believe the account has historical foundations.<sup>41</sup> Richardson takes a different tack: ‘Luke can only mean to imply that James and the elders do not believe that Paul is really doing the things he has been rumoured to be doing, and he further implies that Paul undertakes the vow to eliminate such rumours.’<sup>42</sup> In other words, if the account is historically correct, Paul must have deceived the Jerusalem leadership. Richardson speculates that church unity was so important to Paul that he probably quietly advised Jewish Christians not to circumcise their children, but was flexible enough in his own practices that he went along with the Jerusalem elders without telling them the whole story. But is it not surprising that the Jerusalem leaders seem blissfully unaware that accommodation is an *apostolic* practice?

It is not surprising that Paul would on occasion submit to Jewish rites. He undertook a Jewish vow, apparently under no external pressure (Acts 81.18). The problem is that Luke casts Paul’s action as a sign of his obedience to the law; and on the face of it this either means that Luke was wrong or that the Jerusalem leaders were deceived.

Haenchen<sup>43</sup> suggests that Luke’s account is rather condensed, and hides the difficult situation in which the Jerusalem leaders found themselves when Paul arrived in town with the substantial collection from the daughter churches. According to Rom. 15.31, Paul himself before this trip to Jerusalem foresaw not only danger from unbelievers but also the possibility that his service might not be

acceptable *to the saints* there. The more cynical opposition might view the collection as a bribe; and therefore if the Jerusalem church were to accept the gift, they would lose the credibility of their witness. On the other hand, if the church flatly refused the gift, not only would their financial loss be considerable, but it would also have the effect of abandoning the predominantly Gentile churches to their own devices. Under these circumstances, if Paul could make some conciliatory gesture, then perhaps the gift could be received and the opposition stilled.

What this presupposes is that historically there was an agreement between Paul and the Jerusalem elders, who understood perfectly well what both they and he were doing.

This reconstruction is not intrinsically unlikely: any group that had hammered out the Jerusalem accord, to which reference is here made (21.25), must have understood the other's position pretty well. Moreover, for all that Luke restrains himself from Paul's most negative statements about the law, he insists that the law is inadequate as a means of salvation (cf. esp. 13.38,39), and makes much of Peter's vision of the sheet, which has the effect of formally abolishing more than just food laws. Moreover, Acts 21.24b must not be made to say more than it does. We know the collection was brought to Jerusalem at this time, and we know that Paul himself feared trouble (Rom. 15.31). If Haenchen's reconstruction is sound, v.24 may mean only that Paul is living in obedience to all the strictures of Torah *during his sojourn in Jerusalem*, not that he has never felt free to abandon such strictures, nor that he has never advocated such abandonment to Christian Jews living under quite different circumstances. It is hard to see, in the light of Acts 10.1–11.18, that Luke means more than this; for if Peter can, under the influence of fresh revelation, reconsider his relationship to Torah (10.14,15,28,34–36), Luke cannot mean to imply in 21.24b that the Jerusalem elders think the apostle response of the Jerusalem church to Peter's report (11.18) was probably unreflected enthusiasm. They focused on the salvation of Gentiles, and rejoiced; they did not (apparently) consider very deeply the implications of the divine instructions *carried out by Peter and the other Jews*. But Luke cannot have been so unreflective; even if he had his own particular slant to get across, it is doubtful that he meant to give the impression that Richardson finds in 21.24b.

It appears that the Book of Acts provides no decisive information to support the view that Paul was perfectly obedient to the law, plainly two-faced with the Jerusalem elders, or quietly but systematically advocating the abandonment of the law to Jewish Christian families.<sup>44</sup>

#### 4. The focus of the Antioch episode (Gal. 2.11–14)

To measure how far Gal. 2.11–14 contradicts I Cor. 9.19–23, we must decide the nature of the conflict between Peter and Paul, and then assess whether this dispute falls within the limits of Paul's principle of accommodation. We may proceed by asking five questions:

##### 4.1 Does Paul consider any party in Gal. 2.11–14 'weak'?

As Richardson<sup>45</sup> rightly points out, in Antioch there are three possible candidates for the label 'weak': (i) Gentile Christians whose position as Christians was threatened because they were not circumcised; (ii) Jewish Christians who were so sensitive about circumcision that Gentile Christians had to cater to their opinion; (iii) the intruders from outside, who held even stronger views about circumcision and its bearing on table fellowship.

One might make a plausible case for (i) since in Paul's account their position was under siege. But this does not seem very likely. As Paul defines the 'weak' in I Cor. 8, they have consciences burdened by things not really wrong; they are not emancipated spirits under attack from their fellow Christians for ignoring the claims of *adiaphora*. This might then support (ii) as a candidate for the label 'weak'. But the Jewish believers in Antioch, including Barnabas, seem to have had no qualms over table fellowship with Gentiles until the party from Jerusalem arrived. From Paul's perspective, that can scarcely be called 'conscience' and therefore it is no sign of the 'weakness' for which he is prepared to be accommodating. Nor can Peter be labelled 'weak', since at first he was happy to eat with the Gentile believers.

The sole real possibility is (iii). Is it not plausible that Peter saw the recently arrived Jews from James as 'weak' in the sense of I Cor. 8, and therefore decided to accommodate himself to them? But whatever Peter's point of view, from Paul's perspective that identification will not work. In I Cor. 8 the 'weak' refuse to indulge in something Paul perceives to be religiously indifferent. Paul is quite prepared to distinguish between that which objectively contradicts the gospel, and that which does so only in the mind of the immature believer. The former he opposes; the latter he generally tolerates, and even accommodates.

Yet the matter is more subtle still. Whether a particular viewpoint belongs to the former or the latter category may depend not only on the thing itself but also on its connections. In the case of meat offered to idols, because an idol is 'nothing in this world' (I Cor. 8.4) Paul sees the thing itself as religiously indifferent. But if it is linked to pagan cultic practices (I Cor. 10.14–22), then Paul treats it as an abomination. Similarly for circumcision: at one level Paul insists circumcision is religiously indifferent (I Cor. 7.19; Gal. 6.15),

because he is free from Torah; but in a certain framework, and linked with particular theological associations, Paul forbids circumcision, because it puts a man under the obligation to obey all of Torah (Gal. 5.3), and thereby makes Christ of no value (Gal. 5.2).

Under *Paul's* interpretation of the Antioch episode, therefore, no party is 'weak'. He perceives the circumcision question, *in connection with the larger Judaizing movement*, to be perfidious, preaching another gospel (Gal. 1.6–7). He understands the demand for circumcision implicit in Peter's newly restricted table fellowship to be not only a return to the 'minority' period of the history of the Jewish race (4.1–7), but also a fundamental misunderstanding of the Scriptures, the work of Christ.

If in Paul's view there are no 'weak' parties in the Antioch episode, then his principle of accommodation (I Cor. 9.19–23) is not operative. From his perspective, Paul had adequate reasons to present himself not as the elastic apologist but as the defender of orthodoxy.

#### 4.2 Do Paul and Peter disagree regarding the basis of salvation?

Some scholars have answered this question in the affirmative. Perhaps the strongest form of the argument has been put forward by Howard.<sup>46</sup> He argues, *inter alia*: (i) The verb 'to compel' *anankazō*, (Gal. 2.14) should be given its full force: Peter's mission to Antioch was to *compel* Gentile Christians to accept circumcision. Howard is unhappy with any suggestion that interprets the verb to mean *indirect* compulsion by dint of personal example; for such approaches, he argues, must assume that Peter withdrew from table fellowship without clearly stating his reasons. Why could not Peter have simply explained to the believers why he felt it expedient to withdraw? But Howard's objection overlooks the psychology of the situation. *If* Peter was withdrawing because he was intimidated by those from James or by the prospect of the reaction of the Jerusalem church to their reports, he was scarcely in a position to offer an explanation to Gentile Christians that would publicly brand Jewish Christians as weaker brothers! (ii) Howard argues that the report that Barnabas sided with Peter on this issue is inconceivable unless Peter was claiming that what he was demanding (*viz.* the circumcision of all Christians) was new and theologically necessary. This is part of Howard's argument that Peter had once shared Paul's perspective on these matters, but had since come to new and more conservative theological conviction. Only a step so decisive, Howard reasons, would have been enough to swing Barnabas, especially after his years of work with Paul and with the Antiochian believers. But not only do our records provide no hint of so major a change in Peter's thinking, the kinds of arguments Howard applies to Barnabas, if applied to Peter, make this interpretation untenable. How could *Peter* undergo so major a shift

in theological outlook and not leave some trace of the transformation? (iii) Howard tries to overcome the obvious implications of Paul's charge of *hypocrisy* against Peter<sup>47</sup> by interpreting it in the light of v.14 ('If you being a Jew live like a Greek and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jesus?'): In other words, Howard writes, Peter's hypocrisy was not that he avoided the Gentiles but that he did first one thing and then the opposite. '[It] is hard to escape the conclusion that he was convinced on both occasions that he was right.'<sup>48</sup> We thus return to the improbability that Peter changed substantially on so important an issue. In any case Howard misinterprets Paul's question in v.14. If Peter's convictions had *changed*, Paul could not legitimately charge him with *hypocrisy* but rather with fickleness or apostasy. The purpose of Paul's question therefore is to point out that Peter's convictions had already surfaced in his table fellowship with Gentiles, and therefore to ask what right he had to give the impression that Gentile believers should adopt the narrower approach to Torah that he himself had principally abandoned.

