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The Jewish People and its Holy Scripture in the Christian Bible

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By chance it happens that my neighbour in the choir in which I sing at Oxford is a Jew. Recently he remarked that I was to preach in his College Chapel. ‘What is that to do with you?’ I asked. ‘I sing in the Chapel choir; you see, faith doesn’t seem to be a requirement,’ he replied. ‘Anyway, what will you be preaching on?’ ‘I think I’ll preach on Christianity as the fulfilment of Judaism,’ I replied. ‘You do just that,’ was his answer. ‘Will questions be allowed?’

In the aftermath of the Second World War and the atrocities committed against the Jews during that period¹ the sympathy for the Jews and the question inevitably asked whether such a persecution could have occurred without the background of centuries of Christian anti-Semitism have provoked renewed reflection on relationships between Jew and Christian since the beginning of Christianity. In addition, the biblical movement within the Catholic Church, in which Fr Lattey (and indeed the donor of this lecture) played such an important part, have provoked a new examination of the extent to which any understanding of Christianity must grow out of an understanding of Judaism.

The Biblical Commission began its work on this topic in 1902. The Commission has had a mixed history and deserves a short introduction. It was established by Leo XIII in 1902 to encourage and guide Catholic participation in the biblical reflection following the major advances in archaeological and ancient literary studies of the nineteenth century. However, the Commission became notorious in the wake of, and partly as an instrument in, the repression of the Catholic Modernist Crisis by a series of extremely conservative and cautious rulings between 1905 and 1915, which, together with the encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* and the decree *Lamentabili*, in fact strangled Catholic biblical scholarship for nearly half a century. The tide was turned by the encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, which fully encouraged open Catholic participation in biblical study. This new openness issued in the important letter from the PBC to Cardinal Suhard of Paris (1948), which withdrew the insistence that Adam and Eve must be considered historical personages. Since then, among the works of the PBC, I would single out for mention two documents: the important work on the Historicity of the Gospels (1964), which firmly backed the three stages in the understanding of the life and mission of Jesus, and most recently the 1993 document on different methods in the Interpretation of the Bible.²

The background would not be complete without mention of the Pope’s personal interest in the project. It was at his request that this topic was chosen, for he wished some statement to be made on the matter, though it must have been by chance that the document was completed at just about the time of his momentous visit to Jerusalem in 2000. The relations between Christianity and Judaism have been a continuous interest of his. This is fully in accord with the declaration of Vatican II on Relations of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate*, which states that ‘the Church cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament by way of that people with whom God established the ancient covenant. Nor can she forget that she

¹ I do not use the term ‘Holocaust’, which I regard as a bullyingly racist term. Firstly, it disregards the occurrence of other dreadful instances of racial cleansing, such as the atrocities to gypsies by the same Hitler, and massacres in Armenia or Rwanda. Secondly, the use of the sacrificial term lends this horror a sort of sacredness which makes it untouchable.

² Sympathetically but not uncritically reviewed in the collection of essays, mostly by Anglican scholars, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, edited by J.L.Houlden (SCM, 1995).

draws nourishment from that good olive tree onto which the wild olive branches of the gentiles have been grafted' (no. 4). The continuous present tense of 'draws' is striking – the relationship is continuous. John Paul II's interest may also not be unconnected with the large number of Polish Jews who perished under Hitler. There is the unforgettable story which emerged during his visit to Israel, of the Jewish girl whom the young seminarian carried 3 km to the railway station.³ He regards relations with Judaism as being an internal rather than an external element in the Church. As long ago as 1980, visiting a synagogue at Mainz, he declared, 'The encounter between the People of the Old Alliance, which has never been abrogated by God, and that of the New Alliance is a dialogue internal to our Church' (*Documentation Catholique* 77 (1980), 1148). In 1986, visiting the Synagogue of Rome, he told the Jews of Italy that Judaism is not extrinsic but intrinsic to Christianity. This is quite unlike the relationships between Christianity and any other religion (*Documentation Catholique* 83 (1986), 437). Such, then, is the background to the commission given to the PBC.

