

JAMES D. G. DUNN

# The New Perspective on Paul

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen  
zum Neuen Testament  
185*

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**Mohr Siebeck**

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zum Neuen Testament

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185





James D. G. Dunn

# The New Perspective on Paul

Collected Essays

Mohr Siebeck

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To  
*Tom Wright*

φίλος,  
συνεργός και συστρατιωτής  
ἐπίσκοπος



## Foreword

Choosing a title for a book is always a hazardous business. It has to be a title which is informative, but which also attracts attention, rather than being dully or merely descriptive. And yet the more it attracts attention, the more likely it is to cause misunderstanding or to be misrepresented. So I choose this title, *The New Perspective on Paul*, with some misgivings.

I do so, in the first place, since my article of the same title (reprinted as ch. 2 below) is regularly regarded as signalling a new phase in Pauline studies or a fresh way of looking at Paul's gospel and theology (or at his teaching on justification by faith in particular). Since the volume largely consists of a collection of this and twenty-one other essays which in one way or another speak to or try to advance this 'new perspective', the title could have been *The New Perspective on Paul and Other Essays*. But that would not make sufficiently clear that the large first essay (ch. 1) is entirely new and written for the volume, and it is this new essay, 'The New Perspective on Paul: whence, what, whither?', to which I particularly want to draw interested readers' attention. The final essay, on Phil. 3.2–14, also is written for this volume to indicate a renewed appreciation of just how effective is this summary of the full-roundedness of Paul's theology on the controverted subjects.

More to the point, the title 'the New Perspective' seems to have struck a chord with many, and to have become established as the most obvious referent for this different or fresh way of looking at Paul, particularly among those who are critical of 'the new perspective' (as the bibliography attests). So the reference is eminently recognizable; those for whom the volume has been put together will know almost at once what the content of the volume is likely to be. And given the controversy which 'the new perspective on Paul' has generated, it will easily be recognized that the volume is intended as my attempt to respond to the debate on the 'new perspective', as well as providing a resource for any who might find it helpful to have ready access to the full range of my developing thoughts/insights on the subject.

All that being so, I need to add at once that the title should not be read as '*the*-new perspective on Paul', as though that was the *only* 'new perspective' possible or accessible to students of Paul; given the brief history of the title, it would have been more misleading to entitle the volume 'A New Perspective on Paul'. Nor should it be read as 'the *new* perspective on Paul', as implying that any and every



*old* perspective is thereby rendered passé or condemned to the dustbin; quite the contrary, as the opening essay should make clear. Nor should it be read as a claim to provide a definitive statement of ‘The New Perspective on Paul’; in the pages that follow, I speak only for myself, not as representative of some kind of ‘school’. Nor, perhaps I should add, is ‘the new perspective’ some kind of ‘dogma’ which is somehow binding on its ‘adherents’; that is not how properly critical (including self-critical) exegesis and historical scholarship goes about its task.

The title simply indicates my continuing belief that ‘the new perspective’ has provided fresh and valuable insights into Paul’s theology and continues to contribute to a more rounded appreciation of the mission and theology of Saul the Pharisee become Paul the Christian apostle. As the opening essay should make clear, I have mostly found the discussion generated by and round ‘the new perspective’ stimulating and informative, sometimes correcting, but always clarifying and sharpening my own appreciation of Paul. The volume, then, is not a passionate defence of ‘the new perspective’, as though ‘the new perspective’ was an item of faith to die for, or as though every criticism of whatever I had written earlier had, as a matter of honour, to be resolutely rebuffed. My aim in all my writing is always to offer a contribution to a collegial and developing appreciation of what is, of course, a much richer and fuller theology than any one person can formulate or single essay, or volume, can encapsulate. So, in this case, the opening essay attempts to explain how I came to ‘the new perspective’, to clarify what I understand it to be, and to take the discussion further. And the final essay attempts to demonstrate the richness and fullness of Paul’s understanding of God’s saving righteousness as illustrated by the single passage, Phil. 3.2–14.

I am grateful, then, to Jörg Frey, editor of WUNT, for the original suggestion that I should put together my essays on ‘the new perspective’, and for encouraging me to provide the opening essay. I am grateful also to the editors and publishers of the original articles for permission to reprint them, and to Henning Ziebritzki, of Mohr Siebeck, who undertook to reprint articles from the pre-computer phase of my research on the subject. I owe a considerable debt of gratitude to Friedrich Avemarie, John Barclay, Kevin Bywater, Don Garlington, Michael Gorman, Terry Halewood, Peter O’Brien and Michael Thompson for help with bibliography; and to Henning Ziebritzki for letting me see an early proof copy of the second volume of Carson, O’Brien & Seifrid, *Justification and Variegated Nomism*. Mark Mattison’s Paul Page on the web ([www.thepaulpage.com](http://www.thepaulpage.com)) is an excellent resource for those interested in the ongoing debate.

But my main thanks are due to those with whom I was able to discuss some or all of the subject matter of the first chapter, or who read earlier drafts of parts or the whole of the first chapter, and who contributed often valuable comment and advice – Friedrich Avemarie, John Barclay, Phillip Esler, Don Garlington, Simon Gathercole, Bruce Longenecker, Stephen Taylor, Mark Seifrid, Peter

Stuhlmacher, Francis Watson and Tom Wright. I have not always followed the advice proffered, but I benefited greatly from the exchanges and made many changes to the text, very much with the hope that the resulting reformulations make for a more irenic and positive impact of the whole. As I try to make clear in the first chapter, I do not regard 'the new perspective' as refuting or replacing some or any 'old perspective', but as *complementing* other perspectives and as contributing to a fuller and richer understanding of the gospel and theology of the first and greatest Christian theologian. If this volume advances that objective I shall count its publication worthwhile.

James D.G. Dunn  
Hogmanay, 2004



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## Chapter 1

# The New Perspective: whence, what and whither?

### 1. A personal account

As I indicated in the Preface to my *Theology of Paul the Apostle*,<sup>1</sup> my interest in Paul goes back to my 6<sup>th</sup> form (13<sup>th</sup> grade) school days, when I ran a lunchtime series for my younger fellow-pupils on Paul's missionary journeys. That interest deepened appreciably in the course of my student days and became a fascination during my research at Cambridge in the mid-1960s. So I was not dismayed when in my first university lecturing post, at Nottingham starting in 1970, I found the expectation to be that I should put on a course on Paul's letter to the Romans. And when, a year later, I was able to substitute a more ambitious course on 'the Beginnings of Christianity', Paul's theology naturally featured prominently from the first.

A question soon arose for me, which became a nagging puzzle during the rest of the '70s. I naturally lapped up Paul's teaching on justification by faith, or *through* faith, as I soon began to correct myself. It was so fundamental to the gospel, and so central within the Reformed and Evangelical traditions within which my own theological awakening and early development had taken place. But it was obvious from any study of the key Pauline passages that in his teaching on justification through faith Paul was reacting against some other teaching – 'by faith *apart from works of the law*' (Rom. 3.28), 'from faith in Christ and *not from works of the law*' (Gal. 2.16). What was Paul reacting against? What were these 'works of the law'? The textbooks and commentators provided a fairly standard answer: Paul was reacting against the typical Jewish teaching that justification was by works of achievement – that is, against the characteristic Jewish assertion that God's acceptance had to be earned by the self-effort of merit-winning good behaviour.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> As H.B.P. Mijoga, *The Pauline Notion of Deeds of the Law* (San Francisco: International Scholars Publications, 1999) documents, the dominant tradition has regarded 'works of the law' as indicating 'a legalistic works righteousness' (5–21). A recent example is R.N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Dallas: Word, 1990): 'a catch phrase to signal the whole legalistic complex of ideas having to do with winning God's favour by a merit-amassing observance of Torah' (86).

