

THE ROMANS DEBATE

Revised and Expanded Edition

EDITED BY KARL P. DONFRIED

 **HENDRICKSON**
PUBLISHERS
PEABODY, MASSACHUSETTS 01961-3473

IRA J. TAYLOR LIBRARY
THE ILIFF SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
DENVER, COLORADO

Copyright © 1977, 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.
P.O. Box 3473
Peabody, Massachusetts 01961-3473
All rights reserved.
Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 0-943575-42-7

The original edition of this book appeared as *The Romans Debate*, published by Augsburg Publishing House: Minneapolis, 1977.

The bas relief on the cover comes from the funeral monument of a rich merchant at Neumagen near Trèves (2nd century CE). The scene depicts a master and his three pupils. The cover art appears courtesy of the Rhineland Museum in Trier, Germany, and is used with permission.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The Romans debate / edited by Karl P. Donfried.—Rev. and expanded ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN 0-943575-42-7

1. Bible. N.T. Romans—Criticism, interpretation, etc.

I. Donfried, Karl P.

BS2665.2.R65 1991

227'.106—dc20

91-13252

CIP

IN MEMORIAM
GÜNTHER BORNKAMM
(October 8, 1905 – February 18, 1990)

THE NEW PERSPECTIVE ON PAUL: PAUL AND THE LAW

J. D. G. Dunn

A fresh assessment of Paul and of Romans in particular has been made possible and necessary by the new perspective on Paul provided by E. P. Sanders, *Paul*, 1–12, and pt. 1 (though Limbeck's [*Ordnung*] earlier critique of the negative depiction of the law in OT and "intertestamental" scholarship should also be mentioned; see also particularly Gaston, "Torah," 48–54, and Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 2–18; for examples of discussion in terms of older categories see Kuss, "Nomos," with review of earlier literature; Lang, "Gesetz"; and Hübner, *Paul and the Law*). Sanders has been successful in getting across a point which others had made before him (e.g., Stendahl, "Conscience," and Dahl, on justification, *Studies*, particularly 110–11, 117–18), but which had been too little "heard" within the community of NT scholarship. The point is that Protestant exegesis has for too long allowed a typically Lutheran emphasis on justification by faith to impose a hermeneutical grid on the text of Romans (see, e.g., the way in which Bornkamm, *Paul*, 137, sets up his discussion of the subject). The emphasis is important, that God is the one who justifies the ungodly (4:5), and understandably this insight has become an integrating focus in Lutheran theology with tremendous power. The problem, however, lay in what that emphasis was set in opposition to. The antithesis to "justification by faith"—what Paul speaks of as "justification by works"—was understood in terms of a system whereby salvation is *earned* through the *merit of good works*. This was based partly on the comparison suggested in the same passage (4:4–5), and partly on the Reformation rejection of a system where indulgences could be bought and merits accumulated. The latter protest was certainly necessary and justified, and of lasting importance, but the hermeneutical mistake was made of reading this antithesis back into the NT period, of assuming that Paul was protesting against in Pharisaic Judaism precisely what Luther protested against in the pre-Reformation church—the mistake, in other words, of assuming that the Judaism of Paul's

day was coldly legalistic, teaching a system of earning salvation by the merit of good works, with little or no room for the free forgiveness and grace of God ("the imaginary Rabbinic Judaism, created by Christian scholars, in order to form a suitably lurid background for the Epistles of St. Paul"—Montefiore, *Judaism and Paul*, 65; in addition to the examples cited by Sanders, *Paul*, and Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, see, e.g., Leenhardt, *Romans*, passim, and Ridderbos, *Paul*, 130–35).