The normative edition of the document is in French, and it has not yet been translated into English. The papers and discussions which contributed to it were in the five principal European languages, as were also the discussions of them. In view of the reputation for autocracy – and even restrictiveness - enjoyed by the Vatican, it might be worth saying that the only words of Latin spoken during the session were a short formal speech at beginning and end of the week from Cardinal Ratzinger, who thereafter relaxed with his gentle smile, listened attentively with his affectionate courtesy, and spoke seldom but profoundly in whatever language happened to be being used. The discussions were, to my mind, a model for any open scholarly discussion: the topics were put forward by the members.⁴ Papers were circulated two months in advance and carefully read, then discussed and re-edited. Discussion was open and animated.⁵ The document was then edited by the Secretary, Albert Vanhoye, and re-submitted twice to the full Commission. Any final changes after that were edited in by a committee of three elected by the full membership, and the finished product returned to the Commission for a *placet/nonplacet* vote.

³ *Time Magazine*, 3.4.00, p. 34

⁴ For instance, I put forward as an important topic 'Jewish methods of exegesis in the New Testament'. As there was at that time there was no inter-testamental expert on the Commission, I was saddled with writing the paper. By the time I came to submit it a year later, the Commission had been afforded by Ryszard Rubinkiewicz.

⁵ My neighbour, Raymond Brown, turned to me during the third session (his last) and remarked, 'Well, Henry, you haven't been burned yet.'

I

The Sacred Scriptures of the Jewish People as a Fundamental Part of the Christian Bible

The first section of the document is entitled 'Les Saintes Ecritures du peuple juif, partie fondamentale de la Bible Chretienne'. The purpose of this part is to show – in stark opposition to any Marcionist tendency – that the New Testament is in total continuity with the Jewish Bible, and is based upon it. The similarity of attitudes is shown in detail. The most fundamental aspect is that the Christian scriptures repeatedly show a recognition of the continuing validity of the Bible as the Word of God, and of the Jewish people as the Chosen Race. It is not merely that authors like Paul recognise that the gospel is God's power for the salvation of everyone who has faith, Jews first (Rm 1.16), or that 'salvation comes from the Jews' (Jn 4.22), or that the meaning of Christ is continually shown to be in the fulfilment of the scriptures (Lk 24.27 – indeed, the Emmaus story as a whole has been described as the myth of Christian kerygma).

More than that, a whole range of similar attitudes and ideas can be brought to light. So many New Testament key-words receive their meaning not from secular Greek but specifically from biblical Greek, without which they are unintelligible; one may instance

δόξα *doxa* that wonderful concept of 'divine glory' rather than merely 'reputation',
μετανοία *metanoia* 'conversion' or 'repentance' rather than a simple and banal change of mind,

ἀγάπη *agape*, that obscure and little-used word, filled with content to express the specifically Hebrew concept. The verb occurs once in Homer and rarely elsewhere, but of the noun Liddell & Scott give no instance outside the LXX and Christian Greek,

ἄγγελος *angelos* as a heavenly messenger, rather than simply an announcer or augury of the future,

διαθήκη *diatheke* as a divine and lasting pact rather than a mere disposition by bequest.

My own particular interest was in certain techniques of presentation and argument used in Judaism and in the New Testament.⁶ The same way of presenting biblical quotations can be seen in the writings of Qumran as in the New Testament, the lemma introduced by 'as it is written' or 'thus it is written'. More interestingly, the use of the scriptures in the New Testament mirrors that of Qumran. Each is concerned to show that current events fulfill the scriptures, but with significant differences. The *pesharim* of Qumran are continuous commentaries on books of the Bible, applying one verse after another continuously to the events of recent history or the present day, whereas the New Testament books work in the opposite direction: they start from current events and show that they are the actualisation of biblical texts (Mt 1-2; 1 Cor 10.4). In technical passages the argumentation coheres with the rules of exegesis attributed to Hillel. Perhaps the most significant instance of all is the application of the sixth of Hillel's *middoth* by Matthew: the whole observance of the Law is to be interpreted in

⁶ Cf. Henry Wansbrough, 'Jewish Methods of Exegesis in the New Testament' in *Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt* 25 (2000), 219-244.

the light of Hosea 6.6, 'What I want is love not sacrifice' (Mt 9.13; 12.7; 23.23). But it is particularly fascinating also to see Paul wickedly hoisting the rabbis with their own petard, turning claims to Jewish superiority on their heads by the use of rabbinic arguments (e.g. in the midrash on Hagar and Sarah in Ga 4).