Not untypical of my early reading was the commentary on Rom. 4.6ff. by Franz Leenhardt, who notes ‘that the juridical mentality of the rabbis (and in this they resembled all men of all times) thought of the believer’s relations with God as an account showing debit and credit. The important point was that on the credit side should be listed more good works than there were bad works on the debit side’.<sup>3</sup> In a footnote he quotes J. Bonsirven’s observation (*Jud. Palest.* II 58–9) that it was such an attitude which ‘earned for the Pharisees their nickname as calculators’. Also, W. Bousset: ‘Life thus became a game of reckoning, a constant inspection of the account which the pious man has in the divine bank’ (*Rel. Jud.* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1926, 393). Influential was Emil Schürer’s characterization of Judaism at the time of Jesus in terms of ‘external formalism ... very far removed from true piety’.<sup>4</sup> To similar effect was Matthew Black’s description of Pharisaism as ‘the immediate ancestor of ... the largely arid religion of the Jews after the fall of Jerusalem’, ‘a sterile religion of codified tradition, regulating every part of life by a halachah ...’.<sup>5</sup> My reaction was understandable: no wonder Paul found his conversion liberating from such a religion (Rom. 8.2; Gal. 5.1)!

All that seemed to be taken for granted and to go largely unquestioned in my early reading on Paul and his gospel. But the puzzle which quickly began to nag emerged from my initial probing into one of the key phrases in Paul’s justification teaching – the phrase, ‘*the righteousness of God*’. How could one not seek to unpack that phrase when confronted with the thematic statement of Rom. 1.16–17? – ‘the gospel is the power of God for salvation to all who believe, Jew first and also Greek, for in it is revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith, as it is written, “The righteous by faith shall live” (Hab. 2.4)’. I found the articles on the subject by Elizabeth and Paul Achtemeier in *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* highly illuminating – but puzzle-provoking.<sup>6</sup> For the Achtemeiers brought home to me that Paul’s central phrase was drawn directly from the Old Testament, and resonated through and through with characteristic Jewish emphases. ‘Righteousness’ was a relational concept, and was to be understood ‘as meeting the demands of a relationship’. The same applied to ‘the righteousness

<sup>3</sup> F.J. Leenhardt, *The Epistle to the Romans* (1957; ET London: Lutterworth, 1961) 115–6.

<sup>4</sup> E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ* (ET Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 5 vols. 1886–90): ‘when even prayer itself, that centre of the religious life, was bound in the fetters of a rigid mechanism, vital piety could scarcely be any longer spoken of’ (2/2.115). Characteristic also was Rudolf Bultmann’s *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1956) in which the main description of ‘Judaism’ has the heading ‘Jewish Legalism’ (59–71). F. Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T. & T. Clark International, 2004) is probably fair when he notes: ‘It is made unambiguously clear that Bultmann personally dislikes the historical phenomenon he is writing about, and that he intends to communicate that dislike to his readers’ (7).

<sup>5</sup> M. Black, ‘Pharisees’, *IDB* 3 (1962) 774–81 (here 81).

<sup>6</sup> E.R. Achtemeier, ‘Righteousness in the Old Testament’ and P.J. Achtemeier, ‘Righteousness in the New Testament’, *IDB* 4 (1962) 80–5, 91–9.

of God': it presupposed the covenant relationship made with man at God's initiative; God was righteous when he met the demands of that covenant relationship.<sup>7</sup> Hence the (to me) surprising talk (particularly in Second Isaiah and the Psalms) of God's *righteousness* as denoting his *saving action* towards his people, his *redemption* and *vindication* even of an erring people.<sup>8</sup> Hence also the realisation that the righteousness of God could include the thought of God's *faithfulness* to his covenant promises (Rom. 3.3–5).<sup>9</sup>

The puzzle is obvious, though at that stage (the '70s) it was still only nagging. If 'the righteousness of God' refers to God's justifying action, then how does it correlate with the traditional view that Paul was reacting against a view which taught that justification had to be earned? If 'the righteousness of God' presupposed divine election of and expressed divine faithfulness to and upholding of a faithless people, then where did the thought of justification to be earned by works come into the picture? If Paul was able to draw on the characteristic OT emphasis on the graciousness of God's righteousness as a statement of his own gospel, how could he also imply that the characteristic Jew understood justification as a status to be earned? Something had gone wrong somewhere, but where?

The puzzle was only deepened when I first noted the now famous hymn at the end of the Community Rule of Qumran (1QS 11.11–15):<sup>10</sup>

As for me, if <sup>12</sup>I stumble, the mercies of God shall be my eternal salvation. If I stagger because of the sin of flesh, my justification (*mshpti*) shall be by the righteousness of God which endures for ever. <sup>13</sup>... He will draw me near by his grace, and by his mercy will he bring <sup>14</sup>my justification (*mshpti*). He will judge me in the righteousness of his truth and in

<sup>7</sup> I did not appreciate at that time the importance of the earlier work of H. Cremer, *Die paulinische Rechtfertigungslehre im Zusammenhange ihrer geschichtlichen Voraussetzungen* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1899, <sup>2</sup>1900) 34–8, but found the insight confirmed by the then dominant OT theologians of W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament Vol. 1* (<sup>6</sup>1959; London: SCM, 1961) 239–49, and G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology Vol. 1* (1957; Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1962) 370–6. So now e.g. F. Hahn, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002) 1.247–8; J. Roloff, 'Die lutherische Rechtfertigungslehre und ihre biblische Grundlage', in W. Kraus & K.-W. Niebuhr, hg., *Frühjudentum und Neues Testament im Horizont Biblischer Theologie* (WUNT 162; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003) 275–300: 'Gottes Gerechtigkeit ist nicht erst mit Christus neu in die Welt gekommen; sie war schon vorher in Israel wirksam' (290).

<sup>8</sup> So I could empathise with Luther's experience as I had first encountered it in R. Bainton, *Here I Stand* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1951) 65, and as cited in 'The Justice of God: A Renewed Perspective on Justification by Faith', *JTS* 43 (1992) 1–22 (here 1) reprinted below ch. 7 (here 187).

<sup>9</sup> These became crucial insights in my commentary on *Romans* (WBC 38; Dallas: Word, 1988) 41–2, 132–4.

<sup>10</sup> It was K. Kertelge, "*Rechtfertigung*" bei Paulus: Studien zur Struktur und zum Bedeutungsgehalt des paulinischen Rechtfertigungsbegriffs (Münster: Aschendorff, 1967) 29–33, who first drew my attention to this text. Similarly 1QH 12(= 4).29–37; 13(= 5).5–6; 15(= 7).16–19; IQM 11.3–4; not to mention Ps. 103.10 and Dan. 9.16–18, and even 4 Ezra 8.34–36.



the greatness of his goodness he will pardon (*ykpr*) all my sins. Through his righteousness he will cleanse me of the uncleanness of <sup>15</sup>man and of the sins of the children of men (Vermes).<sup>11</sup>

Here was a text which spoke feelingly of God's grace, mercy and righteousness as the only ground of hope, of the assurance of sins forgiven.<sup>12</sup> The text was so *Pauline* in character and emphasis!<sup>13</sup> And yet this very document (1QS) was also being held up as an example of the sort of narrow, sectarian legalism which, it was generally assumed, must have characterized the 'Judaism' of Paul's day (Gal. 1.13–14), or at least have been very like the Pharisaism with which Paul was most familiar.<sup>14</sup> How to reconcile the traditional view of Jewish merit-earning legalism with both the OT teaching on God's righteousness and the Qumran hymn's apparently total reliance on the grace of God for a favourable judgment? What was Paul reacting against in his own so OT-ish, so Qumranish(!) teaching on justification by grace through faith?

In my initial work for my commentary of Romans I had identified the incident at Antioch (Gal. 2.11–14) as a key which might well unlock some of the puzzles. And my examination both of that episode and of the relations between Paul and Jerusalem in the first two years of the '80s helped clarify the tensions in Paul's missionary work, arising particularly from his vocation and commitment to Gentile mission.<sup>15</sup> But how these insights could feed into any resolution of the puzzle was not yet evident. However, that period also gave me opportunity to

<sup>11</sup> Of more recently published scrolls see particularly 4Q507 and 4Q511 frag. 28+29. See further H. Lichtenberger, *Studien zum Menschenbild in Texten der Qumrangemeinde* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980) 73–93.

<sup>12</sup> Note that 1QH 12 (= 4).29–31 and 17 (= 9).14–15 echo Ps. 143.2, on which Paul also builds his doctrine of justification (Rom. 3.20; Gal. 2.16).