It was this depiction of first-century Judaism which Sanders showed up for what it was—a gross caricature, which, regrettably, has played its part in feeding an evil strain of Christian antisemitism. On the contrary, however, as Sanders demonstrated clearly enough, Judaism's whole religious self-understanding was based on the premise of grace—that God had freely chosen Israel and made his covenant with Israel to be their God and they his people. This covenant relationship was regulated by the law, not as a way of entering the covenant, or of gaining merit, but as the way of living *within* the covenant; and that included the provision of sacrifice and atonement for those who confessed their sins and thus repented. Paul himself indicates the attitude clearly by his citation of Lev. 18:5 in Rom. 10:5—"the person who does these things [what the law requires] shall live by them." This attitude Sanders characterized by the now well-known phrase "covenantal nomism"—that is, "the maintenance of status" among the chosen people of God by observing the law given by God as part of that covenant relationship (e.g., *Paul*, 544; see further Dunn, "New Perspective"; similarly Limbeck, *Ordnung*, 29–35; cf. Ziesler's earlier phrase "covenant-keeping righteousness"—*Righteousness*, 95). Sanders' review had not encompassed all the available Jewish literature of the period, but it has been confirmed by the work of one of my own postgraduates, D. Garlington ("Obedience"), who has demonstrated the consistency of the "covenantal nomism" pattern throughout the Jewish writings contained in "the Apocrypha." See also Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, who notes, however, that the pattern is not so consistent through all diaspora literature (pp. 14–15, 29, 48, 77, 141, 167, 178–81, 236–37). For the importance of the covenant in Judaism leading up to and at the time of Paul, see also particularly Jaubert (*Alliance*).

Unfortunately Sanders did not follow through this insight far enough or with sufficient consistency. Instead of setting Paul more fully against and within this context of Judaism so understood, he advanced the thesis that Paul had jumped in arbitrary fashion (as a result of his Damascus road encounter) from one system (covenantal nomism) into another (Christianity; *Paul*, 550–52), leaving his theology, particularly in reference to the law, incoherent and contradictory (*Law*). On this last point he has been given strong support by Räisänen (*Law*), who also argues that Paul "intended to portray Judaism as a religion of merit and achievement" ("Conversion," 411) and that he thus "gives a totally distorted picture of the Jewish re-

ligion" ("Legalism," 72 [in agreement with Schoeps, *Paul*, 200]; though with an important concession in Räisänen, *Torah*, 183). Just as puzzling from a different angle is the fact that the "covenantal nomism" of Palestinian Judaism as described by Sanders bears a striking similarity to what has been commonly understood as the religion of Paul himself (good works as the fruit of God's prior acceptance by grace; Hooker, "Covenantal Nomism")! What, then, can it be to which Paul is objecting?

I. Exegetical Questions

The exegetical questions exposed here focus very largely on the issue of Paul and the law (hence, not surprisingly, the titles of the books by Sanders and Räisänen, as also by Hübner). This is important since the law actually forms a major secondary theme of the letter, to an extent not usually appreciated ("an indispensable accompanying motif"—Hahn, "Gesetzverständnis," 30). Rather striking is the way in which Paul regularly in Romans develops part of his discussion before bringing in the law (2:12ff.; 3:27ff.; 4:13ff.; 5:20; ch. 7), while in other key sections it is the role of the law which provides a crucial hinge in the argument (3:19–21; 8:2–4; 9:31–10:5). Since these references taken together span the complete argument of chs. 1–11 in all its stages, there can be little doubt that the tension between his gospel and the law and his concern to resolve that tension provide one of Paul's chief motivations in penning the letter.

Moreover, it is hardly a coincidence that several of the most recalcitrant exegetical problems in Romans are bound up with this central secondary theme of the letter. Thus it is significant once again that Sanders and Räisänen are unable to integrate Paul's treatment of the law in ch. 2 into the rest of his theology (Sanders, *Law*, 147—"true self-contradiction"; Räisänen, "Difficulties," 307—"contradictory lines of thought"; also *Law*). The use of *nomos* in 3:27–31 has caused unending puzzlement: should we take *nomos* in v. 27 as a reference to the law or translate "principle"? And how can Paul claim in v. 31 to be "establishing the law"? The centrality of the law in ch. 7 has been recognized, but how and whether that insight facilitates the exegesis of 7:14–25 in particular is a matter of unresolved controversy, with the meaning of *nomos* in 7:23 and 8:2 disputed in the same way as in 3:27. In the obviously crucial resumptive section, 9:30–10:4, there is equal controversy over the meaning of *nomos dikaionēs*, "law of righteousness" (9:31), and *telos nomou*, "end of the law" (10:4). And in the parenthetic section the claim that love of neighbor is a fulfillment of the law (13:8–10) causes further puzzlement to those who think that Paul has turned his back on Judaism and its law. As Räisänen's withering critique has underlined (*Law*, 23–28, 42–83), the problem of holding together in an integrated whole both the positive and the negative