Furthermore, both Christianity and Judaism (and in fact Islam) respect the oral tradition which interprets and supplements the Bible. In both traditions the oral tradition completes the written.⁷ In Judaism the oral tradition is held to stem from Moses no less than the written tradition, an expression of its normative value. In the Catholic Church the relationship between scripture and tradition was exhaustively debated at Vatican II. The Council refused to sanction the idea of two sources, averring that 'Sacred tradition and sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God which is committed to the Church' (*Dei Verbum*, 10) though the exact relationship between them is never defined, merely 'The teaching office draws from this one deposit of faith everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed.'

A further similarity of method may be seen in the formation of the Canon. Both Christianity and Judaism were feeling their way towards defining which books are considered sacred, which books among those held in religious honour are specially revered and read in the liturgical assembly, or – as Judaism would put it – which books 'soil the hands'. The form of the Bible received by Christianity from Judaism was the Greek LXX, including an indeterminate number of books in Greek which were not in the end accepted into the canon of Judaism. Its form was still unfixed, for different versions still included different books. Judaism and Christianity arrived at their separate canons of scripture around the same time, but independently. The close co-operation between them over the Bible, however, even at a later date, is shown by Jerome's fierce championship of the *Hebraica veritas*, and by the help given him by rabbis over his translation from the Aramaic (Preface to Tobit).⁸

⁷ This was forcefully demonstrated to me recently on the occasion of a presentation at the Oxford Catholic Chaplaincy by myself (on 'What a Christian thinks of Judaism') and Rabbi Norman Solomon ('What a Jew thinks of Christianity'). Rabbi Norman insisted that I should speak first, on the grounds that Christianity is the older religion, since the New Testament precedes the Talmud.

⁸ It could also work against Jerome. Augustine warns Jerome that the unfamiliarity of his new translation of Jonah occasioned such a riot at Oea in Tripoli that the bishop felt obliged to appeal to some local Jews for arbitration. And they, 'whether from ignorance or from spite', supported the old translation (Augustine, *Letter* 71.3-5)! The interest of this story is, of course, that the Bishop was prepared to appeal to the Jews about the authority of the Bible.

II

Fundamental Themes of the Scriptures of the Jewish People and their Reception in the Christian Faith

The first part of the document, therefore, remains rather external to scripture itself, discussing the approaches to scripture in Christianity and Judaism and the use made of the Bible. The second part (which is as long as the other two parts put together) handles the factor of continuity within the scripture itself. Here it is stressed that many of the ideas and themes of Christian theology receive their valuable beginnings in the Bible, and that without the pre-Christian biblical revelation they remain unintelligible. The balance, however, is this. The Christian does not read the Bible as the Jew does, for the important themes of the Old Testament reach a new focus and actualisation in the New. In this regard, however, there is an important novelty in the document which I have never seen expressed elsewhere, and which constitutes an important expression of respect for Judaism. The advance and focus of Old Testament ideas in the New Testament does not imply that the Christian should hold a Jewish reading of the Bible to be illegitimate. Each way of reading the Bible is valid: 'the Jewish reading of the Bible is a possible one, in continuity with the Jewish Holy Scriptures of the era of the Second Temple, a reading analogous to a Christian reading which has developed in parallel. Each of these two readings is consonant with the perspective of faith of which it is a product and expression' (no. 22). The Christian reading is not, then, the only admissible reading, and the Jewish reading cannot be characterised as a false reading. On the contrary, without any Christian interpretation, the Old Testament is a treasury of knowledge of God and of the human condition. It is merely not a Christian reading, not informed and directed by Christian faith.