Howard offers other support for his theory, but it does not seem any stronger. The conclusion of Schmithals in his discussion of this problem (though of course without reference to Howard) does not seem too strong:

Whatever the precise meaning given to *hypokrinein* may be, it completely excludes the possibility that Peter made a breach with the Gentile-Christian church owing to a private decision against the doctrine of justification by faith. For in that case Paul would have had to reproach him not with dissimulation but with lapsing into unbelief, with giving up the Christian fellowship altogether.<sup>49</sup>

Even a less virulent form of the theory that Paul and Peter were locked in a major confrontation over mutually exclusive doctrinal claims does not seem particularly inviting. D. R. Catchpole,<sup>50</sup> for instance, argues that Peter was trying to impose the decision of the Jerusalem Council on the Gentile Christians of Antioch; and D.W.B. Robinson<sup>51</sup> accepts the reading *tina* instead of *tinan* in Gal. 2.12, and takes it as a neuter plural referring to the *krimata* or *dogmata* of that Council: when these were brought to Antioch, Cephas felt obliged to eat only with the ritually clean. But quite apart from (i) the relative dating of the epistle to the Galatians and the Jerusalem Council, (ii) the uncertainty of this textual variant, and (iii) the unlikelihood that if Paul were going to refer to the decisions of that Council he would do so in such a veiled way, (iv) 'if any credence is to be given to the record of Acts 15 (as Robinson's interpretation requires) Cephas/Peter was one of the 'apostles' by whose authority the letter embodying the resolutions was sent to the church of Antioch and her



daughter churches.<sup>52</sup> It is therefore strange that Peter should have to wait until it arrived before changing his practice. And in any case a good argument can be made for the view that the Jerusalem decree was designed to facilitate table fellowship between Jewish and Gentile believers, not hinder it.<sup>53</sup>

#### 4.3 When did Paul change his practices?

Richardson makes the *arti -eti* contrast in Gal. 1.10 crucial to this question. At some point Paul has changed his behaviour, and now claims that his aim is *not* to please men. Gal. 1–2, Richardson argues, is to be interpreted as support for this claim: Paul did not confer with flesh and blood by going up to Jerusalem (1.14–17), he did not confer with the apostles except to speak with Peter and to see James (1.18–19), he was not compelled to have Titus circumcised (2.1–3), concern for the poor was not laid on him as a matter of compulsion (2.10), and in Antioch he opposed Cephas to his face (2.11–14). All of this goes to demonstrate that Paul does *not* please men. Richardson concludes:

Though it is incapable of proof, it may be that Paul's changed attitude alluded to in 1.10 is a result of his changed practice referred to in 5.11. He used to urge circumcision, perhaps even as a Christian, but he views that at the time of writing Galatians as an attempt to please men. Since he has stopped that practice, because his understanding of the law in the new times after Christ has changed (2.15–4.31), he is no longer pleasing men. Thus, on the showing of Galatians, to require circumcision is to attempt to please men. Those apostles who limit their table fellowship to circumcised brethren must be opposed as sharply as possible. No accommodation can be made.<sup>54</sup>

With much of this I heartily agree. But there are two qualifications to be entered. *First*, it is very doubtful if Paul is referring to a change in his behaviour as Richardson suggests *and* presupposes by his argument that at some time before his writing Paul 'was put into situations where an attempt was made to force his hand'. Paul gives no hint of a change in his thinking during his ministry, and that interpretation is excluded by 1.10: 'If I were still trying to please men, *I would not be a servant of Christ.*' In other words, Paul relates his men-pleasing days to the time when he was not a servant of Christ, and the beginning of his God-pleasing days to the time when he became a servant of Christ. For him, the change in his relation to Christ came with his conversion, not at some later point. *Second*, it is doubtful that Paul means to interpret Gal. 1.10 by the events he records in 1.14–17, 18–19, 2.1–3, 10, 11–14. These passages are not cast as situations where he proves he is not a men-pleaser, but where he demonstrates his apostolic independence from the Jerusalem

Twelve or the Jerusalem pillars. Thus, these verses are better seen as demonstrations of Gal. 1.1 than of Gal. 1.10.

Two conclusions are entailed by these judgments. *First*, if Paul's changed status from men-pleaser to God-pleaser came with his conversion, then because his principle of accommodation (I Cor. 9.19–23) was formulated *after* that change, it cannot legitimately be interpreted as a form of men-pleasing. In other words, differences between I Cor. 9.19–23 and Gal. 2.11–14 cannot be explained by appealing to a change in Paul's view of men-pleasing, that took place between the writing of the two epistles. And *second*, it appears that Paul views Peter's action in Antioch as a serious failure prompted by the desire to please men. The fact that the incident caused Paul so much grief—even from Barnabas!<sup>55</sup>—is evidence enough that Paul did not succumb to the same motives. We may argue that Paul was wrong, unwise, undiplomatic or ungracious; but we cannot reasonably argue that Paul was out to champion the cause of the group exerting the worst pressure, or that Paul found himself in this dilemma because of his own recent change in theology.

Another form of the question has recently been put forward by James D.G. Dunn.<sup>56</sup> Following Holmberg in the view that 'the dialectic between being independent of and being acknowledged by Jerusalem is the keynote of this important text and must not be forgotten',<sup>57</sup> Dunn argues that despite Paul's best efforts to show that *at the time of writing* he is independent of the Jerusalem leaders, he nevertheless betrays the fact that this was not always the case. Dunn's evidence may be summarised as follows: (i) The use of *prosanatithes-thai* in Gal. 1.16, meaning 'to consult in order to be given authoritative interpretation', is 'probably' in implicit recognition that at the time of his conversion the Jerusalem apostles were indeed the people to consult about his Damascus road conversion—even though the point here is that he did *not* consult with them. (ii) His first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion was 'to get information from Cephas', (1.18),<sup>58</sup> though this information is not the gospel he received three years earlier (1.12). (iii) Paul's second visit to Jerusalem makes clear that what the Jerusalem leadership decided would make a great deal of difference to his own Gentile mission. This shows that *at the time of* this trip Paul was not as independent of the Jerusalem leaders as he would now like to let on. (iv) This embarrassing admission lurks behind the awkward language in Gal. 2.2 and 2.6. In the former, the phrase 'the men of repute', familiar in political rhetoric,<sup>59</sup> is purposely ambiguous; and in the latter, the change of tense in the parenthetical clause ('what they were [then] is [now] a matter of indifference to me ...') demonstrates his concern to reduce the significance of whatever authority he once ascribed to the Jerusalem leaders. (v) If Paul says in Gal. 2.6 that the Jerusalem leaders added nothing to his message, he is probably

acknowledging their *right* to do so. (vi) Similarly, 'Paul's convoluted statement' in 2.7–10 may be taken as an attempt to mask just how dependent Paul was on the Jerusalem 'pillars'. 'All this points strongly to the conclusion that while Paul *defended a position* at Jerusalem, the three "pillar" apostles *delivered a verdict*.'<sup>60</sup>

As a result of this reconstruction, Dunn argues in his second paper<sup>61</sup> that it was the Antioch episode itself (the general parameters of which he reconstructs with admirable sense and clarity) which forced Paul to see instantly the entailments of Peter's action on the as yet ill-defined doctrine of justification by grace through faith,<sup>62</sup> and therefore to adopt the theological independence that thereafter marked him. The result was a breach not only between Paul and Jerusalem but even between Paul and Barnabas.

Each of Dunn's steps may reasonably be questioned:

(i) There should be little quarrel with Dunn's understanding of *prosanatithesthai* in Gal. 1.16; but the fact that Paul denies he went up to Jerusalem to consult with the apostles immediately after his conversion is no argument for the theory that at the time Paul thought them the appropriate people to consult. *First*, Dunn is setting up an antithesis between what Paul now thinks and what he used to think; but the text itself casts an antithesis between what Paul thinks and what his opponents hold. If Paul casts his language as he does, it is to repel his opponents' understanding of the Jerusalem apostolate, not his own earlier views; and if that is so, Dunn's explanation is superfluous. *Second*, the *form* of his argument is not very convincing. He says that because Paul argues that at one time he chose not to do X, he is probably implying that at that earlier time he believed it was appropriate to do X. But such a conclusion cannot be more than speculation. *Third*, Dunn's reconstruction minimises the impact Paul's Damascus road experience had on him, and substitutes too slow a development of thought<sup>63</sup> for what was in all probability a more rapid evolution in his theological understanding.<sup>64</sup> J.L. Houlden may go a shade too far, but not much, when he writes:

Up to this point, the theory must go, Paul's Christian adherence did not involve him in any major movement of mind on the subject of the Law. His self-awareness as apostle to the Gentiles and his doctrine of justification by faith may indeed have been fully-fledged, but on the matter of the observance of the Law he had seen no new issue of principle. This is difficult, to say the least. It would mean that the intimate connections between justification by faith and the place of the Law were only arrived at later, an addition to an earlier structure. Yet the two matters seem to be integrated, as if from scratch, in the developed theology of Paul as found in Galatians and Romans. ... [To] see Paul's pre-Antioch attitude as one of quantitatively limited

acceptance of the Law for Gentile converts is to move away from the possibility of entertaining one of the most likely explanations of the intellectual and psychological aspects of Paul's call or conversion: that as it was precisely zeal for the Law, in principle and *in toto*, which had led Paul to persecute the church, so it was a crisis of appreciation of Jesus in relation to the Law which forced his hand and brought about his change of allegiance. The question before him was whether it was acceptable to dismiss Jesus as one accused under the Law by virtue of his crucifixion, or, on the contrary, his mission and teaching were such that this judgment upon him was impossible, leaving open the ultimately compelling option that God had indeed sent his Son. Acceptance of that option necessitated a negative verdict upon the Law, and compromise was excluded by the very nature of the dilemma. In other words, the alternatives, Christ or the law, were not the result of later reflection prompted by a row over table-fellowship at Antioch, but go back to the very root of Paul's Christian life.<sup>65</sup>