statements regarding the law in Romans has not reached a satisfactory solution; though Räisänen's own atomistic treatment of the texts is itself a critical hindrance to an integrated and coherent overview of the theme.

Clearly, then, this major secondary motif in the letter presents problems of central importance for our understanding of the letter. It may be, indeed, that they all hang together, and a correct resolution of one may carry with it resolution of the others. At all events it will be necessary to gain a clearer view of the role of the law in first-century Judaism before we venture into the letter itself. Only when we can take for granted what Paul and his readers took for granted with regard to the law and its function will we be able to hear the allusions he was making and understand the argument he was offering. The confusion and disagreement still remaining with regard to the passages listed above strongly suggest that the role of the law, both within the Judaism against which Paul was reacting and within the new perspective on Paul, has not as yet been properly perceived. In what follows I will therefore attempt briefly to "set the scene" for an understanding of this important integrating strand of the letter.

II. Nomos as Equivalent of Torah

First of all, we should clarify a point that has occasioned some misunderstanding and confusion, namely, the appropriateness of *nomos*/law as the translation equivalent or "meaning" of *torah*/Torah. Since Schechter (*Rabbinic Theology*) and Dodd ("Law") it has frequently been claimed that *torah* does not mean *nomos* or "law"; rather, *torah* means simply "instruction" or "teaching," and the Torah (the Pentateuch, or indeed the whole of the scriptures) includes more than law. According to an influential body of opinion, this equation of *torah*/Torah with (the) law as given by the LXX translation of *torah* using the narrower word *nomos*, subsequently contributed to Paul's "distorted" understanding of his ancestral faith, and lies at the root of the modern characterization of Judaism as "legalistic" (e.g., Dodd, "Law," 34; Schoeps, *Paul*, 29; Sandmel, *Paul*, 47–48; cited by Westerholm, "Torah," 330–31; also Lapide–Stuhlmacher, *Rabbi*, 39). However, Westerholm has now shown clearly (1) that *nomos* can be an appropriate rendering of *torah* (e.g., Gen. 26:5; Exod. 12:49; Lev. 26:46); (2) that the technical use of "*torah* to refer to a collection which spells out Israel's covenantal obligations" goes back to Deuteronomy, which provides the basis for Torah = *nomos* = law as an appropriate title for the Pentateuch (e.g., Deut. 4:8; 30:10; 32:46); and (3) that Paul's use of *nomos* to sum up Israel's obligations as set out by Moses is "fully in line with Hebrew usage of *torah*" (cf. e.g., Rom. 2:12, 17–18; 7:12; and 10:5 with 1 Kings 2:3; Ezra 7:6, 10, 12, 14, 26; Neh. 8:14; 9:14, 34; and Jer. 32:23).

In particular, the basic understanding of "covenantal nomism" is more or less self-evident in the central foundation act of Israel as a nation—the