On the other hand, it is perfectly legitimate to read the Old Testament in the light of Christ and of the New Testament, just as Deuteronomy reads the story of the manna as the Word of God (Dt 8.2-3). There the manna is the symbol of the word of God, teaching Israel to obey God's commandments. Similarly Chronicles re-reads the stories of Kings from the perspective of his own day. King David, rather than being a flesh-and-blood, lusty warrior is transformed into the ideal king, the founder of the Temple liturgy. In prophecy, also, the return from the Babylonian exile is foretold in terms of the Exodus from Egypt to show the continuity of God's saving power. There is of course, nothing new in Christianity about seeing the New Testament in the Old, in reading the Bible in the light of Christ. In the patristic ages this occurred already in allegorisation: the red chord of the prostitute Rahab (Jos 2.18) was understood by Origen as Christ's blood, just as in the New Testament itself an elaborate process of allegorisation occurred, for example, in the treatment of the parables of Jesus. However, a retreat from this allegorical approach does not imply that there is no Christian sense to the Old Testament. On the contrary, the great biblical themes (pilgrimage, the presence of God among human beings, the promises, the alliance) reach their fulness in Christ and attain a new focus, a new plenitude and a new creation. 'Jesus does not confine himself to a role already pre-determined – the role of Messiah – but confers on the concepts of Messiah and salvation a fullness which could not have been imagined beforehand; he fills them with a new reality' (no 31).

The opening statement is followed by brief studies of several themes which run through the Bible into the New Testament, showing just how they come to a sharper

focus in the New. I find this an inspiring part of the document. It constitutes an important resource both for major theological themes of the Bible and for the development of these themes into the New Testament. Between them these major themes build up a fine picture of the continuity and advance of the understanding of God through the two Testaments.

1. The Revelation of God

The first theme discussed is the Revelation of God – aptly enough, for the knowledge and understanding of God is the basic purpose of the Bible. The God of the Bible is a God whose self-expression is by speech, whether it is making promises to Abraham or David, or making known the divine ways and the divine will through the mouth of the prophets. Even the act of creation is described under the image of speech, both at the beginning in Genesis (‘God said, “Let there be...”’) and in the much later Book of Wisdom (18.15, ‘Down from the heavens, from the throne leapt your all-powerful Word’). In the New Testament too Jesus is first the preacher of God’s Word, and then, in the fuller understanding of John, is seen as the Word made flesh, the fullness of revelation in human form. Furthermore, just as the word of God is the means and principle of creation, so the Word incarnate, the risen Christ, is the principle of a new creation. Besides being the basic theme of the Bible, this reflection also provides a superb example of the way in which the New Testament accepts, builds on and carries the biblical message further, with a new focus on Jesus.

2. Human Grandeur and Failure

In the story of the Garden of Eden every person is invited to recognise his or her own history and situation, created in the image of God but now vulnerable and out of harmony with creation. I find this discussion of the first chapters of the Bible particularly significant for four reasons. Firstly, without any mention of historicity, either positive or negative, the story is read as an interpretation of the present human situation in all its dignity and fallibility. Secondly, there is no fear of accepting that the imagery of ‘image of God’ may well be adopted from the Egyptian language of the king formed in the image of God – adopted but adapted because generalised to all of humanity. Thirdly, there is strong emphasis on an aspect which the emphasis of Catholic theology on *dominium terrae* has often been accused of obscuring, that of continuing the creative work of God to the whole of creation. Fourthly, there is a strongly egalitarian emphasis, both on the association of the woman with the man in continuing the government and peopling of the world, and in the exclusion by the creation story of any human group claiming superiority over any other.

In the New Testament human misery and disharmony are fully evident, both physical and moral. The document instances two classic examples, Paul’s lament over his own inability to act as he wills in Romans 7, and the splendid tableau of that paradigm of evil, the corruptions of the whore of Babylon in Revelation 17-18. This issues principally in Jesus’ divine pity and in the insistent call to conversion. Again the imagery of ‘the image of God’ receives a new dimension in the transformation of the Christian into the resemblance of Christ, the perfect image of God, ‘being transformed into the image that we reflect, in brighter and brighter glory’ (2 Cor 3.18).