(ii) That Paul first went to Jerusalem after his conversion in order 'to get information from Cephas (1.18) has little bearing on the question of Paul's apostolic authority. Dunn is offering too narrow a disjunction: *either* Paul is exactly the same as Peter so far as their respective apostolic roles are concerned, *or* he is inferior. At some stage Paul seeks information from Peter; *ergo*, at that stage of his development he recognised his inferiority as an apostle. This argument appears plausible at first reading, but forces the evidence too much. Paul elsewhere clearly recognises that his own apostleship is rather *inferior in certain respects* from that of the others (I Cor. 15.8,9; Gal. 1.17), though he claims that in the long run he is *superior in certain respects*, in particular that God's grace enabled him to work harder than any of his colleagues (I Cor. 15.10; and cf. II Cor. 11.23). Moreover, if it is right to hold that the formula of I Cor. 11.23 refers to the passing on of tradition,<sup>66</sup> Paul is quite happy to acknowledge what he could in any case scarcely deny, viz. that he learned a great deal about the historical Jesus from the eyewitnesses of the Lord's ministry and passion. But the gospel he preaches and the authority with which he preaches it Paul keeps distinct from such auxiliary information (Gal. 1.12), and even chronologically separate from the first trip to Peter (1.18). To acknowledge that his apostleship is different in certain respects from that of those who were apostles before him is not at all tantamount to admitting that the nature of his apostolic authority has ever been different from theirs or that the gospel he preaches is derivative or a partial distortion of theirs.

(iii) It is true Paul acknowledges that what the Jerusalem leaders decide (Gal. 2.1–5) would make a great deal of difference to his own

ministry. But this does not show that Paul was then more dependent on them than he was later, any more than Paul's acceding to the request of the Jerusalem leaders (Acts 21.17–26), proves that they thought themselves dependent on him. The fact is that the Jewish and Gentile wings of the church were mutually dependent. But mutual dependence says nothing about Paul's status as an independent apostle—which would introduce questions of dependence of quite *another* kind. Dunn<sup>67</sup> rightly perceives that the 'dependence' Paul expresses in Gal. 2.1–2 reflects no hesitation whatever in Paul's mind as to the *truth* of the gospel he preaches (else he would be seriously undermining the argument he has just advanced) but rather concern for the *effectiveness* of its promulgation. Unless Jerusalem recognised Paul's gospel as authentic and simultaneously disavowed all connections with those who sought to undermine him, a great deal of Paul's work could be quickly undone. But then it is all the more surprising that after rightly outlining the point in question in Gal. 2.1–2, Dunn should detect some intrinsic inferiority in Paul's apostleship when the trip was made. Similarly, it scarcely follows that because Titus was *not* compelled to be circumcised (2.3) 'the implication [is] that Titus *could* have been compelled, that is, had the Jerusalem apostles insisted', and 'Paul would have had to go along with them'.<sup>68</sup> That is surely to return to a form of the interpretation of these verses that Dunn has rightly just disavowed. Paul's point is that despite pressure from some 'false brothers' (2.4—surely not the Jerusalem apostles!), Titus was *not* compelled by the Jerusalem apostles to be circumcised: i.e. these apostles sided with Paul and his understanding of the gospel. To argue that if their decision had gone the other way, Paul would have gone along, however grudgingly, is to suppose that Paul was prepared to submit his *gospel* to the adjudication of the Jerusalem leaders—even though he had just finished insisting that he received his gospel on an authority higher than theirs (Gal. 1), and even though Dunn himself has just admitted that Gal. 2.1–2 lends no support to the view that Paul was submitting the content of his gospel to the Jerusalem leaders for their approval. From what Paul actually says, therefore, we must suppose that if the decision of the Jerusalem leaders had gone against Paul on the matter of Titus' circumcision, Paul would have opposed them tooth and nail—just as he was later to oppose Peter (Gal. 2.11–14).

(iv) Conclusions rather different from Dunn's can be drawn from the language Paul uses in Gal. 2.2 and 2.6. In the former, the phrase 'the men of repute' may have been chosen precisely because Paul wants to use language flexible enough to show respect without betraying subservience; and in the latter, the change in tense in the parenthetical expression may not mean 'what they were [*then*] is

[*now*] a matter of indifference to me', but 'what they were [*on the occasion of which I am speaking*] is [*as a matter of principle*] a matter of indifference to me'. Indeed, this way of taking the present tense makes much more sense of the context; for Dunn's interpretation not only requires that Paul is hiding his past attitude to the Jerusalem leaders, but that he is doing a thoroughly bad job of it; whereas the interpretation suggested here is entirely in line with Paul's insistence that he has not been a men-pleaser (1.10) or a derivative apostle (1.1,15–17) from his conversion on. Moreover, the rest of the parenthesis in Gal. 2.6 calls for a present tense verb: *diaphorei* is suitably parallel to *lambanei*. Just as it is a principle with God to 'receive no one's face', so it is a principle with Paul to be indifferent to the status of other servants of Christ.

(v) As for Dunn's fifth argument, it is not entirely clear how he reaches his conclusion. A slightly sceptical reading of his interpretation of Gal. 2.6 might be presented as follows:

- Only leaders with authority superior to Paul's could decide to add to his doctrine.
- The Jerusalem leaders decide not to add to Paul's doctrine.
- Therefore they have superior authority.

This cannot be said to follow, for the minor premise is not the particularization of the (unstated) major premise, but the negation of such a particularization. Since the major premise is unstated, one might reasonably conclude that it is mistaken, and suggest that the unambiguous and factually correct minor premise is evidence of early apostolic agreement on the structure of the gospel rather than a reflection of relative authority.

Alternatively, a more sympathetic presentation of Dunn's fifth point might be as follows:

- Paul would be prepared to submit his gospel for assessment only to those with superior authority.
- Paul does in fact submit his gospel for assessment by the Jerusalem leaders.
- Therefore the Jerusalem leaders possess authority superior to that of Paul.

Formally, of course, this argument is valid; but it is not at all certain that the conclusion is true, for the minor premise is precisely what Paul does *not* say, and the major premise, though doubtless theoretically true, falls to the ground because Paul has already established that the 'authority' behind his gospel is the resurrected Jesus himself. In other words, Dunn has to imagine that Paul was

submitting his gospel to the Jerusalem leaders for their assessment (even though Dunn rightly recognises that 2.1–5 gives no support for that view)<sup>69</sup> in order to reach his conclusion that at one time Paul did in fact hold the authority of the Jerusalem leaders in higher regard than his own. Paul's phrasing can scarcely be thought to justify Dunn's speculation. One may reasonably conclude that in a sense Paul *is* appealing to the authority of the three—but it is the authority of the three in agreement *with him*.

(vi) Similarly, the accord of Gal. 2.7–10 is not so awkward that it needs to be interpreted as a mask hiding Paul's real dependence on the Jerusalem pillars at that time. Whatever awkwardness is present might better be interpreted as the result of Paul's efforts to affirm both his apostolic independence and the agreement over differences in principal spheres of labour, while avoiding any language that might be thought to demean or depreciate the other leaders.

There are three other features that tell against Dunn's interpretation.

*First*, although Dunn is rightly cautious, the final conclusion is nevertheless put forward forcefully enough that it becomes, as we have seen, the basis of the thesis in the second paper. A theory of major significance but based on a string of speculations is unlikely to command sustained assent among historians.<sup>70</sup>

*Second*, the supporting evidence for his thesis that Dunn finds in Acts 15—viz. that Paul and Barnabas go up to Jerusalem not as 'apostles' but as 'apostles of the church at Antioch', that the question discussed at the Jerusalem council was not whether or not Paul and Barnabas were apostles 'but whether as apostles of Antioch their practices should continue',<sup>71</sup> and that the Jerusalem decree 'did not call in question the authority of the Jerusalem apostles to make this concession'<sup>72</sup>—is considerably overstated. To phrase the outcome in terms of what the decision did *not* do ('it did not call in question the authority of the Jerusalem apostles') is to beg a lot of questions: one might with equal justification conclude that it did not call in question Paul's gospel and call to apostolic ministry. To label the decision a 'concession' ignores the fact that the record as we have it presents the outcome as a logical extension of the Cornelius episode (cf. Acts 15.6–11), Barnabas and Paul in an atmosphere of apostolic collegiality (15.12, 24–29), and Paul's opponents as trouble-makers without authorization from Jerusalem (15.24). More telling still, Peter himself had to pass a not dissimilar step of approval by the church (11.1–18); and if his apostleship was not reduced, why should Paul's be endangered in Luke's handling of the Jerusalem council? If with Dunn we presume reasonable historical accuracy in the account, it appears that Luke is less interested in delineating relative apostolic

authority, as in outlining how the Jerusalem church struggled over the full implications of their own theology.

*Third*, Dunn's reconstruction requires the view that Paul is self-consciously masking from his Galatian readers what actually took place. It is not just that Paul's memory is playing him tricks, but that he is self-consciously re-writing certain phases of his personal history in order to defend the position he now holds. Dunn's reconstruction is therefore at considerable variance with what Paul actually says.