<sup>13</sup> The parallel was early on noted by David Flusser, 'The Dead Sea Sect and Pre-Pauline Christianity' (1958), *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1988) 23–74 (here 33–5). As N. Dahl, 'The Doctrine of Justification: Its Social Function and Implications' (1964), *Studies in Paul* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977) 95–120 observed: 'Some of the Scrolls from Qumran speak of the sin of man and of God's righteousness in a manner that sounds strikingly Pauline, not to say Lutheran. ... the beliefs voiced by members of the Qumran community correspond to a number of the classical formulations of the doctrine of justification. ... the terminology of justification ... has a positive connection to a religious language still existing in Judaism. ... The similarity with Paul's doctrine of justification through the saving righteousness of God is truly remarkable' (97, 99–100).

<sup>14</sup> The influential study by J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem at the Time of Jesus* (3<sup>rd</sup> 1967; London: SCM, 1969) had drawn on CD to fill out his understanding of 'patterns of community life like those of Pharisaic rule' (259–60).

<sup>15</sup> J.D.G. Dunn, 'The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2.11–18)', *JSNT* 18 (1983) 3–57 (the lecture was first delivered in 1980); also 'The Relationship between Paul and Jerusalem according to Galatians 1 and 2', *NTS* 28 (1982) 461–78; both republished in my *Jesus, Paul and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (London: SPCK, 1990) 129–74, 108–26 (both with additional notes). The former has also been reprinted in M.D. Nanos, ed., *The Galatians Debate* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002) 199–234. The latter is well received by R. Schäfer, *Paulus bis zum Apostelkonzil* (WUNT 2.179; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 123–49, 175–80, 201–21.

study closely the recently published work by E.P. Sanders on *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*.<sup>16</sup> And it was here that the puzzle became a question which I could no longer push to one side. It had to be answered: what was it that Paul was reacting against?

Sanders in effect gave NT scholarship *a new perspective on Second Temple Judaism*. He objected in forthright polemical fashion that the traditional perspective on Judaism from the side of Christian scholarship was simply wrong. He pointed out that Jewish scholars had long been puzzled at what seemed to them a caricature of the Judaism they were familiar with; how could Paul the Pharisee characterize the Judaism of his day so misleadingly (they were, it should be said, reading Paul in the traditional terms of Christian scholarship)?<sup>17</sup> Sanders also noted that scholars from the Christian side, like George Foot Moore and James Parkes,<sup>18</sup> had long protested against the traditional characterization of Paul's Judaism as narrowly and coldly legalistic. Sadly, however, their protests had not been heard.<sup>19</sup> Sanders was determined that his protest would not be ignored.<sup>20</sup>

Sanders' basic point was that Judaism was not obsessed with works righteousness as a way to secure a divine favour previously unknown. On the contrary, Israel's theology of salvation began from the initiative of God and the givenness of God's favour. God had chosen Israel to be his people; he had made his covenant with them. Members of the covenant therefore did not need to gain his favour

<sup>16</sup> Subtitled *A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM, 1977).

<sup>17</sup> 'Reading Schechter and Montefiore, one wonders what Paul found in Judaism to attack' (Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* 12), referring back to his quotation (p.6) from S. Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (New York, 1961 = 1909): 'Either the theology of the Rabbis must be wrong, its conceptions of God debasing, its leading motives materialistic and coarse, and its teachers lacking in enthusiasm and spirituality, or the Apostle to the Gentiles is quite unintelligible' (18). See further S. Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004) on C.G. Montefiore and H.J. Schoeps (118–28).

<sup>18</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* 6, quotes J. Parkes, *Jesus, Paul and the Jews* (London, 1936): '... if Paul was really attacking "Rabbinic Judaism", then much of his argument is irrelevant, his abuse unmerited, and his conception of that which he was attacking inaccurate' (120).

<sup>19</sup> See further Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* 33–59. Cf. the criticism of F. Weber by P.S. Alexander, 'Torah and Salvation in Tannaitic Literature', in D.A. Carson, et al. eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomism. Vol. 1: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism* (WUNT 2.140; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001) 261–301: 'his account is permeated by an anti-Jewish animus which is determined to depict Judaism as nothing more than a dry, legalistic works-righteousness' (271).

<sup>20</sup> In private conversation Sanders observed to me that Moore's protest had been hidden in his great work on *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim* (Cambridge, Mass. 1927–30) and had only been explicit in his 'Christian Writers on Judaism', *HTR* 15 (1922) 41–61 – with the consequence that Moore's *Judaism* was often cited in support of the traditional denigration of Judaism, something which would have horrified Moore. It was this which made Sanders determined that his own polemical protest would be 'up-front' and unmistakable. This observation also provides a response to the critique and puzzlement of M. Silva, 'The Law and Christianity: Dunn's New Synthesis', *WTJ* 53 (1991) 339–53 (here 348).

before they could properly count themselves acceptable to God; they *started* from that position.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, members of the covenant were expected to obey the law; obedience was necessary if they were to *maintain* their membership of the covenant. In a famous distinction, obedience was required, but to ‘stay in’, not to ‘get in’: ‘obedience maintains one’s position in the covenant, but it does not earn God’s grace as such’, was Sanders’ summary of the consistent emphasis of the rabbinic and second temple literature which he surveyed.<sup>22</sup>

Crucial to Sanders’ new perspective on Judaism was the recognition that in this ‘pattern of religion’ God did not require perfection, but allowed for failure, by providing means of atonement and forgiveness for those who repented of their sin. Hence the overall balance of this new perspective summed up in the most famous of Sanders’ phrases, which he himself clearly regarded as the key formula – ‘covenantal nomism’ (*Bundesnomismus, nomisme d’Alliance*) – indicating the inter-relationship between divine initiative (‘covenant’) and human response (‘nomism’) which he saw to be so characteristic of Judaism: ‘covenantal nomism is the view that one’s place in God’s plan is established on the basis of the covenant and that the covenant requires as the proper response of man his obedience to its commandments, while providing means of atonement for transgression’.<sup>23</sup>

I took Sanders to have made his case, and was more than ordinarily grateful for the correction he had provided to the traditionally more negative view of Judaism.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, however, his treatment of Paul failed to answer my own

<sup>21</sup> T.R. Schreiner, *Paul Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001): ‘First God redeems Israel from Egypt, and then he gives the law, so obedience to the law is a response to God’s grace, not an attempt to gain righteousness by works (see Ex 19–20)’ (117–8).

<sup>22</sup> *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* 420; ‘Paul is in agreement with Palestinian Judaism. ... salvation is by grace but judgment is according to works; works are the condition of remaining “in”, but they do not earn salvation’ (543). Cf. already Moore: “a lot in the World to Come” ... in rabbinical Judaism ... is ultimately assured to every Israelite on the ground of the original election of the people by the free grace of God, prompted not by its merits, collective or individual, but solely by God’s love ... These facts are ignored when Judaism is set in antithesis to Christianity ... If the one is grace, so is the other’ (*Judaism* 2.94–5).

<sup>23</sup> *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* 75; see also 236, 420, 544; in ‘The New Perspective on Paul’, *BJRL* 65 (1983) 95–122, reprinted in *Jesus, Paul and the Law* 183–214 (reprinted below ch. 2), I note that, though criticizing Sanders’ methodology, J. Neusner accepted Sanders’ representation of rabbinic Judaism at this point as a ‘wholly sound and ... self-evident proposition’ (204 n.16; below 93 n.16); noted also by C. Strecker, ‘Paulus aus einer “neuen Perspektive”’: der Paradigmenwechsel in der jüngeren Paulusforschung’, *Kirche und Israel* 11 (1996) 3–18 (here 7); see further my *The Theology of Paul* 338 n.15. D. Garlington, ‘The Obedience of Faith’: A Pauline Phrase in Historical Context (WUNT 2.38; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991) demonstrated the persistence of the covenantal nomism paradigm through the apocrypha. R. Bergmeier, ‘Das Gesetz im Römerbrief’, *Das Gesetz im Römerbrief und andere Studien zum Neuen Testament* (WUNT 121 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 31–90 has taken Sanders’ point (44–8).