exodus from Egypt and the giving of the law at Sinai. As quintessentially expressed in Exod. 20 and Deut. 5, the law (here the ten commandments—cf. Deut. 4:8 with 5:1) follows upon the prior act of divine initiative ("I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt . . ."); obedience to this law is Israel's response to divine grace, not an attempt to gain God's favor conceived as grudgingly given and calculatingly dispensed. As already implied, the fullest and most sustained expression of this basic Jewish theologoumenon is Deuteronomy, the classic statement of Israel's covenant theology: the statutes and ordinances of the law (chs. 5–28) set out explicitly as God's covenant made with Israel (5:2–3; 29:1); the promise (and warning) repeatedly reaffirmed in numerous variations, "This do and live" (e.g., 4:1, 10, 40; 5:29–33; 6:1–2, 18, 24; 7:12–13; etc.; see also Dunn, *Romans* 1–8, 9–16, on 2:13 and 10:5). Not surprisingly, in Romans Paul interacts more frequently with Deuteronomy than with any other section of the Pentateuch; and his exposition of Deut. 30:12–14 is at the center of his attempt to expound the continuing and wider significance of the law in a way which retrieves the law from a too narrowly defined understanding of "This do and live" (10:5–13).

It is unnecessary to enter the debate about how deeply rooted this understanding of covenant and law was in pre-Exilic Israelite religion (see, e.g., Nicholson). Whatever the actual facts in that case, the attitude of covenantal nomism was certainly given determinative shape by Ezra's reforms in the post-Exilic period, with their deliberate policy of national and cultic segregation as dictated by the law (Ezra 9–10). This trend was massively reinforced by the Maccabean crisis, where it was precisely Israel's identity as the covenant people, the people of the law, which was at stake (1 Macc. 1:57; 2:27, 50; 2 Macc. 1:2–4; 2:21–22; 5:15; 13:14), and where "zeal for the law" became the watchword of national resistance (1 Macc. 2:26–27, 50, 58; 2 Macc. 4:2; 7:2, 9, 11, 37; 8:21; 13:14; see further Dunn, *Romans* 9–16, on 10:2). So, too, in the period following the Maccabean crisis the tie-in between election, covenant, and law remains a fundamental and persistent theme of Jewish self-understanding, as illustrated by ben Sira (Sir. 17:11–17; 24:23; 28:7; 39:8; 42:2; 44:19–20; 45:5, 7, 15, 17, 24–25), *Jubilees* (1:4–5, 9–10, 12, 14, 29; 2:21; 6:4–16; 14:17–20; 15:4–16, 19–21, 25–29, 34; 16:14; 19:29; 20:3; etc.), the Damascus document (CD 1.4–5, 15–18, 20; 3.2–4, 10–16; 4.7–10; 6.2–5; etc.) and Pseudo-Philo (*LAB* 4.5, 11; 7.4; 8.3; 9.3–4, 7–8, 13, 15; 10.2; 11.1–5; etc.). In particular we may note the outworking of all this in two of the main groups in Palestinian Judaism at the time of Jesus and Paul. The Qumran community defined membership of the covenant of grace in terms of observing God's precepts and clinging to God's commandments (1QS 1.7–8; 5.1–3), and commitment to the law had to be total and to be examined every year, with any breach severely punished (1QS 5.24; 8.16–9.2). And the Pharisees were known for their *akribeia*, "strictness," in observing the law (see Dunn, *Romans* 1–8, §1.1), and

evidently also for their concern to maintain a level of purity in their daily lives which the law required only for the temple cult itself (see also idem, *Romans* 9-16, on 14:14). For rabbinic traditions on Israel's special relationship with the law see Str-B, 3:126-33. We may confine ourselves to two quotations provided by Schoeps, *Paul*, 195 and 216: *Sifre Deut.* 53b-75b—God addresses Israel in the words "Let it be clear from the keeping of the commandments that you are a people holy to me"; and *Mek. Exod.* 20:6—"By covenant is meant nothing other than the Torah."

3:1 The law thus became a basic expression of Israel's *distinctiveness* as the people specially chosen by (the one) God to be his people. In sociological terms the law functioned as an "identity marker" and "boundary," reinforcing Israel's sense of distinctiveness and distinguishing Israel from the surrounding nations (Neusner, *Judaism*, 72-75; Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 97; Dunn, "Works of Law," 524-27). This sense of separateness was deeply rooted in Israel's national consciousness (e.g., Lev. 20:24-26; Ezra 10:11; Neh 13:3; *Pss. Sol.* 17:28; 3 *Macc.* 3.4) and comes to powerful expression in *Jub.* 22:16:

Separate yourself from the Gentiles,
and do not eat with them,
and do not perform deeds like theirs.
And do not become associates of theirs.
Because their deeds are defiled,
and all of their ways are contaminated,
and despicable, and abominable.