There is no compelling evidence for interpreting the Antioch episode as a major turning point in Paul's theological development. If this episode had the significance Dunn ascribes to it, could Paul have reasonably been expected to write I Cor. 9.19–23, with its extraordinary symmetry, *after* it? Would not Paul have found it necessary to enter some *caveat* as to when it is *not* appropriate to 'become a Jew'? The more the Antioch confrontation looms as a turning point instead of an incident, the harder it becomes to explain both the epistle to the Galatians and I Cor. 9.

#### 4.4 Was the dispute simply over division of labour?

Richardson's answer to this question, we have seen, is affirmative, though in a special sense. Peter and Paul share the same principle of accommodation; but because Peter sees his primary allegiance to the perspectives of Jerusalem, he applies the principle in an independent way and decides to cater to the foibles of 'those from James'. This means that the reason for Paul's wrath is that he feels the accord of Gal. 2.7–10 has been broken. On Gentile turf, Peter should lean in Paul's direction.

Quite apart from Richardson's over-emphasis on Antioch as *Pauline* territory,<sup>73</sup> it is doubtful if the accord of Gal. 2.7–10 can be made to bear so much weight. For a start, the division of labour in these verses is broadly racial, not territorial, as Conzelmann points out;<sup>74</sup> so any emphasis on Pauline *territory* is likely to miss the mark.

Neither the text of Gal. 2–10 nor the rest of the New Testament supports the view that the division of labour, even if purely ethnographical, was ever conceived as absolute. Acts records that it was Peter who made the breakthrough to Cornelius; and the evidence is strong that Paul wherever possible regularly began his ministry in any new place in the local synagogue (Acts 13.5–14, 14.1, 17.1–2, 10, 17, 18.4, 19, 19.8).<sup>75</sup> Such evidence is not solely Lukan: the accommodation principle itself (I Cor. 9.19–23) is not very coherent if Paul never preached to Jews. More telling yet is the raw evidence of Paul's synagogue floggings (II Cor. 11.24), painful proof that Paul was persistent in his efforts to win his own people.<sup>76</sup> In any case, the Gentile character of the Antioch church may well be exaggerated in our minds.<sup>77</sup> More important yet, the purpose of Gal. 2.7–10 is not to establish an absolute division of labour, but to establish that Paul's

mission is on a par with that of Peter and the other apostles. The point is all the clearer if we accept the arguments of J. Chapman in a rather overlooked article.<sup>78</sup> Chapman and Wenham draw attention to the following parallels, which, taken together, are rather suggestive:

(Matt. 16.16) You are the <i>Christ</i> the <i>Son of the living God</i> (Matt. 16.17) Blessed are you ...	(Gal. 1.12,15) a revelation of Jesus <i>Christ</i> he was pleased to reveal his <i>Son</i> in me
because <i>flesh and blood</i> has not ... <i>revealed</i>	he was blessed ... through his grace ... (Gal. 1.1,12,16) did <i>not</i> consult with <i>flesh and blood</i> but through <i>revelation</i> ... to <i>reveal</i> his Son
(Matt. 16.18) on this rock I will build my church ...	that I may proclaim him

The verbal parallels are ‘flesh and blood’ (but that is fairly infrequent in Paul: cf. I Cor. 15.50; Eph. 6.12) and ‘revelation’; but the broader parallelism is substantial. The notion of God revealing Jesus to someone is unparalleled elsewhere in Paul, and argues against the view that Matthew borrowed from Paul.<sup>79</sup> Chapman and Wenham advance other arguments as well; and if there is anything to their observations, it appears that Paul was familiar with some tradition of the Caesarea Philippi revelation, and lightly modelled the report of his own call on Peter’s. If so, in Gal. 1–2 Paul insists that his apostleship and mission be recognised as on a par with the commissions to Peter and the others.

There is no exegetical tie of cause and effect between Gal. 2.7–10 and 2.11–14. Paul does not say that *because* of the accord, when Peter came to Antioch he found it necessary to oppose him. When Paul offers his rebuke to Peter, he mentions neither the accord nor the territory, but only the *volte-face* and the exclusiveness of the principle of justification by faith.

#### 4.5 Was Peter guilty of *hypocrisy*?

According to Paul, Peter joined with Jews and Gentiles alike in table fellowship<sup>80</sup> until ‘certain men from James’ arrived. The insistence of the latter on eating separately was not *hypocrisy* since there is no evidence they had ever done otherwise. Their presence prompted Peter, and because of Peter the rest of the Jews in the Antioch church,<sup>81</sup> to follow their practice, primarily because they stood in fear of ‘the circumcision group’;<sup>82</sup> and this prompted Paul to rise and

charge *them* with *hypocrisy*, ‘the assumption of a part which masked their genuine feelings and made them appear otherwise than they were. The idea ... is not a false motive entertained, but a false impression produced.’<sup>83</sup>

That Peter began by enjoying table fellowship with the Gentile members of the Antioch church is fully in accord with the picture given of him in Acts following the vision on the tanner’s roof in Joppa (Acts 10–11). On this point at least, Peter and Paul were in thorough agreement. It is more difficult to determine what Peter feared. There seems little merit in identifying ‘certain people from James’ (Gal. 2.17) with the ‘certain people’ who precipitated the Jerusalem council (Acts 15.1—whatever the relative chronology), since the latter are disowned by James and the Jerusalem church (Acts 15.24). Paul would more likely link the ‘certain people’ of Acts 15.1 with the ‘false brothers’ of Gal. 2.4.<sup>84</sup> They were not real brothers in Christ at all (cf. also Gal. 18.8,9). By contrast, the language used in Gal. 2.12 suggests the newly arrived party from Jerusalem carried genuine credentials from James, and perhaps a message.

If this is reasonable, we must ask their purpose in coming; and here the suggestions of Manson and Bruce are very attractive.<sup>85</sup> The middle of the fifth decade saw the resurgence of Jewish Zealots and corresponding Roman suppression. ‘In the eyes of such militants, Jews who fraternized with Gentiles and adopted Gentile ways were traitors, and the leaders of the Jerusalem church may have felt themselves endangered by their colleague’s free-and-easy conduct at Antioch’.<sup>86</sup> On this view, of course ‘those of the circumcision’ (Gal. 2.12) are not the same as those from James, nor even the Jewish Christian party in Jerusalem,<sup>87</sup> but non-Christians, Jewish militants. If this theory is right, those from James carried reports from the Jerusalem church to the effect that the church was being placed in jeopardy by the intense reactions of fellow Jews, who were zealous and militant upholders of Torah and scandalised by reports of the conduct of Christian Jews. In short, the conclusion of Reicke seems valid (though unlike Bruce he dates the incident in the early fifties):

Es war im Grunde keine zufällige Episode, die sich in Antiochia abspielte, als nach Gal. 2.11–14 ‘die Leute um Jakobus’ eine Absonderung der Judenchristen von ihren unbeschnittenen Brüdern durchsetzten; sondern es war das Ergebnis einer programmatischen und immer fortschreitende Judaisierung der Kirche, von leitenden Kreisen in der Urgemeinde beeinflusst.<sup>88</sup>

If this is an accurate reconstruction of what took place, the force of Paul’s reaction is somewhat clarified. He perceives that the church’s theology is in danger of being manipulated by committed Jewish

militants whose agenda is their own. Submission to their demands would be a surrender to an ultimatum that had the effect of denying the exclusiveness of the salvation found in Christ.

The charge Paul levels at Peter is that he is guilty of a *volte face* which tells the Gentile believers that they must come under the law of Moses. But although his immediate accusation is *hypocrisy* Paul's concern is not so much moral as theological. His charge is that Peter is masking his true convictions for the sake of expediency; but the lengthy theological treatise that follows goes much farther and argues that Jewish Christians do not have the *right* to avoid table fellowship with their Gentile brothers. Thus, although the people from James cannot be charged with *hypocrisy* Paul is almost certainly condemning their exclusiveness as well. In other words, Paul's *theological* argument recognises that for the Jewish believers to uphold the *necessity* of adhering to Torah involves separation between Jewish and Gentile Christians 'in precisely that one part of Christian worship where unity was most essential. In view of the whole tradition and temper of Judaism, such a separation could only result in a belief that Jewish Christians were superior to Gentile converts, which would certainly issue in a fresh demand for circumcision of such converts and the exclusion from the Church of all who refused to become proselytes of the synagogue.'<sup>89</sup> Doubtless salvation comes from the Jews; but how are Gentile believers to know which Jews embrace the right opinion on the matter? Only those Jews who know liberty from the law when they mingle with Gentile believers, constitute the faithful remnant, the olive tree onto which the Gentile branches are grafted; for only they make Jesus Messiah the exclusive basis for their salvation.

Perhaps, as Richardson, Bruce and others argue,<sup>90</sup> Peter would have defended himself by saying that his concern for the work in Jerusalem was conflicting with Paul's concern for the work in Antioch and Galatia. But in reality the problem is not as simple as that. If there were non-Christian Jews who were exerting pressure on the Jerusalem church, they cannot simply be identified with the 'weak' of I Cor. 8 or with the Jews of I Cor. 9.19–23 who are people who have their defences up against the gospel but who are not seeking to pressure the church.

Even if 'those of the circumcision' (Gal. 2.12) refers to *Christian* Jews, it is doubtful if Paul's argument would change very much. Paul reckons that Peter's unwillingness to eat with Gentile believers before the people from James arrive demonstrates Peter's grasp of the true nature of the situation: observance of Torah is *not essential* for *any* believer. That is why the charge of *hypocrisy* is not only valid, but turns into a full-blown exposition of grace and faith.