<sup>24</sup> N.T. Wright, ‘The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith’, *TynBul* 29 (1978) 61–88, was the first to recognize the significance of Sanders’ work and to offer ‘a new way of looking at

key question. In fact, in setting the record straight so far as the Judaism confronted by Paul was concerned, Sanders only increased the puzzle. If the Judaism of Paul's day also gave such a place to divine election, atonement and forgiveness, then what was Paul objecting to?<sup>25</sup> Sanders did not help me to make sense of Paul against this background. And his own solution in terms of Paul's inconsistency did not seem to me a satisfactory resolution of the puzzle.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, as became clear to me later, Sanders' characterisation of Paul's soteriology in terms of 'from solution to plight'<sup>27</sup> continued to pose the issues too much in terms of the traditional Protestant view of Paul to which he was objecting. To be sure, he was reacting against the tradition which in effect took Paul's exposition of the gospel in Romans 1–3 as a reflection of Paul's own experience ('from plight to solution'). But did not Sanders' own new perspective on Palestinian Judaism require a more substantial reconfiguring of the issue which crystallised Paul's exposition of the gospel?

My T. W. Manson Lecture on 'The New Perspective on Paul' (1983) was a first attempt to find a better answer.<sup>28</sup> I found it in the context occasioning Paul's first use of the key term, 'works of the law', in Gal 2.16.<sup>29</sup> The context makes it clear enough that 'works of the law' was the phrase used to characterise the insistence of Jewish believers that obedience of law ('nomism') was reason necessary and sufficient for them to 'separate' (2.12) from other believers and was essential to their being 'counted righteous' (2.16). The 'works of the law' in view were evidently the circumcision which 'the false brothers' in effect tried to 'compel' Gentile believers to observe (2.3–4), and the food laws which Peter and the other Jewish believers tried to 'compel' Gentile believers to obey if table-fellowship was to be maintained (2.14).

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Paul ... (and) a new perspective on ... Pauline problems' (64, 77–84). K. Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (London: SCM, 1976) earlier spoke of 'a new perspective' (for systematic theology and practical theology) opened up by his own insight into the springs of Paul's theology (see n.31 below).

<sup>25</sup> Morna Hooker posed the problem afresh: 'In many ways, the pattern which Sanders insists is the basis of Palestinian Judaism fits exactly the Pauline pattern of Christian experience: God's saving grace evokes man's answering obedience' ('Paul and "Covenantal Nomism"' [1982], *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* [Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1990] 155–64 [here 157]).

<sup>26</sup> See 'New Perspective' 186–8 (below 93–95). H. Räisänen's atomistic reading of the Pauline texts to find an alienated Paul in his *Paul and the Law* (WUNT 29; Tübingen: Mohr, 1983), appearing at about the same time as Sanders' second volume, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), seemed to me equally unsatisfactory (*Jesus, Paul and the Law* 215; below 111).

<sup>27</sup> *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* 474–5, 497.

<sup>28</sup> Below ch. 2. As Henri Blocher puts it: 'The new perspective on Paul was born of a new perspective on Second Temple Judaism' – 'Justification of the Ungodly (*Sola Fide*): Theological Reflections', in D. A. Carson, et al., eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomism. Vol. 2: The Paradoxes of Paul* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 465–500 (here 469).

<sup>29</sup> 'New Perspective' 188–9 (below 95–96).

In 1984, in dialogue with Heikki Räisänen, I broadened the argument by seeking an explanation for the problematic Gal. 3.10 in the ‘social function’ of the law: that the law served to mark off, ‘separate’ Israel from the nations; that, as Gal. 2.1–16 had demonstrated, works of the law could function as boundary markers, rituals and practices which distinguished Israel from the nations.<sup>30</sup> Might that provide the key to Paul’s objection? – that in speaking of ‘works of the law’ Paul had in mind this boundary-marking, separating function of the law? That would certainly fit with the observation made some time earlier by Krister Stendahl, that the ‘doctrine of justification by faith was hammered out by Paul for the very specific and limited purpose of defending the rights of Gentile converts to be full and genuine heirs to the promises of the God of Israel’.<sup>31</sup> And it fitted very closely with the role attributed to the law in the Letter of Aristeas 139–142:

<sup>139</sup>In his wisdom the legislator [i.e. Moses] ... surrounded us with unbroken palisades and iron walls to prevent our mixing with any of the other peoples in any matter, being thus kept pure in body and soul ... <sup>142</sup>To prevent our being perverted by contact with others or by mixing with bad influences, he hedged us in on all sides with strict observances connected with meat and drink and touch and hearing and sight, after the manner of the Law (Charlesworth).

Observances of the law as boundary markers indeed!<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> ‘Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Gal. 3.10–14)’, *NTS* 31 (1985) 523–42, reprinted in *Jesus, Paul and the Law* 215–41; and below ch.3. Räisänen had also characterized ‘works of the law’ as ‘something that separates the Jew from the Gentile’ (*Paul and the Law* 171; further references to Sanders and Neusner on pp. 114–5 below). I was late in noting that in the same year that ‘The New Perspective’ was published, R. Heiligenthal, *Werke als Zeichen* (WUNT 2.9; Tübingen: Mohr, 1983), drew attention to the socially delimiting function of ‘works’ in Gal. 2 – ‘works of the law as signs of group membership’ (127–34); ‘Wenn Paulus von den “Gesetzeswerken” redet, denkt er konkret an Speisegebote und Beschneidung’ (133).

<sup>31</sup> Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* 2, taking up one of the key themes of his famous essay, ‘The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West’, *HTR* 56 (1963) 199–215, reprinted in the same volume (78–96): ‘it was his grappling with the question about the place of the Gentiles in the Church and in the plan of God ... which had driven him [Paul] to that interpretation of the Law which was to become his in a unique way’ (84).

<sup>32</sup> As Sanders also observed: ‘There is something which is common to circumcision, Sabbath, and food laws, and which sets them off from other laws: they created a social distinction between Jews and other races in the Greco-Roman world. Further, they were aspects of Judaism which drew criticism and ridicule from pagan authors’ (Paul, the Law and the Jewish People 102). See further ‘Works of the Law’ 216–9 (below 112–5), with Neusner’s similar observation (232 n. 16; below 115 n. 16), also ‘The New Perspective on Paul: Paul and the Law’, in my *Romans* lxvii–lxxi, reprinted below ch.4 (here 134–9); also ‘What was the Issue between Paul and “Those of the Circumcision”?’ in M. Hengel & U. Heckel, eds., *Paulus und das antike Judentum* (WUNT 58; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991) 295–312 (here 298–305), reprinted below ch.5 (here 145–53); and ‘The Theology of Galatians: The Issue of Covenantal Nomism’, in J.M. Bassler, ed., *Pauline Theology Volume I: Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 125–46 (here 125–8) (below ch.6, here 167–70).

My ongoing work on Romans seemed to indicate that I was on the right lines.<sup>33</sup> The ‘boasting’ of the ‘Jew’ in Rom. 2.17–23 is certainly to be understood as a boasting in covenant privilege over against the less-favoured, or rather passed-over Gentiles:<sup>34</sup> ‘boasting’ in God/in the law (2.17, 23) is filled out in terms of the confidence of the ‘Jew’ that he is ‘a guide to the blind, a light for those in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of the young, having the embodiment of knowledge and of truth in the law’ (19–20). A ‘boasting’ of self-confidence and self-reliance,<sup>35</sup> ‘boasting’ in self-achieved righteousness (which I had previously assumed),<sup>36</sup> is remote from the context.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, in 3.27–30 the sequence clearly implies that to boast on the ground of, or as encouraged by the law of works is equivalent to affirming that God is God of Jews only; works of the law somehow function to reinforce Israel’s exclusive claim on God.<sup>38</sup> The verses indicate two alternative/opposed logical sequences:

<sup>33</sup> Already reflected in my ‘Works of the Law’ (221–5; below 118–22). As well as my commentary on Romans (above n.9) I have in mind my ‘Yet Once More – “The Works of the Law”’, *JSNT* 46 (1992) 99–117 (here 104–14) (reprinted below ch. 8, here 211–8).

<sup>34</sup> Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* 33; similarly Wright, ‘History’ 82; also ‘The Letter to the Romans’, *NIB* 10 (2002) 446. See further my *Romans* 110–1, 115; I develop the argument in ‘What was the Issue’ 305–13 (below 153–61). The citation of *Pss. Sol.* 17.1 and 2 *Bar.* 48.22–24 (‘We shall always be blessed; at least, we did not mingle with the nations. For we are all a people of the Name’) catch the mood well (U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* vol. 1 [EKK; Zürich: Benziger, 1978] 147–8; E. Lohse, *Der Brief an die Römer* [KEK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003] 109–10).