The letter of Aristeeas expresses the same conviction in terms which reinforce the sociological insight.

In his wisdom the legislator . . . surrounded us with unbroken palisades and iron walls to prevent our mixing with any of the other peoples in any matter. . . . So, 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 (*Ep. Arist.* 139, 142).

Similarly Philo, *Mos.* 1.278—a people "which shall dwell alone, not reckoned among other nations . . . because in virtue of the distinction of their peculiar customs they do not mix with others to depart from the ways of their fathers." And a funerary inscription from Italy praises a woman "who lived a gracious life inside Judaism [*kalōs biōsasa en tō Ioudaismō*]"—Judaism understood as "a sort of fenced off area in which Jewish lives are led" (Amir, *Ioudaismos*, 35-36, 39-40).

Consistent with this is the characterization of Gentiles as *anomos* and their works as *anomia*: by definition they were "without the law, outside the law," that is, outside the area (Israel) coterminous with the law, marked out by the law; so already in the Psalms (28:3; 37:28; 55:3; 73:3; 92:7; 104:35; 125:3), in 1 Maccabees (Gentiles and apostates—3:5-6; 7:5; 9:23,

58, 69; 11:25; 14:14), and in the self-evident equation, Gentile = "sinner" (as in Tob. 13:6 [LXX 8]; *Jub.* 23:23-24; *Pss. Sol.* 1:1; 2:1-2; 17:22-25; Matt. 5:47 with Luke 6:33; Gal 2:15). Not surprisingly this desire to live within the law and be marked off from the lawless and sinner became a dominant concern in the factionalism which was a feature of Judaism in the period from the Maccabees to the emergence of rabbinic Judaism as the most powerful faction within post-C.E. 70 Judaism. It was expressed in the frequent complaints of "the righteous" and "devout" over against those (within Israel) whom they characterized as "sinners" (as in *Wisd. Sol.* 2-5; *Jub.* 6.32-35; 23.16, 26; 1 *Enoch* 1.1, 7-9; 5.6-7; 82.4-7; 1QS 2.4-5; 1QH 2.8-19; CD 1.13-21; *Pss. Sol.* 3.3-12; 4.8; 13.5-12; 15.1-13; Pharisees probably = "separated ones"); see also on 3:7; 4:5, 7-8; and 9:6.

3.2 A natural and more or less inevitable converse of this sense of distinctiveness was the sense of *privilege*, precisely in being the nation specially chosen by the one God and favored by gift of covenant and law. This comes out particularly clearly in writings which could not simply ignore and dismiss Gentiles as sinners, but which had to attempt some sort of apologetic for the claims of Israel in the face of a much more powerful Gentile world. Thus both Philo and Josephus speak with understandable if exaggerated pride of the widespread desire among Greek and barbarian to adopt Jewish customs and laws (Philo, *Mos.* 2.17-25—"they attract and win the attention of all . . . the sanctity of our legislation has been a source of wonder not only to Jews and to all others also;" Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.277-286—"The masses have long since shown a keen desire to adopt our religious observances. . . . Were we not ourselves aware of the excellence of our laws, assuredly we should have been impelled to pride [*mega phronein*] ourselves upon them by the multitude of their admirers"). Expressive of the same pride in the law of Moses is what seems to have been a fairly sustained attempt in Jewish apologetic to present Moses as "the first wise man" who was teacher of Orpheus and from whose writings Plato and Pythagoras learned much of their wisdom (Eupolemus, frag. 1; Artapanus, frag. 3; Aristobulus, frag. 3-4; from Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 9.26.1; 9.27.3-6; and 13.12.1-4; texts in Charlesworth).