This analysis is in conformity with Paul's stance toward both Jew and Gentile in I Cor. 9.19–23. The reason he can formulate his

principle of accommodation in such evenhanded terms is, as we have seen, because he stands on a *third* position so far as the claims of Torah are concerned. From that vantage point he can afford to be flexible, as long as he does not contravene whatever it means to be *Ennomos Christou*; but if any Christian, even the apostle Peter, begins to operate from the vantage point of Torah and its claims, he is in danger of abandoning his distinctively *Christian* ground. At that point Paul is uncompromising.

To return for a moment to Richardson's speculation about what Paul may have suggested to Jewish Christian families, the results of our exegesis suggest: (i) he would not have cared very much whether Jewish Christian families circumcised their sons or not, provided they did not think this action won them a special status as Christians, and did not impose it on Gentile Christians as something necessary or even merely spiritually desirable; (ii) he would not have minded if Christian Jews observed laws on Kosher foods when they were on their own, but would strongly urge them to abandon such restrictions if it would keep them from table fellowship with Gentiles; (iii) he apparently tried to curb the gastronomic freedoms of Christian Gentiles, so that the offence to Christian Jews would be minimised;<sup>91</sup> and (iv) he would continue to expound his own understanding of the role of Torah in the light of the coming Jesus Messiah, knowing full well that the knottiest problems would be resolved if both sides shared his understanding of Christ.

Richardson affirms that his paper serves to exculpate and rehabilitate Peter,<sup>92</sup> but he does not mention that his interpretation is an implicit condemnation of Paul for his intolerance and failure to sympathise with Peter's position. If the reconstruction suggested in this paper hangs together, however, then we must conclude that the only evidence we have suggests that Peter was guilty as charged, and Paul was the one who exhibited deep and self-consistent understanding of the gospel which, at the core, the two apostles held in common.<sup>93</sup>

## 5. Synthesis

Paul's principle of accommodation, as expressed in I Cor. 9.19–23, is not a licence for unlimited flexibility. For him, distinctively Christian demands, and whatever it means to be *Ennomos Christou*, are non-negotiable. From this specifically Christian base, Paul feels free to adopt either Jewish or Gentile perspectives, with a view to winning as many people to Christ as possible. Paul's example of voluntary servanthood has an immediate bearing on the contextual discussion of the weaker brother, along with a universal application to all Christians and not just to the apostolate.

Further, Acts 21.17–26, interpreted against the most probable historical background, is far from requiring the view that Paul's belief and practices in this respect were unknown to the Jerusalem leaders. At the level of theology, those leaders had been forced to come to conclusions similar to those of Paul; at the level of practice, the relative uniformity of their own racial and cultural setting meant they could not only afford, unlike Paul, to let their understanding remain at a fairly theoretical level, but that they may have found it expedient to do so.

But this perspective does not entirely exonerate Peter in Gal. 2.11–14. On the most straightforward reading of the evidence, Peter's *volte-face* was prompted less by principles of evangelistic flexibility than by fear of the difficult situation in Jerusalem. His decision was a capitulation to the agenda of non-Christian Jews. Even if we take the milder interpretation—that Peter's decision was based on pressures not from non-Christian Jews in Jerusalem but from Jews who attached themselves strongly to the church and to Jesus as Messiah while still insisting on the necessity of upholding Torah—it is hard to see how Paul's charge was unjustified. Peter had given the impression that the best Christians must be circumcised and come under the law of Moses, and that threatened the gospel that Peter and Paul shared.

From this analysis, Paul appears consistent in not applying his principle of accommodation to Peter and his *volte-face*. The principle of accommodation in I Cor. 9.19–23, as we have seen, (i) is in Paul's view irrelevant to distinctively Christian demands that he judges non-negotiable, and (ii) irrelevant to all that is embraced by the believer who is *Ennomos Christou*. Moreover, (iii) the purpose of enunciating the principle in its immediate context is to provide an apostolic example of self-denial (iv) regarding the consciences of those who eat food that had been sacrificed to idols,<sup>94</sup> (v) the long-range goal being by all means to save some. Paul's condemnation of Peter in Gal. 2 falls outside these parameters. We may be uncertain as to the *exact* content of what falls under *Ennomos Christou*, but the first entry is unambiguous. From his understanding of the relationship between law and gospel, Paul understands Peter's action to be a threat to the gospel, and no example of self-denial since it stems from fear and reflects *hypocrisis*. Moreover, the question of table fellowship is in Galatians more tightly bound to problems relating to the place of Torah in the Christian scheme of things, than are similar problems in Corinth; and in any case the focus of interest in Galatians is not so much linked with evangelistic outreach and stabilization of immature believers as with an unacceptable doctrinal compromise.

If these results are sound, it follows that those aspects of Paul's thought reflected in these two passages do not show enough development to be useful in establishing relative chronology. Whatever differences there are between these two passages are

completely explicable in terms of the demonstrably different circumstances. The belief structure that undergirds the two passages is consistent enough to provide no index to a fundamental change of mind in Paul *at this stage in his life*.

The synthesis I have suggested, however, does turn on a particular understanding of the way Paul treats the law. Although this subject is too vast for extended discussion here, the integrity of the position demands at least a few hints at the way Paul's treatment of the law might be conceived. It is impossible to reply here to those who trace a substantial development from Galatians to Romans;<sup>95</sup> I propose simply to draw attention to one aspect of Paul's treatment of law that is frequently overlooked.

A great deal of modern debate on Romans and on Paul focuses on the meaning of *dikaïosynē* ('righteousness'/'justification') and related words,<sup>96</sup> or on the 'centre' of Pauline thought.<sup>97</sup> Arguably, however, there has been a tendency to overlook the way in which Paul presents Christ and his gospel as the *fulfilment* of Torah. The reasons for such oversight are many. They include the influential essay of Cranfield<sup>98</sup> who argues that in Paul *nomos* sometimes means 'legalism' and *ta erga tou nomou* something like 'legalistic works'; and therefore the passages that might seem to speak of the law as something in the past do not in fact do so. This conclusion makes it possible to see a great deal of *legal* continuity from the Mosaic covenant to the gospel, and thereby diverts attention from other forms of continuity. Again, the reasons include the long ecclesiastical tradition which attempts to find unity in the canon in part by delineating a 'moral' (as opposed to 'civil' and 'ceremonial' law) that constitutes part of the pattern of continuity between the Testaments.<sup>99</sup> Discussion degenerates into questions as to how much of the law has been abrogated under the new covenant, by what principles we may discover this, the significance of Paul's teaching that what really matters is keeping God's commandments (I Cor. 7.19) so that Christians may themselves be described as those who by the Spirit meet the law's righteous requirements (Rom. 8.4).<sup>100</sup>

Recent study, however, has shown, that, *contra* Cranfield, Paul never uses *nomos* to mean 'legalism', nor *ta erga tou nomou* to refer to legalistic obedience to the law.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, although Paul certainly sees the Christianity he espouses and proclaims as being in some sense in continuity with what he calls 'the old covenant' (II Cor. 3.14), it is very doubtful that the line of continuity is established primarily or even secondarily in terms of law. Paul nowhere attempts to specify what parts of Torah are abrogated, the rest (presumably) continuing in legal force; nor does he attempt to set out what parts of the law continue as legal stipulations, the rest (presumably) being abrogated.<sup>102</sup> Rather, he holds that a righteousness from God *apart from the law* has now been made known in the coming of Jesus

Messiah. Cranfield<sup>103</sup> argues that to 'appeal to these words as evidence that Paul regarded the Law as superseded and set aside by the gospel as something now out of date and irrelevant is surely perverse.' But we may respond: (i) Cranfield's argument depends entirely on taking *chōris nomou* in v.21 along the lines he assigns to *ex ergōn nomou* in v.20; and this interpretation has been shown to be of doubtful validity (cf. n.103, *supra*). (ii) That same interpretation applied to 3.27–31 brings him into even greater difficulties: cf. discussion, *infra*. (iii) In any case he appears to be offering an absolute disjunction when something more nuanced is needed: *either* the law continues in force, so that 'apart from the law' means 'apart from dependence on law as the means of justification', *or* the law is 'something now out of date and irrelevant'. But may we not argue that in one sense the law *is* 'out of date and irrelevant' (consider what Paul says about circumcision, Rom. 2.28,29; I Cor. 7.19; Gal. 5.6!), yet in another sense, though it is along the salvation-historical plane 'out of date', it has continuing functions, not only to provide warnings (I Cor. 10.11), but *typoi* (I Cor. 10.6,11) and witness (Rom. 3.21), enabling us thereby to discover the law's valid continuity in that to which it points? Even in passages such as I Cor. 7.19, it seems a shade easy to point out that what really matters is keeping God's commandments without also pointing out that in the rest of the verse Paul insists that circumcision and uncircumcision are equally unimportant.<sup>104</sup> Any Jew who saw himself under Torah would instantly respond, 'But circumcision *is* one of God's commandments; so how can you say the observation of this particular law is of little consequence?' We glimpse again a fact already established in the analysis of I Cor. 9.19–23, viz. that for Paul *ho nomos tou theou* (I Cor. 9) or *hai entolai tou theou* (I Cor. 7) cannot simply be identified with the Mosaic law.<sup>105</sup>

Paul looks at the covenant ratified at Sinai in the light of the promises to Abraham and fulfilled in Christ. The flow of argument in Rom. 4–5 and Gal. 3–4 is profoundly salvation-historical. If most Jews interpreted the Pentateuch in terms of the Sinai code, Paul treats the Sinai code in terms of the Pentateuch. It is this that enables him to find in the Scriptures—i.e. in Torah *qua* Pentateuch, plus prophets—a clear witness to the righteousness that comes by faith.