<sup>35</sup> R. Bultmann, *kauchaomai*, *TDNT* 3.648–9; also *Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1952) 242–3: ‘The self-reliant attitude of the man who puts his trust in his own strength and in that which is controllable by him’ (240); H. Hübner, *Das Gesetz bei Paulus* (FRLANT 119; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980) 93–104; R.H. Bell, *No One Seeks for God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 1.18–3.20* (WUNT 106; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998) defends Bultmann’s view (186–8, 193).

<sup>36</sup> C.E.B. Cranfield, *Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, vol. 1 1975), commenting also on 3.27: ‘the act of asserting a claim on God on the ground of one’s works, of claiming to have put God in one’s debt’ (165).

<sup>37</sup> Cf. N.T. Wright, ‘The Law in Romans 2’, in J.D.G. Dunn, ed., *Paul and the Mosaic Law* (WUNT 89; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996) 131–50 (here 139–43): ‘this Torah-base, upon which she [Israel] ‘rests (v.17), is not the legalist’s ladder of merit. It is Israel’s national charter’. D. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996): ‘Thus, the Jews’ “boasting in God” is not wrong in itself – an instance of human pride and arrogance – but a legitimate pride and joy in the God who had given to Israel so many good things’ (160); contrast, however, his treatment of 3.27 – ‘the pride in accomplishments, the tendency for the Jew to think that his obedience to the law constituted some kind of claim on God’ (247). C.G. Kruse, *Paul, the Law and Justification* (Leicester: Apollos, 1996): ‘The boast of the Jews which Paul condemned was not that they had earned their salvation by observance of the law, but rather a presumption that they are better off in God’s sight than the Gentiles because they are Jews and because they have the law (2:17–20)’ (191–2). T.R. Schreiner, *Romans* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998): ‘In this context boasting is not censured’ (130). T. Eskola, *Theodicy and Predestination in Pauline Soteriology* (WUNT 2.100; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998): ‘This kind of boasting/glorying cannot be identified with legalistic self-confidence’ (231). Similarly K. Haacker, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer* (ThHK 6; Leipzig: Evangelische, 1999) 68.

<sup>38</sup> See further my *Romans* 184–5, 190–1; Wilckens, *Römer* 1.244–5; M.A. Seifrid, *Justification*

*not*: of works → justification from works → God of Jews only

boasting  
excluded by law

*but*: of faith → justification through faith → God also of Gentiles →  
establishes law

And similarly in 9.30–10.4, the sequence of thought links Israel's failure in misplacing emphasis on works of the law (9.32)<sup>39</sup> with Paul's fellow-Jews' mistaken 'zeal' (10.2) and assumption that righteousness was to be 'established' as 'their own', that is (exclusively) their own, theirs and not others (10.3).<sup>40</sup> Again the

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by Faith: *The Origin and Development of a Central Pauline Theme* (SuppNovT 68; Leiden: Brill, 1992): 'the *kauchēsis* of Rom 3:27 signifies Jewish privileges' (35–6); Mijoga, *Deeds of the Law*: 'Paul is attacking the self-confidence of the Jew as a Jew and as a member of God's chosen people' (151); L. Thurén, *Derhetorizing Paul: A Dynamic Perspective on Pauline Theology and the Law* (WUNT 124; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000): 'in Rom 3,27–30 he [Paul] excludes Jewish boasting of the status conferred on them by the law' (169); S.J. Gathercole, *Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1–5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002): 'the boasting in 3:27 most logically points back to 2:17–24' (225); R.K. Rapa, *The Meaning of "Works of the Law" in Galatians and Romans* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001) 249–51; Wright, 'Romans' 480; cf. Haacker, *Römer* 92–3. Schreiner is misleading when he claims that the particle *ē* which opens v.29 indicates 'that a fresh argument is being introduced' (*Romans* 205). The particle simply denotes the carrying forward of the same argument by reference to scripture (as in Rom. 11.2; 1 Cor. 6.16), or to an accepted conviction (as in Rom. 6.3; 1 Cor. 6.9, 19), or as here to the fundamental Jewish creed (*Shema*). And even if more of a break between vv. 28 and 29 is to be recognized (D.J. Moo, 'Israel and the Law in Romans 5–11: Interaction with the New Perspective', in Carson, et al., *Justification and Variegated Nomism Vol. 2* 185–216 [206]), the point of 3.29–30 remains: justification by faith is a way of saying that God is not God of Jews only but also of Gentiles, since he justifies *both* by faith apart from the works of the law (3.28) that are possible only for Jews.

<sup>39</sup> For the possibility that the metaphor of 'pursuit' is sustained through 9.30–10.4 see J.A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1992) 584; but the critique of works is not directed against 'human effort' (Moo, 'Israel and the Law 210–11) since pursuit 'from faith' is regarded positively.

<sup>40</sup> See further my *Romans* 582–3, 587–8; Wright, 'Romans' 649, 654–5. Cf. B. Byrne, 'The Problem of *Nomos* and the Relationship with Judaism in Romans', *CBQ* 62 (2000) 294–309: 'In the light of what Paul has established earlier in the letter (chaps. 3–4), "their own righteousness" ... can only mean the righteousness of Israel as holy people separate from the sinful rest of humankind, the righteousness that the "law of works" sought to foster and preserve' (302); D. Marguerat, 'Paul et la Loi: le retournement (Philippiens 3,2–4,1)', in A. Dettwiler, et al., eds., *Paul, une théologie en construction* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2004) 251–75 (here 272–3). I owed the exegetical insight into the significance of *idios* to G.E. Howard, 'Christ the End of the Law: The Meaning of Romans 10:4', *JBL* 88 (1969) 331–7 (here 336), who also persuaded B.C. Wintle, 'Justification in Pauline Thought', in D.A. Carson, ed., *Right With God: Justification in the Bible and the World* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1992) 51–68 (262 n.31); Moo discusses the interpretation (*Romans* 634–5), with further bibliography (n.22). I confess to some disappointment that so few have noted the parallel (in the use of 'establish') between the standpoint criticised in 10.2–3 and that so powerfully expounded in 1 Macc. 2.27 (Haacker, *Römer* 204–5 is the exception; Eskola, *Theodicy and Predestination* 237 n.7 thinks that I overinterpret 'established', but ignores the link in the context to 'zeal' and 'their own'; Gathercole, *Where is Boasting?* 228–9 notes the parallel but plays down the Maccabean link between 'zeal' and 'establishing' what is

perspective is primarily of a status (covenant) given exclusively to Israel, setting Israel apart from and privileging Israel over against the (other) nations,<sup>41</sup> a status affirmed and maintained by the works of the law which demonstrated and constituted Israel's set-apartness to God; Paul now saw this attitude as a failure to grasp the character and 'to all-ness' of faith.

Similarly my ongoing study of Galatians helped fill out the increasingly coherent picture of Paul's theology of justification and its rationale. In my work on Rom. 10.2 I had become aware of the tradition of 'zeal' within Israel, as *a dedication to maintain Israel's set-apartness to God* – exemplified by the stories of Simeon and Levi, Phinehas, Elijah and the Maccabees<sup>42</sup> – such dedication as warranted the use of force against fellow Israelites deemed to be threatening that set-apartness.<sup>43</sup> Such 'zeal', after all, was the counterpart of God's 'jealousy' (the same word!) (Ex. 20.5; 34.14; Num. 25.11–13; Deut. 4.24; 5.9; etc); indeed, in Num. 11.29 Phinehas' zeal is understood as a direct reflection of Yahweh's.<sup>44</sup> God's 'zeal' that Israel should keep herself for God alone was directly mirrored in the 'zeal' which defended and reinforced the boundaries separating Israel from the (other) nations. This seemed to me to make best sense of the fact that Paul ascribes his own violent persecution of 'the church of God' to this same 'zeal' (Phil. 3.6; Gal. 1.13–14). Paul's persecuting zeal was not simply zeal to be the best that he could be (zeal for the law),<sup>45</sup> but a grim determination to maintain Israel's holiness by attacking – 'seeking to destroy'! (Gal. 1.13, 23) – those Jews who (in his view) were beginning to breach Israel's boundaries.<sup>46</sup> Not only

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distinctive to Israel). Contrast, e.g., the earlier R.H. Gundry, 'Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul', *Biblica* 66 (1985) 1–38 (here 17–19).