3. God, Liberator and Saviour

After these two basic considerations of the divine and human, the themes begin to build up to show the biblical view of the divine rescue of humanity from its

predicament. First the theme of God as Liberator and Saviour is discussed, then the choice of Israel, the alliance and the Law and institutions of Israel, and finally the kingship of God. Looked at in a certain way, the texts both make valuable sense on their own and point towards a fuller reality. So God is from the beginning of the Bible a liberator and saviour, liberating Israel from Egypt and again from the Babylonian exile, and finally keeping Israel amazingly intact despite the attempts of the Syrian rulers to wipe out its particularities. On the individual level, too, God is seen as a saviour from all kinds of trouble, invoked especially in the Psalms. In the New Testament this aspect of liberation takes on a new dimension. Still in continuity with the Old Testament, God is shown to be working through human instruments, just as through the Judges and Kings, so through Jesus who gave his life as a ransom for many. Again here the document takes a balanced attitude to the History of Religions school: having pointed out that in the earlier part of the New Testament the term 'Saviour' is avoided because of the pagan connotations of saviour gods, by the time of the Pastoral Letters and 2 Peter the danger has disappeared, so that those letters can capitalise on the sense, and use the hellenistic idea to express the Christian message of salvation.

4. The Choice of Israel and the Covenant

The two themes of the choice of Israel and the covenant, central to the whole thrust of the discussion of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity were nevertheless not easy to deal with. The first danger is that the choice of Israel seems to exclude or even reject other nations. This one-sidedness is carefully avoided, in that the choice of Israel is seen to be partly for the sake of other nations. Israel's titles as 'first-born son' and 'first-fruits' imply that there are other children and other elements to the harvest (cf. Zc 14.16). At least from the universalistic approach of the later prophets from the Third part of Isaiah onwards it becomes increasingly a central part of the message that the nations will come to Jerusalem and draw salvation from Israel.

More difficult is the question whether the choice of Israel persists, whether Israel remains the Chosen People. Matthew, impregnated as he is with the conviction that Christianity is in continuity with Judaism, nevertheless sees other nations succeeding to the inheritance of Israel (8.11; 21.43). More extremely, he sees the Vineyard being taken away from the original tenants. Is it to be taken away from the nation as a whole or merely from its leaders? Luke, the universalist, insists that at every stage, before the saving message turns to the gentiles, large numbers of the Jews embrace it. So much is clear from the Infancy Stories, which are deliberately worded in such a way that they almost seem part of the Old Testament, and where we see the promises being fulfilled to the pious Poor of Israel, observant of the Law and submissive in every way to the Lord. In the Acts, too, the first and ideal community of the Church is at Jerusalem, formed from thousands of adherents drawn from Judaism. At each stage of Paul's mission successively in Asia Minor, Greece and Rome, the apostle attracts significant numbers of Jews before being forced by Jewish hostility to turn to the gentiles. Paul, for his part, in those agonised chapters of Romans, sees the original branches cut off from the stem of the olive tree, but the stem remains designated to salvation: 'as regards those who are God's choice, they are still well loved for the sake of their ancestors' (Rm 11.28).

Similarly in the matter of the Covenant. This was, perhaps, the single most hotly debated question in the whole discussion. It was twice sent back for re-drafting to a

sub-committee of which I found myself the unwilling chairman.⁹ The issue is the crucial point whether the new covenant can be said to include historical Israel or Judaism. Three factors are presented:

1. The series of covenants by which God bound himself to Israel were continually broken by Israel. It is in such a context that at the time of the Babylonian exile Jeremiah (and Jeremiah alone in the Old Testament) promises a new covenant, written on the heart rather than on tablets of stone. This idea of a new covenant never became prominent in Israel's thinking. It is not used again until it is picked up at Qumran by the Damascus Document to designate the new, messianic community (CD 6.19). Then it is used in the Luke-Paul version of the words of Jesus at the Last Supper, 'the new covenant in my blood' (Lk 22.20; 1 Cor 11.25). Jesus therefore sees his new community as the community of the new covenant (also called 'my *ecclesia*', corresponding to the *ecclesia* or gathering of God in the Old Testament). Is it in any sense realised of the community of Judaism, or does the new *ecclesia* in any way imply that the community of Judaism is now obsolete?
2. The New Testament testifies in many different ways that Christians felt themselves to be in a new relationship with God. One element was that the covenant-as-law was now abolished, though the covenant-as-promise still remained (Rm 1.26; 11.26-32). The novelty consists also in the universal extension of the covenant (Peter's Pentecost speech, Acts 3.25; the expanded New Jerusalem, Rv 21.3). The expression 'blood of the alliance' shows the basic novelty of the situation: the new relationship is founded no longer on the animal blood shed in the sealing of the covenant on Sinai, but on the self-giving of Jesus on the Cross (Hebrews 7.18-19; 10.9-10).
3. Finally, though the ancient covenant persists in the sense of God's enduring loyalty to the promises to Israel, a new stage, heralded by Jeremiah and Ezekiel, has been inaugurated by the sacrifice of Christ. One cannot speak of a decisive *break* between Christianity and Judaism, for the new situation is in continuity with the old; but it is appropriate to speak of a decisive *newness*.

I pass over a series of stimulating themes for which the progress and focussing on Christ contributes notably to our understanding of revelation,

- the Law (the importance of the Law in Judaism and the new Law in Christ),
- prayer (the wealth of Israel's prayer and worship, but the new status of prayer as adopted sons crying Abba),
- Jerusalem and the Temple (the presence of God in the midst of the Chosen People, but the new mode of God's presence in the Christian).

5. The Reign of God (the document avoids the apparent territorial overtones of 'Kingdom of God').

The growing importance of this theme in the Old Testament is outlined, especially its cosmic dimensions from the exile onwards (particularly in the kingship Psalms). From the exile onwards the kingship of God is seen to extend no longer just to Israel and its

⁹ One session of which narrowly missed being cancelled because it coincided with a crucial match between Madrid and Bilbao!

territory but to the whole world, indeed the whole universe. In the apocalyptic literature an eschatological dimension becomes increasingly important, that is, Israel's hope is focussed more and more on a decisive event, the intervention of God or the Day of the Lord, which will change the world and bring the reign of God to be a reality in a new way. The inter-testamental literature (Jubilees and the Psalms of Solomon) shows that this idea was alive and vigorous at the time of Jesus, conceived principally as a heavenly, eternal kingdom. In Jesus' own proclamation it has an absolutely central position, filling his whole horizon. The urgency of its arrival dominates his message. This is expressed above all in the gospel of Matthew, who gives it a focussed content in the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables of the Kingdom and the final parables of Judgement.

To sum up this major section of the document, there is, between Old and New Testaments, continuity, discontinuity and progress. The continuity has been made obvious by the presence of the great themes which run through the whole Bible. The discontinuity consists in cessation of such institutions as levitical priesthood, animal sacrifice, laws of purity, restrictions for the Sabbath. While it should not be denied that for Judaism these are elements of major importance, at the same time it must be noted that there are reservations about many of these elements already in the Old Testament. The prophets are incessantly critical of Israel's unthinking reliance on material practices which were meant to lead to salvation but have become empty ritual. The advance, as we have seen, consists in Jesus bringing these great themes to perfection, a realisation of promises, or extension or concretisation. The revelation of God reaches a new fullness in Jesus, the Word and Son of God. Human dignity receives a new dimension in the restoration of all things in Christ. God the Saviour brings a new salvation in the Sacrifice of the Cross and the Resurrection. The promises of a holy People of God are fulfilled to a new intensity by the divine presence of Christ in his community of the new covenant.