Paul treats the Mosaic law in the same framework he uses to handle isolated parts of it. He understands circumcision to point beyond the physical rite to 'circumcision of the heart' (cf. Rom. 2.25–29), so that ultimately one may interpret Christ's work as the obliteration of merely physical distinctions in order to establish the unity of the messianic people, Jew and Gentile alike (Eph. 2.11–22). Paul can take this step because he perceives the importance of certain temporal links in the scriptural narrative: Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness *before* he was circumcised

(Rom. 4.10), making circumcision nothing more than the seal of a relationship of transcendent importance (Rom. 4.11–12). Whatever other functions the law has in Paul's theology—and it has many—one important element is its anticipation of the fuller revelation found in Christ himself. The law is not so much abrogated as fulfilled along a salvation-historical axis.<sup>106</sup>

If this is even approximately correct, it immediately becomes clear why Pauline ethics are not based on a simple appeal to Old Testament law, not even the Decalogue.<sup>107</sup> Paul's approach is profoundly Christological, or, as in Gal. 5 and Rom. 8, eschatological and based on his understanding of the Holy Spirit. The way Paul upholds or establishes the law (Rom. 3.31) is not by simply obeying it as it stands;<sup>108</sup> and likewise fulfilling 'the entire law' (Gal. 5.14) is accomplished by life in the Spirit.<sup>109</sup> If Paul can on occasion refer to the explicit commandments of the decalogue (e.g. Romans 13:8–10), it is to make the point that the conduct he is encouraging *fulfils* the law.' Part of the reason *why* Paul has taken this radical hermeneutical step in his interpretation of Torah lies, as Hooker points out, in Paul's coming to terms with the death and resurrection of Christ:

[The] inadequacy of the Law is seen in the fact that one who was *condemned by the Law* has been *pronounced righteous by God*. Christ has been declared righteous, not only *apart from the Law*, but *in spite of the Law*. In the resurrection, the Law's verdict has been overthrown. This is why the righteousness of the Law is not an alternative to salvation but a blind alley. The death and resurrection of Christ are therefore a demonstration of the fact that the Law is powerless to save.<sup>110</sup>

This synthesis squares with I Cor. 9.19–23: Paul occupies a *third ground* and, so far as law is concerned, is prepared to move from that ground to become like a Jew or like a Gentile, because in his relationship to Torah he is neither one nor the other. This also explains why Paul could be charged with being antinomian by some of his contemporaries<sup>111</sup>—because his understanding of God's redemptive purposes in history left Torah *qua* covenant superseded by a new covenant and relegated to the tie of the Jewish race's minority (Gal. 4.1–7). Meanwhile he kept insisting that to understand Torah aright it is necessary to come under the lordship of Jesus Messiah to whom Torah points.<sup>112</sup> To be a Christian is in fact to satisfy Torah *qua* Scripture, for Torah itself anticipates Jesus Messiah and the gospel of salvation by grace through faith, the new covenant that transforms people by the power of the Holy Spirit who is given them as the downpayment of the promised inheritance.

Historically, then, it is arguable that what appeared to start off as a Jewish sect rather rapidly transformed the structure of its understanding to Jesus Messiah. But recognition of this point *in principle*—a



recognition which enabled Jewish Christians to accept Samaritans as fellow believers, to admit Cornelius, to exonerate Peter even after he had eaten with Gentiles, to bless the establishment of the Antioch church and to acquiesce in the Gentile mission—was necessarily different from recognition of this point *in Jewish practice*.

If it is true that there is no hint in Acts 15 that Jewish Christians might well abandon adherence to Torah, there is equally no rationale offered as to why Torah might still be observed, granted the things Luke has already told his readers (Acts 10.1–11.18, to go no further). Longenecker suggests:

Perhaps this very omission is an indication that the Jerusalem Christians, knowing the temperament of their brethren and remembering the persecution of the Hellenistic Christians, were hesitant to consider the subject. But it would be unfair to assert from the silence that the Jewish Christians never attempted to correlate their Christian theology with their Jewish practice.<sup>113</sup>

Longenecker goes on to suggest that the more enlightened members of the Jerusalem church, while believing that salvation came only through Christ, justified their continued adherence to Torah on several practical grounds: on a religious basis, they might wish to preserve the heritage of the old covenant; on a nationalistic basis, they might wish to continue practices that tended to preserve some unity in the nation of Israel; and on an evangelistic basis, they might well believe this was the best course if they were to obtain and maintain a hearing for their message among their fellow Jews. More important, because of their hope for Messiah's return, who would 'come suddenly to his temple' (Mal. 3.1), constant resort to the temple (e.g. Acts 2.46) would seem particularly appropriate.

And the hope of an early consummation of history in the coming of the Christ in power and majesty was probably one reason why the Jewish Christians felt no great compulsion to define their relation to the Mosaic Law. When the Lord came, He would settle this difficult question. Until then they would continue to emphasize matters of prime importance while using the forms at hand for the expression of their faith.<sup>14</sup>


In short, Christian Jews in Jerusalem had not only practical reasons but theological reasons for *not* deciding certain issues too speedily, whereas Christians (both Jews and Gentiles) outside Palestine had not only practical reasons but *rather different* theological reasons for deciding on similar issues as speedily as possible. The indecision on the part of many enlightened Jewish believers in Jerusalem would encourage if not actually foster a longer adherence to Jesus Messiah by many other Jews who would be less convinced of the exclusiveness

of the Christian community, less convinced that with Messiah's coming a new phase of salvation-history had begun, and correspondingly more certain that the Mosaic law was non-negotiable.

In an essay already too long, it is impossible to interact at length with the influential proposals of E.P. Sanders. But perhaps a brief suggestion as to how this synthesis might respond to his would not be out of order. Elsewhere I have suggested some ways in which Sanders' treatment of the relevant Jewish literature needs to be modified; [footnote—cf. ch.8 of my *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility* (London: MMS, 1981).] here it remains to make one or two observations on his treatment of Paul. He is right in one sense to discern an essentially Christological centre in Paul; but having established this point, he thereby concludes that Paul's treatment of law is virtually undifferentiable from the way it functions in various strands of Judaism, ways lumped by him under the rubric 'covenantal nomism.' But this is too easy, because for Paul the coming of Messiah has brought with it the entailment that law *qua* covenant has passed—a perspective certainly not shared with Judaism. As I understand Galatians 3, Paul insists on reading the Old Testament not only through Christological lenses, but also in salvation-historical perspective that maintains an alert awareness of sequence, before and after, promise and covenant and fulfilment, and so forth. Law can therefore never function for Paul as the systematizing and trans-historical entity it becomes in the thinking of his opponents. I hope to treat these themes at length in a later study.

As far as the issues discussed in this paper are concerned, a case can be made that Paul's powerful mind plumbed depths of implications in the gospel he shared with his contemporaries before the minds of his contemporaries had fathomed so far. Far from inconsistently betraying his own principles, the apostle Paul was the most consistent of them all. Uncomfortable as that responsibility might be, he saw himself used by God to force the church to acknowledge the entailments of the gospel they shared and proclaimed.

(Concluded—except for minor changes—in November 1983)