<sup>41</sup> Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* 38; Wright, 'Romans' 654. Wright coined the phrase "'national righteousness'", the belief that fleshly descent guarantees membership of God's true covenant people' ('History' 65, 71, 82–3; and below 104 n.36). B.W. Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant: A Comparison of 4 Ezra and Romans 1–11* (JSNTS 57; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991) preferred the term 'ethnocentric covenantalism'.

<sup>42</sup> Simeon and Levi – Gen. 34; Jdt 9.2–4; *Jub.* 30. Phinehas – Num. 25.6–13; Sir. 45.23–24; 1 Macc. 2.54; *4 Macc.* 18.12. Elijah – 1 Kgs 18 (note 18.40); Sir. 48.2–3; 1 Macc. 2.58. The Maccabees – 1 Macc. 2.23–27; Josephus, *Ant.* 12.271; cf. 2 Macc. 4.2. See further below 354–5.

<sup>43</sup> *Romans* 586–7; noted also by J.L. Martyn, *Galatians* (AB 33A; New York: Doubleday, 1997) 155 (briefly) and 161–3 (but ignoring the rationale of Phinehas-type zeal).

<sup>44</sup> 'Like Joshua's zeal on behalf of Moses (Nu. 11:29), Phinehas's zeal on behalf of Yahweh realizes Yahweh's own jealousy ... which otherwise would have consumed all Israel' (E. Reuter, *qn'*, *TDOT* 13.56). A. Stumpff had already observed (*TDNT* 2.879), that the term ('zeal') is linked with 'anger' (Deut. 29.20) and 'wrath' (Num. 25.11; Ezek. 16.38, 42; 36.6; 38.19). See further below ch. 22 n.35.

<sup>45</sup> Gathercole is misleading when he affirms that 'Paul does not see the "zeal" of his own past as Jewish piety' (*Where is Boasting?* 208); 'not as *Christian* piety' would make better sense.

<sup>46</sup> J. Becker, *Paulus: Der Apostel der Völker* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989): 'Kann man überhaupt in der Zeit des Paulus von einem sachlich so nahen Eifern sprechen, ohne den Geist des Pinchas heraufzubeschwören?' (72). T. Holland, *Contours of Pauline Theology* (Fearn, Ross-shire: Mentor, 2004) mistakenly infers from such references to Paul's zeal (indeed a self-styled 'zealot' – Gal. 1.14; Acts 22.3) that I regard the pre-Christian Paul as a 'Zealot', that is,



so, but the fact that Paul describes his conversion in terms of a calling to preach Christ among the nations (Gal. 1.15–16) implies fairly clearly that Paul was indeed converted: he turned right round and committed himself to a gospel for the Gentiles which he had so violently persecuted.<sup>47</sup>

My investigation of ‘Pharisees, Sinners, and Jesus’, published in the same year as my Romans commentary, in response to Sanders’ interpretation of the term ‘sinners’ in the ministry of Jesus,<sup>48</sup> had also brought me to recognize that the term (‘sinners’) could be and was used in a strongly *factional* sense.<sup>49</sup> The term of course denotes those who disregard the law, law-breakers, the wicked. But for those ‘within the law’, that also included those ‘outside the law’; Gentiles by definition were ‘out-laws’, ‘sinners’.<sup>50</sup> And for those who insisted that obedience of the law required acceptance of their particular interpretation of the law, the *Jews* who failed to follow that interpretation were equally law-breakers, ‘sinners’.<sup>51</sup>

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that I associate him with the political revolutionaries who led the revolt against Rome in 66 (188–92), apparently unaware that the term ‘zealot’ only took on such political and titular significance 25–30 years after Paul’s conversion (see my *Jesus Remembered* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003] 272–3). Holland also thinks Paul’s acceptance of his role as an evangelist to the Gentiles was ‘the most natural of changes’ (190)! He justifiably asks whether a Gentile mission had begun before Paul’s conversion (195), though he ignores both Acts 11.19–21 and the question whether Luke has delayed his account of the Hellenist breakthrough at Antioch in order to insert the story of Paul’s conversion (Acts 9) and to give priority to Peter’s conversion of Cornelius (Acts 10–11).

<sup>47</sup> I set out the case most fully in my contribution to the Peter Stuhlmacher Festschrift: ‘Paul’s Conversion – A Light to Twentieth Century Disputes’, in *Evangelium – Schriftauslegung – Kirche* ed. J. Ådna et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997) 77–93; reprinted below ch. 15. Roloff’s position is close to mine: ‘Die Gewissheit, mit der Verkündigung Jesu speziell unter den Heiden betraut worden zu sein, war denn für ihn auch die entscheidende Erkenntnis aus dem Damaskusgeschehen’ (‘lutherische Rechtfertigungslehre’ 283–4). Seifrid rightly asserts that ‘Paul’s conversion involved the reevaluation of the role of Torah and of Israel’s privileges in the divine granting of righteousness’ (*Justification* 37), but misses the significance of ‘zeal’ in his attempt to ‘reconstruct’ Paul’s conversion from his self-references (136–46, 255–7). J. Taylor, ‘Why did Paul persecute the church?’, in G.N. Stanton & G. Stroumsa, eds., *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Cambridge: University Press, 1998) 99–120, is also oblivious to the light shed on his question by the ‘zeal’ motif. U. Schnelle, *Paulus: Leben und Denken* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003) is vulnerable to similar criticism (74–5).

<sup>48</sup> E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM, 1985) ch. 6.

<sup>49</sup> ‘Pharisees, Sinners, and Jesus’, in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism*, H.C. Kee FS, ed. J. Neusner, et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 264–89, reprinted in *Jesus, Paul and the Law* 61–86.

<sup>50</sup> Ps. 9.17; Tob. 13.6; *Jub.* 33.23–24; *Pss. Sol.* 1.1; 2.1–2; Matt 5.47/Luke 6.33; Gal. 2.15.

<sup>51</sup> ‘Pharisees, Sinners, and Jesus’ 73–7; also *The Partings of the Ways between Christianity and Judaism* (London: SCM/Philadelphia: TPI, 1991) 103–6; where I refer to 1 Macc. 1.34; 2.44, 48; *1 Enoch* 1.1, 7–9; 5.6–7; 82.4–7; 1QpHab 5.5; 1QH 10(=2).10, 12, 24; 12(=4).34; *Pss. Sol.* 1.8; 2.3; 7.2; 8.12–13; 17.5–8, 23. The most obvious example is the calendrical dispute which racked Second Temple Judaism in the two centuries before Paul: to observe a feast according to the wrong calendar was to *fail* to observe the feast, or to observe the feast of Gentiles (*Jub.* 6.32–35; *1 En.* 82.4–7); see my ‘Echoes of Intra-Jewish Polemic in Paul’s Letter to the Galatians’, *JBL* 112 (1993) 457–77 (here 470–3) (reprinted below ch. 9, here 232–5). And further M.A. Elliott, *The*

This again brought a flood of light on Gal. 2.15: ‘we are Jews by nature and not “Gentile sinners”’. Here was the same typically Jewish attitude to Gentiles. Paul evidently saw the Jewish believers treating the Gentile believers in Antioch in the same condemnatory spirit (‘sinners’), indeed, displaying the very sectarian spirit that Jesus himself had protested against, and on the same issue of table-fellowship (Matt. 11.19; Mark 2.17).<sup>52</sup> And it follows that use of the same word ‘sinners’ two verses later (Gal. 2.17) constitutes a protest against the same sectarian spirit: to sit light to the hard interpretation of the food laws demanded by Peter, as Paul did, was to call upon oneself the condemnatory epithet ‘sinner’, and to make Christ, who accepts sinners, the servant of sin (2.17)!<sup>53</sup>

Taking up from my earlier 1984 article (above), the ‘new perspective’ had suggested to me that ‘all who are from the works of the law’ (Gal. 3.10) was best taken as a reference to those who insisted on a full-scale covenantal nomism (rather than on earning salvation by works righteousness), such as had provoked the crises in Jerusalem and Antioch, and now again in Galatia.<sup>54</sup> In addition I began to see that the force of Lev. 18.5 (Gal. 3.12) had probably been misunderstood: it served to indicate how the covenant life should be lived (‘He who does these things shall live by them’), life within the covenant, and not just life after death.<sup>55</sup> Which also shed light on Gal. 3.21: the law was provided not to *give* life (only God or his Spirit could do that), but to order the life of the covenant people.<sup>56</sup> And the earlier insight, that the boasting which Paul condemned had more to do with pride in ethnic privilege than with pride in self-achievement,

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*Survivors of Israel: A Reconsideration of the Theology of Pre-Christian Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 144–62.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Seifrid: ‘sources which display some form of polemical stance against other Jews are the proper point of departure for a comparison with Paul’ (*Justification* 62). In *Theology of Paul I* I suggest that Paul was aware of the tradition of Jesus eating with ‘sinners’ (191–2).