III

The Jews in the New Testament

The third and final section of the document is entitled 'The Jews in the New Testament', and in fact is an examination, book by book, of the charge of anti-Semitism (or, more accurately, anti-Judaism) in the New Testament. This is, of course, a grave charge, since anti-Jewish activity has historically often been cloaked by a specious justification from the New Testament. The classic example of this is the use of the saying 'His blood be upon us and upon our children' (Mt 27.25) as an invitation to revenge the death of Jesus on the whole Jewish race. Other less obvious texts which have been used are the description of the Jews in First Thessalonians as 'enemies of the whole human race' (1 Thess 2.15), and the standard description of the opponents of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel as 'the Jews'. This thorough examination is long overdue.

It begins by establishing a background in the controversies of the time, even within Judaism, where violent language and action was commonplace. Political correctness has no place in the attitude of Ben Sira to the Samaritans (Sira 50.25-26):

There are two nations that my soul detests;
the third is not a nation at all:
the inhabitants of Mount Seir, the Philistines,
and the stupid people living at Shechem.

Similar abuse, and much more virulent, is commonplace in the Scrolls of Qumran against Sadducees and Pharisees alike, and especially the Temple authorities. The Wicked Priest (presumably the high priest of the time) attacked the founder of the sect during the celebration of Yom Kippur and drove him into exile (1QpHab 11.6-8). One might also mention the persecution of the Christians by the zealous Saul before his conversion (Ga 1.13-14; Acts 9.1-2), the flogging to which Paul himself was three times subjected, and the 'scourging in their synagogues' predicted in Matthew 10.17. There must surely be a threat of expulsion from the synagogue behind the threat to the parents of the Man Born Blind for acknowledging Jesus as the Christ (Jn 9.22; cf. 12.42) and the prediction, 'they will make you *ἀποσυνάγωγοι* *aposynagogoi*' in the Last Supper Discourse (Jn 16.2). Against the background of this sort of violent opposition towards the end of the first century, it would not be surprising if some traces of hostility appeared in the Christian literature of the time.

The examination of each of the New Testament writings proceeds not in chronological order but in the order in which the books appear in printed editions of the New Testament.

The most notorious of all anti-Jewish sayings is that of the crowd in Matthew's account of the trial of Jesus. This is in some ways surprising. Matthew stands on the cusp of the break between Christianity and Judaism. There can be no doubt that he grows out of Judaism, and is permeated with its thoughts, concepts and loyalties. At the same time he has harsh words to say, 'Nowhere in Israel have I found faith like this'. The hostile language of Matthew is not directed against the Jews in general, but is typical of contemporary polemic and expectedly reflects that of two rival groups

within Judaism. Matthew, writing from the point of view of a minority within Judaism, and a persecuted minority at that, makes a careful distinction between the leaders and the people as such. So in the Parable of the Vine-Dressers it is not the vine itself which is condemned (as it is in Isaiah 5), but those appointed to tend it. His polemic against the Temple in 23.37-24.2 may seem aggressive, but it is no more forceful – indeed considerably less threatening – than the polemic common in the prophets and contemporary literature between one group and another within Judaism. Furthermore, it reflects the language and style of Jeremiah’s prophecies against the Temple (Jer 7.16-20), and particularly in the passage (26.6) where Jeremiah reverses the promise to Abraham (Gn 12.3) that his descendants will become a blessing for all the nations of the world: ‘I shall treat this Temple as I treated Shiloh, and will make this city a curse for all the nations of the world’. Even so, there is a positive ending promised in Mt 23.39. Against this background, the document argues that when all the people cry out ‘His blood be upon us and upon our children’ (27.23), this ‘all the people’ should be taken to mean only the casual crowd who happened to be present (no. 72). I am now not sure that this comfortable interpretation is tenable, for Matthew here carefully changes from his normal ὄχλος to the theologically significant πᾶς ὁ λαός. It is, however, inconceivable that a writer so deeply attached to Judaism as Matthew should intend the condemnation of the whole people for all time, and I would far rather, following his Jeremiad against the Temple, relate it literally to the following generation which saw the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD.