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## NOTES

1 John W. Drane, *Paul: Libertine or Legalist?* (London, SPCK 1975).

2 W.D. Davies, 'Paul and the People of Israel', *NTS* 24 (1978), pp.4–39.

- 3 Some of this is present in the important work by James D.G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (London, SCM 1977), especially in the first part of the book. Similarly, cf. the magisterial commentary by H.D. Betz, *Galatians* (Philadelphia, Fortress 1979), which sometimes draws overly sharp disjunctions between Galatians and Romans; and cf. also some elements in Ulrich Wilckens, 'Zur Entwicklung des paulinischen Gesetzesverständnisses', *NTS* 28 (1982), pp.154-90.
- 4 Cf. the example by R.N. Longenecker, 'The "Faith of Abraham" Theme in Paul, James and Hebrews: A Study in the Circumstantial Nature of New Testament Teaching', *JETS* 20 (1977), pp.203-12.
- 5 See especially the penetrating and disturbing book by David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York, Harper and Row, 1970).
- 6 E. Earle Ellis, 'Dating the New Testament', *NTS* 26 (1980), pp.487-502.
- 7 I. Howard Marshall, 'Palestinian and Hellenistic Christianity: Some Critical Comments', *NTS* 19 (1972-73), pp.271-87.
- 8 Peter Richardson, 'Pauline Inconsistency: I Corinthians 9.19-23 and Galatians 2.11-14', *NTS* 26 (1979-80), pp.347-62.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p.347.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London, Black 1968), p.211.
- 13 Peter Richardson, 'Pauline Inconsistency', p.348.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p.351.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p.356.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p.361.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 *Ibid.*, p.349.
- 19 David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London, Athlone Press 1956), pp.356-61.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p.336.
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 *Ibid.*, p.337.
- 23 H. Chadwick, "'All Things to All Men" (I Cor. ix.22)', *NTS* 1 (1954-55), pp.261-75.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p.275.
- 25 J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia, Fortress 1980), p.170.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p.171.
- 27 Cf. Günther Bornkamm, 'The Missionary Stance of Paul in I Corinthians 9 and in Acts', *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Nashville, Abingdon 1966), p.203.
- 28 *Contra* Hans Conzelmann, *I Corinthians* (Philadelphia, Fortress 1975), pp.160-61, who quite misses this point when he writes, 'The rhetorical parallelism can quite obscure the fact that Paul's behavior toward Jews and toward Gentiles ... is ... nevertheless different in structure. He is a Jew. To the Gentiles he must become a Gentile. The problem is not how he can live in Jewish fashion, but how he can live in Gentile fashion.' That may be our problem as we try to understand Paul, and it may have been the problem of Judaizers observing Paul; but it is most definitely not the apostle's problem. True, Paul can elsewhere still identify himself as a Jew (e.g. II Cor. 11.22), but never in function of his relationship to Torah. In that area he is *not* a Jew. Therefore it is not surprising if in the appropriate contexts he can distance himself from Jews (e.g. Rom. 9.1-5). These distinctions are not adequately observed by D.W.B. Robinson, 'The Distinction Between Jewish and Gentile Believers in Galatians', *ABR* 13 (1965), pp.29-48.
- 29 C.H. Dodd, *More New Testament Studies* (Manchester University Press, 1968), pp.134-48. Hans Conzelmann, *I Corinthians*, p.161, says that Dodd's handling of this text 'is at variance with the whole Pauline use of *nomos*.' But in his own interpretation, he argues that *nomos* is 'used here in an improper sense (cf. Rom. 8.2): Christ the norm.' I am uncertain why Dodd's use of *nomos* is more improper than Conzelmann's: after all, Dodd can adduce, Gal. 6.2 as something of a parallel. And it is not clear what 'Christ the norm' means in practical terms if nothing of what Jesus was or taught is communicated propositionally.
- 30 See, most recently, Dale C. Allison, Jr., 'The Pauline Epistles and the Synoptic Gospels: The Pattern of the Parallels', *NTS* 28 (1982), pp.1-32.
- 31 *Contra* Daniel Patte, *Paul's Faith and the Power of the Gospel* (Philadelphia, Fortress 1983), p.322. Otherwise Paul could not reasonably condemn such sins in the wholehearted way he does (e.g. I Cor. 6.9-10).
- 32 So Karl Heim, *Die Gemeinde des Auferstandenen*, ed. F. Melzer (Hamburg, Furch-Verlag 1949).
- 33 Cf. David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, pp.352-61.
- 34 John C. Brunt, 'Love, Freedom, and Moral Responsibility: The Contribution of I Cor. 8-10 to an understanding of Paul's Ethical Thinking', *SBL 1981 Seminar Papers*, ed. Kent Harold Richards (Chico, SP 1981), pp.19-21. Cf. also Keith Nickel, 'A Parenthetical Apologia: I Corinthians 9:1-3', *CTM* (1974), pp.68-70.
- 35 J. Weiss, *Der Erste Korintherbrief* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht 1910), pp.xi-xliii. Among more recent authors, cf. W. Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth* (Nashville, Abingdon 1971), pp.95-6; J. Héring, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (London, Epworth 1962), pp.xii-xiv.
- 36 Peter Richardson, 'Pauline Inconsistency', p.350.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p.351.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p.355.
- 39 *Ibid.*, p.356.
- 40 *Ibid.*, p.355.
- 41 See, for instance, the discussion of W. Schmithals, *Paul and James* (London, SCM 1965), pp.85ff. Many have argued that the Paul who penned or dictated I Cor. 9.19-23 could not in conscience have agreed to an action that gave the impression he was obedient to the law. I. Howard Marshall, *Acts* (Leicester, Inter-Varsity Press 1980), p.346, recalls Hausrath's comment 'that it would be more credible that the dying Calvin would have bequeathed a golden dress to the mother of God than that Paul should have entered upon this action.'
- 42 Peter Richardson, 'Pauline Inconsistency', pp.353-4.
- 43 Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Oxford, Blackwell 1971), pp.612-14.
- 44 Although the matter cannot be adequately discussed here, Richardson's proposal brings us perilously close to the thesis of J. Jervell, *Luke and the People of God* (Minneapolis, Augsburg 1972), who argues that Luke maintains that Israel is the people of God and continues to keep the law, while the Gentile believers constitute an associate people of God. Jervell has been decisively and convincingly criticised by M.M.B. Turner, 'The Sabbath, Sunday, and the Law in Luke/Acts', in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*, ed.D.A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Zondervan 1982), pp.99-157, esp. pp.113-24.
- 45 Cf. his discussion, 'Pauline Inconsistency', pp.351-2.
- 46 George Howard, *Paul: Crisis in Galatia* (Cambridge University Press 1979), esp. pp.24-8.
- 47 Howard cites, *inter alios*, F.F. Bruce, 'Galatians Problems 3. The "Other" Gospel', *BJRL* 53 (1970-71), p.257.
- 48 G. Howard, *Paul: Crisis in Galatia*, p.26.
- 49 W. Schmithals, *Paul and James*, p.72.
- 50 David R. Catchpole, 'Paul, James and the Apostolic Decree', *NTS* 23 (1976-77), pp.428-44. Similarly, cf. Wayne A. Meeks and Robert L. Wilken, *Jews and*

- Christians in Antioch* (Missoula, SP, 1978), p.17: 'What Paul was resisting, in his confrontation with Peter, was the attempt of Jerusalem to extend its authority to Antioch.'
- 51 D.W.B. Robinson, 'The Circumcision of Titus, and Paul's "Liberty"', *ABR* 12 (1964), pp.24–42.
- 52 F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians* (Exeter, Paternoster 1982), p.129.
- 53 *Ibid.*, pp.129–30.
- 54 Peter Richardson, 'Pauline Inconsistency', pp.359–60.
- 55 Cf. R.J. Bauckham, 'Barnabas in Galatians', *JSNT* 2 (1979), pp.61–70.
- 56 Especially in his article 'The Relationship between Paul and Jerusalem according to Galatians 1 and 2', *NTS* 28 (1982), pp.461–78; but cf. also *idem*, 'The Incident at Antioch', *JSNT* 18 (1983), pp.3–57, esp. pp.6–7.
- 57 B. Holmberg, *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* (Lund, C.W.K. Gleerup 1978), p.15.
- 58 James D.G. Dunn, 'Relationship', pp.463–6; *idem*, 'Incident', p.6.
- 59 Dunn refers in particular to the study of C.K. Barrett, 'Paul and the "Pillar" Apostles', *Studia Paulina*, ed. J.N. Sevenster and W.C. van Unnik (Haarlem, De Erven F. Bohn 1953), pp.1–4, 17–18; H.D. Betz, *Galatians*, pp.86–7, 92.
- 60 James D.G. Dunn, 'Incident', p.7.
- 61 *Viz.* 'The Incident at Antioch' (see n.58, *supra*).
- 62 'The significance of Paul's stand should not be underestimated. For the first time, probably, he had come to see that the principle of "justification by faith" applied not simply to the acceptance of the gospel in conversion, but also to the whole of the believer's life. That is to say, he saw that justification through faith was not simply a statement of how the believer entered into God's covenanted promises (the understanding of the gospel agreed in Jerusalem); it must also regulate his life as a believer' (James D.G. Dunn, 'Incident', pp.36–7).
- 63 Cf. especially Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr, 1981).
- 64 Although he draws very different conclusions from his observation, Ulrich Wilckens, 'Zur Entwicklung', esp. pp.154–7, is another who points out that the law was an issue, indeed the issue, for Paul even before his conversion: his concern for it was precisely what drove him to persecute the church. Unfortunately Wilckens does not see the necessary implication: conversion to Jesus Messiah must have precipitated in Paul an immediate re-thinking of how to view Torah, not just the initiation of a slow, step-by-step series of deductions, the most significant of which took place twenty or thirty years later.
- 65 'A Response to James D.G. Dunn', *JSNT* 18 (1983), pp.58–67, esp. pp.58–60.
- 66 Cf. discussion in C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, pp.264–6.
- 67 'Relationship', pp.467–8. Similarly, F.F. Bruce, *Galatians*, pp.109–11.
- 68 James D.G. Dunn, 'Relationship', p.472.
- 69 See n.68.
- 70 Dan Cohn-Sherbok, 'Some Reflections on James Dunn's: "The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2.11–18)"', *JSNT* 18 (1983), pp.68–74, is particularly critical of Dunn at this point. 'The difficulty here', Cohn-Sherbok writes, 'is that speculative assertions of enormous consequence are based on very little concrete evidence' (p.73).
- 71 James D.G. Dunn, 'Incident', p.7.
- 72 *Ibid.*
- 73 Presumably Richardson argues Antioch is *Pauline* as opposed to *Gentile* territory because he will ultimately argue that *Paul* is affronted by Peter's conduct, not Paul and Barnabas together. Yet arguably if any claim to territory is admissible—a doubtful point—Barnabas might make a better claimant than Paul, if Acts is taken as trustworthy at this point. Not only did Barnabas arrive on the scene before Paul, and send for him (Acts 11.22–26), but until the first missionary journey their names always appear in the order 'Barnabas and Saul' (thereafter only at 15.25 in the form 'Barnabas and Paul').
- 74 Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, p.160 n.22: 'A geographical interpretation is excluded by the missionary journeys of Peter and is indeed inherently inconceivable.'
- 75 Cf. Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel*, esp. pp.60–2; Günther Bornkamm, 'The Missionary Stance', p.200.
- 76 *Contra* W. Schmithals, *Paul and James*, pp.56–7, who argues that Paul did *not* preach to Jews.
- 77 Pierre Bonnard, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Galates* (Paris, Delachaux et Niestlé 1972), p.145.
- 78 'St Paul and the Revelation to St Peter, Matt. XVI.17', *Revue Benedictine* 29 (1912), pp.133–47. This paper was drawn to my attention by David Wenham, who has dealt with the matter further in his essay, 'Paul's Use of the Jesus Tradition: Three Examples', in *Gospel Perspectives V*, ed. David Wenham (Sheffield, JSOT 1985).
- 79 Cf. J. Dupont, 'La Révélation du Fils de Dieu en faveur de Pierre (Mt. 16,17) et de Paul (Gal. 1,16)', *RechSciRel* 52 (1964), esp. pp.417–19.
- 80 James D.G. Dunn, 'Incident', esp. pp.12–25, offers some excellent observations on the nature of the problem of table fellowship in the Antioch church.
- 81 The arguments of Peter Richardson, *Israel in the Apostolic Church* (Cambridge University Press 1969), pp.74–97, to the effect that 'the rest of the Jews' refers to unconverted Jews loosely associated with the Christian church, do not seem sufficiently strong to justify not taking the expression in the way the context most naturally suggests.
- 82 J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (London, SCM 1959), pp.106–9, argues rather unpersuasively that these were Gentile Christians. More likely the expression refers either to the party from Jerusalem, or better yet to the more militant conservative Jews in Jerusalem who were becoming alienated from the church by reports of Paul's (and now Peter's!) non-kosher practices. Cf. further E. Earle Ellis, 'The Circumcision Party and Early Christian Mission', *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans 1978), pp.116–28.
- 83 J.B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London, Macmillan 1896), p.113.
- 84 Cf. F.F. Bruce, *Galatians*, p.130.
- 85 T.W. Manson, *Studies in the Gospels and Epistles*, ed. Matthew Black (Manchester University Press 1962), pp.178–81; F.F. Bruce, *Galatians*, p.130.
- 86 F.F. Bruce, *ibid.*; cf. James D.G. Dunn, 'Incident', pp.7–11, for a similar assessment of the historical background to the passage.
- 87 *Contra* C.K. Barrett, 'pseudapostoloi (2 Cor. 11.13)', *Melanges Bibliques*, ed. Albert Descamps and André de Halleux (Gembloux, Duculot 1970), p.387. See further n.80, *supra*.
- 88 B. Reicke, 'Der geschichtliche Hintergrund des Apostelkonzils und der Antiochia-Episode, Gal 2,1–14', in *Studia Paulina*, ed. J.N. Sevenster and W.C. van Unnik (Haarlem, De Erven F. Bohn, 1953), p.187.
- 89 W.L. Knox, *St Paul and the Church at Jerusalem* (Cambridge University Press 1925), p.192—though of course his reconstruction of events is rather different from my own. Another scholar who recognises that Paul's *theological* arguments mean the apostle thinks it *wrong* for Jewish Christians to follow the laws that govern eating when in the company of Gentile Christians (whether the laws governed matters of purity or prohibited certain kinds of food is irrelevant to this inquiry) is E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia, Fortress 1975), pp.480–81; *idem*, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia, Fortress 1983), pp.100–101. Cf. also Dan Cohn-Sherbok, 'Some Reflections', esp. pp.71–2.