<sup>53</sup> See further my *The Epistle to the Galatians* (London: A. & C. Black, 1993) 132–4, 141–2; also ‘Echoes of Intra-Jewish Polemic’ 460–70 (below 222–32). ‘Ein typischer judenchristlicher Einwurf’ (Becker, *Paulus* 101). See also E.H. Kok, *The Truth of the Gospel: A Study in Galatians 2:15–21* (Hong Kong: Alliance Bible Seminary, 2000); Schäfer, *Paulus bis zum Apostelkonzil* 265–8; and cf. Martyn, *Galatians* 254–5; and the more elaborate thesis of M. Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous: A Comparative Study of the Psalms of Solomon and Paul’s Letters* (CBNTS 26; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995) here 253. Otherwise J. Lambrecht, ‘Paul’s Reasoning in Galatians 2:11–21’, in Dunn, ed., *Paul and the Mosaic Law* 53–74 (here 56–8). A. A. Das, *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001) also misses the factional overtones of ‘sinner’ here (169–70).

<sup>54</sup> *Galatians* 170–4, even though the relation of 10a to 10b remains unclear. Martyn translates ‘those whose identity is derived from observance of the Law’ (*Galatians* 308). See further my ‘Theology of Galatians’ (below ch. 6).

<sup>55</sup> See further below #4.2(10).

<sup>56</sup> *Galatians* 175–6, 192–3. Cf. Westerholm, *Perspectives*: ‘no law requiring dikaios deeds (this is what laws do) can resuscitate the dead’ (282); ‘the law’s function is more limited’ (319); ‘The law was given to regulate, not transform, this life of sin’ (380). Martyn seems to miss the distinction between giving life (3.21) and ordering life (3.12) (*Galatians* 359–60), but he is hardly untypical in this.

seemed to be further strengthened by Gal. 6.12–13: the Jewish missionaries would boast in the flesh of *the Galatians*, when they persuaded the Galatians to be circumcised in the flesh, to conform their uncircumcised identity to the circumcised identity of the covenant people (Gen. 17.9–14).<sup>57</sup>

A year later, in 1994, I was much heartened by the (at last!) publication of the sectarian text from Qumran, 4QMMT.<sup>58</sup> I had known of the text for some time and was naturally intrigued by the report that it used the phrase ‘the works of the law’. But when I first saw it at the SBL meeting that November, 1994, I was stunned by the astonishing parallel which it provided with Galatians.<sup>59</sup> Particularly striking were the three parallels. (i) ‘Works of the law’ are used in reference to various halakhoth described earlier in the letter (cf. Gal. 2.16); clearly implicit is the claim that the law was only properly observed at these points when the Qumran interpretations of the law were followed.<sup>60</sup> (ii) The conviction that the law had to be observed in just this way, that these works of the law had to be performed, was ground necessary and sufficient for the Qumran sect to ‘separate’ (that word again) from the rest of the people (cf. Gal. 2.12).<sup>61</sup> (iii) The letter’s conclusion clearly implies that righteousness will be reckoned (echoing Gen. 15.6) only to those who perform these works of the law (cf. Gal. 2.16).<sup>62</sup> Here was an astonishing parallel with the situation which confronted Paul in Antioch and which led to his first recorded formulation of his key slogan: justification by faith and not by works of the law. The believing Jews in Antioch, including Peter, were in effect insisting that Gentiles must ‘judaize’ (2.14), that is, must observe certain requirements, certain works of the law;<sup>63</sup> they were thus, in Paul’s view,

<sup>57</sup> *Galatians* 336, 339–40; I develop the point in my “Neither Circumcision nor Uncircumcision, but ...” (Gal. 5.2–12; 6.12–16; cf. 1 Cor. 7.17–20), in A. Vanhoye, ed., *La foi agissant par l’Amour (Galates 4,12–6,16)* (Rome: Abbaye de S. Paul, 1996) 79–110 (here 88–92), reprinted below ch. 13; cf. Martyn, *Galatians* 561–2.

<sup>58</sup> E. Qimron & J. Strugnell, *Miqsat Ma’ase Ha-Torah* (DJD 10.5; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994).

<sup>59</sup> ‘4QMMT and Galatians’, *NTS* 43 (1997) 147–53, reprinted below ch. 14. M.G. Abegg, ‘4QMMT C 27, 31 and “Works Righteousness”’, *DSD* 6 (1999) 139–47 has drawn similar conclusions.

<sup>60</sup> Bell, *No One Seeks for God* 230–3, is typical of those who miss the factional context of MMT’s use of the phrase. B. Witherington, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998) 176–8, 353–4 seems to miss the obvious logic: that if all works of the law are required then those referred to in particular cannot be dispensed with.

<sup>61</sup> Elliott describes them as ‘defining laws’, or ‘identity issues’, which ‘serve effectively to identify, or point out, the elect’ (*Survivors of Israel* 174–8). See further Bergmeier, *Gesetz* 38–9.

<sup>62</sup> 4QMMT		Galatians
MMT C26–27	Works of the law focusing the general requirement to obey the law on certain specific issues.	Gal. 2.16
MMT C7–8	Insistence on these works of the law as sufficient and necessary to require separation from the people.	Gal. 2.12
MMT C31	Confidence that works of the law, as represented by those indicated, will result in justification	Gal. 2.16

<sup>63</sup> For the meaning of ‘judaize’ in the first century see my *Galatians* 15 n.1 and 129. P.F. Esler, *Galatians* (London: Routledge, 1998) ignores this evidence and argues that ‘judaize’ must in-

making these works a requirement additional to faith. Hence Paul's expostulation: 'No one is justified by works of the law, but only through faith' (2.16).<sup>64</sup>

This is what I meant and still mean when I speak of 'the new perspective on Paul', as I attempted to work it out in fuller detail some years later in my *Theology of Paul*.<sup>65</sup> In summary: (a) It builds on Sanders' new perspective on Second Temple Judaism, and Sanders' reassertion of the basic graciousness expressed in Judaism's understanding and practice of covenantal nomism. (b) It observes that a social function of the law was an integral aspect of Israel's covenantal nomism, where separateness to God (holiness) was understood to require separateness from the (other) nations as two sides of the one coin, and that the law was understood as the means to maintaining both. (c) It notes that Paul's own teaching on justification focuses largely if not principally on the need to overcome the barrier which the law was seen to interpose between Jew and Gentile, so that the 'all' of 'to all who believe' (Rom. 1.17) signifies in the first place, Gentile as well as Jew. (d) It suggests that 'works of law' became a key slogan in Paul's exposition of his justification gospel because so many of Paul's fellow Jewish believers were insisting on certain works as indispensable to their own (and others?) standing within the covenant, and therefore as indispensable to salvation. (e) It protests that failure to recognize this major dimension of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith may have ignored or excluded a vital factor in combating the nationalism and racialism which has so distorted and diminished Christianity past and present.