Pride in the law as the mark of God's special favor to Israel is also well illustrated in the identification of divine Wisdom with the law, the assertion that the universally desirable Wisdom, immanent within creation but hidden from human eyes, was embodied within "the book of the covenant of the Most High God, the law which Moses commanded us as an inheritance for the congregations of Jacob" (Sir. 24:23). The same claim is expressed more forcefully in Bar. 3:36-4:4:

36 . . . (He) gave her to Jacob his servant and to Israel whom he loved

.....
1She is the book of the commandments of God,
and the law which endures for ever.

All who hold her fast will live,
 but those who forsake her will die.
 Turn, O Jacob, and take her;
 walk towards the shining of her light.
 Do not give your glory [*tēn doxan sou*] to another;
 or your advantages [*ta sympheronta*] to an alien people.
 Blessed are we, O Israel,
 for what is pleasing to God is known [*gnōsta*] to us.

For those confronted by the crushing power of Rome within Palestine this sense of privilege was difficult to maintain. *Psalms of Solomon* found a solution in pressing the older distinction between discipline and punishment (particularly *Pss. Sol.* 3, 10, and 13)—thus 13:6–11.

The destruction of the sinner is terrible
 but nothing shall harm the righteous, of all these things,
 For the discipline of the righteous (for things done) in ignorance
 is not the same as the destruction of the sinners

For the Lord will spare his devout,
 and he will wipe away their mistakes with discipline.
 For the life of the righteous (goes on) for ever,
 but sinners shall be taken away to destruction. . . .

Less easy to satisfy was the writer of 4 *Ezra*, who in common with his fellow Jews saw the law given to Israel as a mark of divine favor (3:19; 9:31), but who could not understand how God could spare the sinful nations and yet allow his law-keeping people to be so harshly treated (3:28–36; 4:23–24; 5:23–30; 6:55–59).

3.3 A sociological perspective also helps us to see how the conviction of privileged election and the practice of covenantal nomism almost inevitably come to expression in focal points of distinctiveness, particular laws and especially ritual practices which reinforced the sense of distinctive identity and marked Israel off most clearly from the other nations. In this case three of Israel's laws gained particular prominence as being especially distinctive—circumcision, food laws, and sabbath (cf. Limbeck, *Ordnung*, 34; Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 36–37, 97; Sanders, *Law*, 102). These were not the only beliefs and practices which marked out Jews, but from the Maccabean period onward they gained increasing significance for their boundary-defining character and were widely recognized both within and without Judaism as particularly and distinctively characteristic of Jews. Not that they were intrinsically more important than other laws; they simply had become points of particular sensitivity in Jewish national understanding and were test cases of covenant loyalty. Since I will provide sufficiently full documentation later, I need say no more here (see Dunn, *Romans* 1–8, 9–16, on 2:25 and 14:2, 5).

III. Paul and the Law in Romans

This, then, is the context within which and against which we must set Paul's treatment of the law in Romans. The Jews, proselytes, and God-worshipping Gentiles among his readership would read what Paul says about the law in the light of this close interconnection in Jewish theology of Israel's election, covenant, and law. They would, I believe, recognize that what Paul was concerned about was the fact that covenant promise and law had become too inextricably identified with ethnic Israel as such, with the Jewish people marked out in their national distinctiveness by the practices of circumcision, food laws, and sabbath in particular (Wright, *Messiah*, ch. 2, appropriately coins the phrase "national righteousness"). They would recognize that what Paul was endeavoring to do was to free both promise and law for a wider range of recipients, freed from the ethnic constraints which he saw to be narrowing the grace of God and diverting the saving purpose of God out of its main channel—Christ.