- 90 Peter Richardson, 'Pauline Inconsistency', pp.361–2; F.F. Bruce, *Galatians*, p.133. Cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 4.3, who also juxtaposes I Cor. 9.19–23 and Gal. 2.11–14 rather uncritically: 'since Paul himself became "all things to all men", Peter too may well have had this policy in mind in acting differently from what he was accustomed to teach'. James D.G. Dunn, 'Incident', pp.34–5, offers some interesting speculations about Peter's reasoning; but whether Peter's reasoning was in reality a form of unacceptable rationalization or not is another question.
- 91 For plausible reasons why Paul makes no overt reference to the Jerusalem decree in I Corinthians, cf. C.K. Barrett, 'Things Sacrificed to Idols', *NTS* 11 (1964–65), pp.138–53, esp. pp.149–50.
- 92 Peter Richardson, 'Pauline Inconsistency', p.361.
- 93 The related question as to whether or not Paul 'won' the Antioch episode does not directly affect the thesis of this paper; but a negative answer is judged probable by both Richardson and Dunn, among many others, and seems to support their respective theses. The answer depends not a little on an argument from silence—viz. that Paul does not so much as hint that Peter repented—and on linking Barnabas' action (Gal. 2.13) with the rift between Paul and Barnabas that Luke connects with a very different subject (Acts 15.36–41). It may be that Paul did not win consensus at this point; but over against the postulate for a sustained rift over fundamentals must be set two facts (as J.L. Houlden, 'Response', pp.66–7, points out): *first*, the collection was not abandoned, and is explicitly introduced by Paul (Rom. 15.25–27) 'as an acknowledgment of the Gentile Christians' spiritual indebtedness to the Jews' (p.66); and *second*, the vision of an ultimately reconciled Israel in Rom. 9–11 may point the same way. How ever this matter is decided, it is probably wrong to let too much hang on it.
- 94 Although I am inclined to think that the conservative wing in Corinth was primarily Jewish, J.L. Houlden, 'Response', p.66, rightly warns us against assuming too much. In the case of I Cor. 8 and 10, 'the weak' might well be, at least in part, 'poor and unsophisticated Gentiles who think in their simple way that they have renounced all trace of idol-worship in becoming Christians.'
- 95 Eg. H. Hübner, *Das Gesetz bei Paulus* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht 1978), and the telling criticisms offered by D.R. de Lacey, 'The Sabbath/Sunday Question and the Law in the Pauline Corpus', in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*, ed. D.A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Zondervan 1982), pp.159–95, esp. pp.164–75.
- 96 E.g. J.A. Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Inquiry* (SNTSMS 29; Cambridge University Press 1972); Karl P. Donfried, ed., *The Romans Debate* (Minneapolis, Augsburg 1977); John Reumann et al., *Righteousness in the New Testament* (Philadelphia, Fortress/New York, Paulist 1982).
- 97 This has of course been a focus of study for decades; but it has resurfaced with special urgency under the influence of E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, op. cit.
- 98 C.E.B. Cranfield, 'St. Paul and the Law', *SJT* 17 (1964), pp. 43–68.
- 99 On the development of the tripartite distinction civil/ceremonial/moral law, see esp. the last three of the four essays by R.J. Bauckham in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*, ed. D.A. Carson, op. cit., pp.251–341.
- 100 E.g. H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1975), pp.284–7.
- 101 Cf. esp. Douglas J. Moo, "'Law", "Works of the Law", and Legalism in Paul', *WTJ* 45 (1983), pp.73–100.
- 102 Cf. F.E. Vokes, 'The Ten Commandments in the New Testament and First Century Judaism', *Studia Evangelica* V, ed. F. Cross (Berlin, Akademie-Verlag 1968), pp.146–54; D.R. de Lacey, 'The Sabbath/Sunday Question', art. cit., pp.176–9.
- 103 *The Epistle to the Romans*, Vol. I (ICC; Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1975), p. 201.
- 104 This failure is common: e.g. H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, p.285.
- 105 So, rightly, C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p.169, who therefore rightly interprets the verse Christologically: 'That we keep God's commandments means an obedience to the will of God as disclosed in his Son far more radical than the observance of any code, whether ceremonial or moral, could be. If a man's life has been determined by the obedience of faith (Rom. i.5; xvi.26) conversion to or from Judaism becomes irrelevant.'
- 106 Arguably, a similar notion stands behind Matt. 5.17–20, 11.13 and much of the epistle to the Hebrews.
- 107 See above, n.104.
- 108 Regardless of whether Christians uphold the law (*nomos histōmen*, Rom. 3.31) insofar as the law (presumably the Pentateuch, or the entire situation from Sinai on) witnesses to faith, as in 3.21, or because the law by exposing sin removes any ground for boasting and therefore drives men to faith, or because Christians living by the power of the Spirit live out the true direction in which law points (as in 8.1–16), in *none* of these cases can Paul be saying that Christians establish the law *qua* Mosaic covenant by obeying it as such, *in toto* and in perpetuity: that would make nonsense of his argument. But if the law is not upheld or established in this sense, then either *some part* of it is upheld (but here it is the later systematician, not Paul, who establishes which part!), or it is upheld *in another sense* than that which a non-Christian Jew might have expected. That is precisely what Paul is arguing: the real purpose of the law in the larger redemptive purposes of God, he maintains, is achieved in its fulfilment in Christ. To cling to the law as a necessary support once Christ has come is to misunderstand Torah's purpose. Thus it is only the Christian who upholds the law.
- 109 This is so regardless of whether the distinction between *holos ho nomos* (5.3) and *ho pas nomos* (5.14) advanced by H. Hübner, *Das Gesetz bei Paulus*, pp.37–9, is maintained.
- 110 Morna D. Hooker, 'Paul and "Covenantal Nomism"', in *Paul and Paulinism*, ed. M.D. Hooker and S.G. Wilson (London, SPCK 1982), p.55.
- 111 Would anyone ever think of labelling as 'antinomian' the interpretations of Paul offered by, say, H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, op. cit., C.E.B. Cranfield, 'St. Paul and the Law', art. cit., and John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans 1959/1965)? Presumably not—and that must surely be a little worrying.
- 112 W.D. Davies, 'Paul and the Law: Reflections on Pitfalls in Interpretation', in *Paul and Paulinism*, ed. M.D. Hooker and S.G. Wilson (London, SPCK 1982), esp. pp.10–11, is quite right to draw attention to the many kinds of explicit moral demands Paul makes in his epistles. The question, however, is whether Paul uses an *a priori* category, 'moral law', to establish the nature of the continuity between the Sinai covenant and the gospel, or rather after establishing his lines of continuity and discontinuity primarily on other grounds Paul still insists on many stipulations which *a posteriori* might rightly be labelled 'moral'.
- 113 Richard N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* (New York, Harper and Row 1964), p.280.
- 114 *Ibid.*, p.282.