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clude the requirement to be circumcised (137–9). Martyn's observation is sounder: 'We can be sure that the message [of the messengers from James] did not directly and explicitly rescind the formula of the Jerusalem conference with its acknowledgment of the Antioch church's circumcision-free mission. Had it done so, Paul would certainly have pointed that out ... The issue of circumcision was not reopened' (*Galatians* 233). As in his earlier 'Making and Breaking an Agreement Mediterranean Style: A New Reading of Galatians 2:1–14', *BibInt* 3 (1995) 285–314, Esler assumes that a social-science appreciation of possible honour-shame considerations gives him license to interpret the episode in a way wholly discreditable to Peter and Barnabas. For James' motivation see further M. Bockmuehl, 'Antioch and James the Just', in B. Chilton & C.A. Evans, ed., *James the Just and Christian Origins* (NovTSup 98; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 155–98.

<sup>64</sup> Martyn characterises well how Paul allowed 'his speech to Peter to become without notice a speech addressed to the Teachers in Galatia. ... Verses 15 and 16 constitute an overlap between the once-upon-a-time remark to Peter and the contemporary speech to the Teachers' (*Galatians* 230); similarly my *Galatians* 132).

<sup>65</sup> *Theology of Paul* #14, especially 338–40, 354–66. At about the same time I wrote 'Paul and Justification by Faith', in R.N. Longenecker ed., *The Road to Damascus: The Impact of Paul's Conversion on His Life, Thought, and Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 85–101, reprinted below ch. 16. Strecker's 'Paulus aus einer "neuen Perspektive"' includes one of the best attempts to summarize my views (11–13).

## 2. Clarifying confusions and misunderstandings

It did not take long for criticisms of this new perspective to be forthcoming.<sup>66</sup> Four are worth trying to respond to at once, since they should help clarify issues and possibly prevent further discussion becoming too preoccupied with particular formulations or with the overtones which some ears pick up, fairly or unfairly. It is perhaps worth saying at once that the discussion should focus on the central thrust of the case and not allow itself to be distracted by phrases which might have been chosen more carefully, or by specifically directed comments taken out of context. (1) The new perspective was set up in antithesis to and as a repudiation of the traditional Reformation doctrine of justification by faith.<sup>67</sup> (2) I had reduced ‘works of the law’ to a few ‘boundary markers’;<sup>68</sup> (3) I had reduced Paul’s objection to the law to merely a (Jewish) ‘attitude’ to the law (or attitude to others as a result of the law);<sup>69</sup> (4) I had delayed Paul’s formulation of the doctrine of justification until his response to the Antioch incident and

<sup>66</sup> For recent reviews of the debate regarding the new perspective, see particularly S. Westerholm, ‘The “New Perspective” at Twenty-Five’, in Carson et al., *Justification and Variegated Nomism Vol. 2* 1–38.

<sup>67</sup> Particularly in a paper read to the Tyndale Fellowship, Cambridge, in 2000, by Carl Trueman, ‘A Man More Sinned Against than Sinning? The Portrait of Martin Luther in Contemporary New Testament Scholarship: Some Casual Observations of a Mere Historian’, accessible on the Paul Page on the internet; also Lee Gatiss, ‘Justified Hesitation? J.D.G. Dunn vs. The Protestant Doctrine of Justification’, in the e-journal *The Theologian* (2001) and in *Churchman*, number 115/1 (2001) 29–48. Similarly B. Corley, ‘Interpreting Paul’s Conversion – Then and Now’, in Longenecker, *The Road to Damascus* 1–17 – ‘a frontal assault on the Augustinian-Lutheran paradigm, arguing that that earlier understanding was a drastic misreading of both Judaism and Paul’ (3). ‘Pauline scholars working inside the “new perspective” have usually rejected several of the great themes of Paul’s theology. This concerns especially the teaching about justification’ (Eskola, *Theodicy and Predestination* 274). P.F.M. Zahl, ‘Mistakes of the New Perspective on Paul’, *Themelios* 27/1 (Autumn 2001) 5–11: ‘rejection of the Reformation ... is a big plank of the New Perspective’ (7). S. Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul’s Gospel* (WUNT 140; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002): ‘the New Perspective School is in many respects overturning the Reformation interpretation of Paul’s gospel’ (xiv). D. Macleod, ‘The New Perspective: Paul, Luther and Judaism’, *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 22.1 (2004) 4–31: ‘If Stendahl, Dunn and Wright are correct, Luther and Calvin were profoundly wrong’ (4–5).

<sup>68</sup> C.E.B. Cranfield, ‘“The Works of the Law” in the Epistle to the Romans’, *JSNT* 43 (1991) 89–101, reprinted in Cranfield, *On Romans and Other New Testament Essays* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998) 1–14 – ‘a special restricted sense’ (4); T.R. Schreiner, ‘“Works of Law” in Paul’, *NovT* 33 (1991) 217–44 (here 225–31); Fitzmyer, *Romans* 338; O. Hofius, ‘Zur Auslegung von Römer 9,30–33’ (1993), *Paulusstudien II* (WUNT 143; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002) 155–66 (here 158–9 n.26); Lohse, *Römer* 126–7.

<sup>69</sup> H. Räisänen, ‘Galatians 2.16 and Paul’s Break with Judaism’, *Jesus, Paul and Torah: Collected Essays* (JSNTS 43; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992) 112–26 (here 122); and his pupil, K. Kuula, *The Law, the Covenant and God’s Plan: Vol. 1. Paul’s Polemical Treatment of the Law in Galatians* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999): ‘for Paul the problem of the law was not that it was *misinterpreted* in a sectarian, exclusive way. It is not a misinterpretation of the law that the apostle contests here but the law itself’ (59 n.3, 76–7).

thereby denied its fundamental importance to Paul's gospel and reduced it to the status of a pragmatic solution to a problem of relationships among Christians.<sup>70</sup>

Let me say at once that there is some justification for these critical comments since my early formulations were not sufficiently refined. So at least some restatement is called for.

## 2.1 *Anti-Lutheran?*

The criticism that my work on the 'new perspective' constitutes a fundamental repudiation of the central Protestant affirmation of justification by faith draws principally on my own essay, 'The Justice of God: A Renewed Perspective on Justification by Faith'.<sup>71</sup> At the heart of the criticism is the charge that I attack Martin Luther but show no firsthand knowledge of Luther's writings. Now, I freely admit that I am no expert on Luther and that my direct familiarity with his writings is limited – particularly his commentaries on *Romans* and *Galatians*, and John Dillenberger's *Martin Luther: Selections from his Writings*.<sup>72</sup> Otherwise my knowledge consists of quotations and references in biographies, histories and theological studies referring to Luther in greater or less detail.<sup>73</sup> In 'The Justice of God' essay I draw only on Roland Bainton's *Here I Stand*,<sup>74</sup> which greatly influenced me in my student days, and M. Saperstein, *Moments of Crisis in Jewish-Christian Relations*,<sup>75</sup> who quotes directly from *Luther's Works*. So had I been intent on critiquing Luther directly (or engaging in a study of Reformation theology) I would certainly be open to criticism, whereas my primary concern is with the way Luther has been perceived and used in the modern period.<sup>76</sup> In fact, in the 'Justice of God' essay I criticise Luther directly at only

<sup>70</sup> Particularly Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective* 45–53.

<sup>71</sup> *JTS* 43 (1992) 1–22; reprinted below ch. 7.

<sup>72</sup> Anchor Books; New York: Doubleday, 1961. See my *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993) 140–3.

<sup>73</sup> Most recently D.K. McKim, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2003), though, somewhat surprisingly, it does not provide a sustained treatment of 'justification by faith'.

<sup>74</sup> London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1951.

<sup>75</sup> London: SCM, 1989; I draw on Saperstein's quotations from Luther's *Table Talk* again in *Theology of Paul* 337 n.7.

<sup>76</sup> Contrary to Trueman (Gatiss makes the same charge more moderately), I do not attribute to Luther the view that the 'I' of Romans 7 refers to Paul's pre-Christian state. Trueman is evidently unaware of my earlier 'Rom. 7.14–25 in the Theology of Paul', *TZ* 31 (1975) 257–73, and *Jesus and the Spirit* (London: SCM, 1975) 314, 444 n.57, in which I explicitly indicate that I am following in the footsteps of Luther and Calvin in interpreting Rom. 7.14–25 as a description of Paul's continuing experience as a believer. In the 'Justice of God' essay the criticisms took up those which W.G. Kümmel, *Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929) directed against what had become the strong Protestant interpretation of Romans 7 as a piece of pre-Christian autobiography, and particularly Stendahl's criticism of the way he perceived