Not least in importance, by setting Paul's treatment of the law into this matrix we are enabled to offer a solution to the sequence of exegetical problems and disputes outlined earlier (I. above = Dunn, *Romans* 1–8, §5.2). Thus it should occasion no surprise that ch. 2 turns out to be a developing critique of precisely these features of Jewish covenant theology which were sketched out above (II. above = Dunn, *Romans* 1–8, §5.3)—the law as dividing Jew from non-Jew, the haves from the have-nots, those within from those without (2:12–14); the law as a source of ethnic pride for the typical devout Jew (2:17–23); and circumcision as the focal point for this sense of privileged distinctiveness (2:25–29) [Hartman draws attention to the consistent strand of "covenant ideology" in and behind these chapters]. Paul regularly warns against "the works of the law," not as "good works" in general or as any attempt by the individual to amass merit for himself, but rather as that pattern of obedience by which "the righteous" maintain their status within the people of the covenant, as evidenced not least by their dedication on such sensitive "test" issues as sabbath and food laws (see Dunn, *Romans* 1–8, 9–16, on 3:20 and 14:2, 5).

Likewise I will be arguing that an important hermeneutical key to such crucial passages as 3:27–31, 7:14–25, and 9:30–10:4 is precisely the recognition that Paul's negative thrust against the law is against the law taken over too completely by Israel, the law misunderstood by a misplaced emphasis on boundary-marking ritual, the law become a tool of sin in its too close identification with matters of the flesh, the law sidetracked into a focus for nationalistic zeal. Freed from that too narrowly Jewish perspective, the law still has an important part to play in "the obedience of faith." And the parenthetic section (12:1–15:6) can then be seen as Paul's attempt to provide a basic guideline for social living, the law redefined for the es-

chatological people of God in place of the law misunderstood in too distinctively Jewish terms, with the climax understandably focused on a treatment of the two older test-cases, food laws and sabbath. It is my contention that only with such an understanding can we do adequate justice to both the positive and the negative thrusts of Paul's treatment of the law in Romans, and that failure to appreciate "the social function" of the law (as outlined above) is a fatal weakness both of alternative attempts (e.g., Cranfield, Hahn, and Hübner) and of Räisänen's critique.

In short, properly understood, Paul's treatment of the law, which has seemed so confused and incoherent to many commentators, actually becomes one of the chief integrating strands which binds the whole letter into a cohesive and powerful restatement of Jewish covenant theology in the light of Christ.

With the letter thus situated within the contexts of its author, of those for whom he wrote, and of the issues with which he engaged, we can now turn to the task of exegesis.

21

ISRAEL'S MISSTEP IN THE EYES OF PAUL

Lloyd Gaston

Christian theologians have often in the past developed a theology of Judaism on the basis of the Pauline epistles. Judaism was whatever Paul opposed or even the opposite of everything Paul said positively. Only in recent times have the scholarly maxim *ad fontes* and the religious injunction not to bear false witness been combined in the ideal of writing about Judaism solely from Jewish sources, read from the perspective of those sources. After the work especially of E. P. Sanders,¹ it will never be possible to return to old habits. Whatever positions Paul was opposing, none of them could be called Judaism as such. Nevertheless, he does have something against his fellow Jews, and I will discuss those passages where he speaks about them. First, however, I want to look briefly at some passages which ought not to be included in such a discussion.

Since every one of Paul's letters is addressed explicitly to Gentile Christians, it is not known what he would have said to Jews. That he would have had occasion to do so is clear from 2 Cor. 11:24, where he says that he was punished in synagogues five times. Since that could only happen if he voluntarily put himself under their jurisdiction, it means that Paul went to synagogues, presumably to worship. If Acts is put rigorously to one side, as methodologically must be done, there is no evidence from Paul's own hand that he ever preached to Jews, in synagogues or anywhere else.² From the account of the Jerusalem council in Galatians 2, it would appear that Paul was at one time in favour of Peter's preaching to Jews, and that he acknowledged Peter's gospel and apostolate. In Romans, on the other hand, there is not a hint even of this.

Can statements about Paul's own past prove anything about what he thought of other Jews or even of Judaism? Did his prophetic commission-

¹Cf. Sanders, *Paul*.

²The best description I know of Paul's missionary practice is found in Sanders, *Law*, 179-90.