The Gospel of John has also been held up as an example of anti-Judaism, because the title ‘the Jews’ is the standard name for the opponents of Jesus. At the same time, however, it is striking that John fully recognises the values of Judaism, and indeed explains Jesus in terms of them. In the first week in the Jordan Valley the disciples come to him in successive days, attributing to Jesus the titles of dignity in Judaism, rabbi, messiah, king of Israel. He returns the compliment to Nathanael as ‘a true Israelite’. Throughout the gospel John’s way of showing the greatness of Jesus is to focus upon his person the festivals and solemnities of Israel, until finally he takes the place of the Passover lambs, slaughtered at the hour of his death. Similarly, the more exalted, transcendent Christology of John, showing the exalted position of Jesus (which many scholars see to be the real cause of the break between the Johannine communities and the Jews), is made in terms drawn from the Bible, both Hebrew (the ‘I am’) and Greek (the Logos). The hostility of ‘the Jews’, which is such a clear feature of this gospel, is a reflection of the experience of the Johannine communities, whose high Christology was so offensive to the Jewish communities. Mutual accusations proliferated, Jesus being accused of being a sinner, a blasphemer and possessed – Jewish accusations familiar from Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho* a few years later.

Of Paul’s love for the Jews and of his loyalty to Judaism as he saw it in the light of Christ there can never be any doubt.¹⁰ It informs his whole cast of thought. His fullest and most agonised statement of his longing for their acceptance of Christ is in Roman 9-11. For me the most convincing proof of this is the very ineptitude of his final image, insisting that the pruned dead branches will finally be grafted back onto the

¹⁰ A sign that a certain previous obscurantism has wholly disappeared from Catholic scripture scholarship was the unhesitating consistency with which the generally accepted division of the Pauline corpus was assumed. The discussion treated separately the seven letters universally accepted as genuine, the deutero-Paulines and the Pastoral Letters.

olive tree. Once dead, it is futile to graft branches back into the tree. Whether it works or not, the image remains the vivid expression of Paul's burning conviction that the whole of Israel will one day be saved by Christ. The only passage which could for a moment seriously suggest any anti-Jewish sentiment is 1 Thess 2.14-16. Here the Jews are characterised as 'not pleasing to God and opposed to the whole human race'. But the context is so obviously particular and polemical – these Jews are preventing the evangelisation of Judea - and the language so obviously rhetorical and generalised that they give no tenable grounds for the charge of anti-Judaism in Paul.

The other writings of the New Testament may be passed over quickly. Far from providing grounds for anti-Judaism, the final books of the New Testament are especially strongly impregnated with Judaism. Remarkable is the Letter of Jude, which seems to be wholly based on Jewish models, both in form and in content, even making heavy use of non-canonical Jewish writings.¹¹ The survey concludes in a positively up-beat mode with the Book of Revelation, which is so thoroughly Jewish in genre, mood and symbolism, representing the outcome of world history as the New Jerusalem, presided by the twelve apostles representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Far from being anti-Judaic, it is so Jewish that it even reproaches as counterfeit Jews those Jews who oppose Christianity (2.9; 3.9, no 83).

¹¹At an earlier session I presented a paper, based on R. Bauckham's work, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1980) to show that Jude 4-19 is uncannily similar in style of exegesis to the Qumran pesharim. This was too long and detailed for the final draft.

Conclusion

I have never found apologies a very satisfying genre, either to deliver or to receive. There is nearly always at least a hint of inauthenticity about them, and always a trace of resentment at having to apologise. If the person to whom the apology is made is fit to receive an apology, the apology will be at least partly embarrassing. And yet apology has been recently very much in the international air, apology to Galileo, apology to the Orthodox, apology to the Jews. I find the document we have been considering far more welcome. It puts on a firm footing a steady and well-reasoned relationship between members of the same family who in the past have been sometimes violently estranged from each other. It shows respect for the traditions and thinking of the other party and acknowledges the riches received by the authors' branch of the family from the other tradition. It explains, while not condoning, how the authors' branch of the family has felt some coolness towards the grounds – admittedly insufficient - on which offence was given. It provides plenty of scope for the two traditions to honour each other and to avoid repetition in the future of the misunderstanding which has been so harmful in the past .