

THEOLOGICAL TRENDS

Some recent attempts at explaining Paul's theology

THE FIELD OF pauline studies is so vast and diversified (not least because it overlaps with most other areas of new testament research) that any attempted survey must limit itself to its primary contours. I have chosen to outline the work of some of the most stimulating of the recent interpreters of Paul's theology, leaving aside the variety of exegetical methods commonly employed and the important implications of contemporary pauline studies for the broader historical question of the development of primitive christian thought.

Even within these limits no tidy picture will emerge. It is not part of my intention to highlight a consensus in recent research as the basis for an up-to-date synthesis of pauline theology, since no such consensus exists, and the possibility of such a synthesis is one of the most divisive issues in contemporary discussion.

The problem of Paul's theology

It is axiomatic among critical interpreters that Paul's Letters are situational. This implies a degree of contingency in the theology expressed in them. Paul's theology is, in large part at least, 'adversary theology'.¹ But for all the contingent character of his theology as we have it, there is also a traditional and still dominant persuasion that he is not a theological opportunist, but has a substantial theological message, however adaptable this may be to particular controversies.

The question that has exercised pauline scholars for most of this century, and never more than recently, is, granted that there is a substantial core to Paul's theology, what is it? Where do we have to start if we are to reconstruct his thought from the centre outwards? How are we to interconnect the various ideas reflected in his 'juridical' talk about righteousness and justification, his 'participationist' talk about dying and rising with Christ (being 'in Christ' and 'in the Spirit', etc.) and, finally, his 'apocalyptic' talk about the end of the ages, the parousia of Christ and the eventual judgment and resurrection of believers?

The problem arises because, at least at first sight, it seems we are dealing not with a theological unity but with several dimensions of thought which have not been properly assimilated to the main body: not with a racehorse but with a camel or, worse still, with a circus horse, whose component parts pull in opposite directions.

In the current approach to this problem the most striking divergence is that between Ernst Käsemann who, working within the tradition of lutheran scholarship, has produced probably the most impressive synthesis

ever of Paul's theology, and Ed Parish Sanders, whose recent books on Paul offer a very bold challenge to all such attempts to gather up Paul's thought into a timeless theological synthesis.

Since Käsemann and Sanders have, each in his own way, contributed probably more than anyone else to establishing the agenda of contemporary pauline discussion, a large part of what follows is devoted to an exposition of their views for their own intrinsic interest and without focusing exclusively on the fundamental issue which divides them.

E. Käsemann: rebellious disciple of Bultmann

To give some idea of Käsemann's position we need to take a backward glance at the history of pauline interpretation over at least the last three decades.² For this purpose we must go back to Bultmann. But not even Bultmann fell from heaven (unlike his gnostic Redeemer): he too has to be set against the background of his predecessors.

On the one hand, Bultmann was heavily influenced by the 'history of religions' approach, which endeavoured to explain Paul in terms of hellenistic and gnostic ideas. On the other hand, he could not altogether evade the challenge of the incomparable Albert Schweitzer.³ Schweitzer, in fact, had completely rejected the 'history of religions' approach, insisting instead that the background of Paul's thought was jewish apocalyptic eschatology. Indeed, he argued, Paul's thought is through and through eschatological: no part of it can be understood except in the light of his conviction that Christ's resurrection constituted God's final intervention in history and that believers, being mysteriously and bodily united with the risen Christ, are already living an eschatological existence, in a manner which is hidden but soon to be revealed.

Like Schweitzer, Bultmann saw that Paul's eschatology conditioned the whole of his thought. Unlike Schweitzer, he interpreted Paul against a gnostic background: eschatological existence consists in a completely new *self-understanding*, whereby the individual believer, eschewing all self-reliance, comes to acknowledge his creaturehood and thus to accept God's sovereignty over him. This was a novel move. One of its effects was to detach eschatology from apocalyptic categories in Paul's thought, so that his statements about Christ's parousia and the future of believers were relegated to the margin of his thought as a relic of jewish mythological thinking which had not to be taken very seriously.

But the real novelty of Bultmann's interpretation lay in his attempt to re-express Paul's eschatology (understood in a 'gnostic' sense) in the categories of existentialism: God, in Christ, confronts the individual with the offer of a new, authentic existence which sets him free from his old self-understanding. Pauline faith is thus reinterpreted as the individual's decision for authentic existence (a correct self-understanding), which sets him free from the illusion of his own righteousness and from the self-

defeating endeavour to secure life through his own resources.

Although Bultmann no longer dominates the pauline scene, much of the discussion in the intervening period, particularly in Germany, has been concerned either to reinforce or to dismantle his synthesis. It is necessary, therefore, to bear in mind some of the implications of this synthesis in order to understand current trends in pauline discussion. Bultmann's neglect of the cosmic and universalist dimension of Paul's thought and his focusing upon the individual and anthropology⁴ have provoked the sharpest reaction in some quarters, not least within the circle of his own disciples. The most vigorous challenge has come from Käsemann, whose work on Paul, culminating in his magisterial (and majestic) commentary on Romans (1973), constitutes one of the most influential single contributions to pauline studies today.⁵

Like Bultmann and the lutheran tradition, Käsemann places 'justification by faith' at the centre of Paul's theology, interpreting all other dimensions of his thought in terms of it. But there the theological contact with Bultmann virtually ceases, for Käsemann has reinterpreted the teaching on justification in a way which completely reverses the main emphases of Bultmann's understanding of Paul.

It was at the 1969 Oxford Congress ('The New Testament today') that Käsemann first presented the exegetical and historical arguments which formed the basis of his radical departure from Bultmann.⁶ The question turned on the meaning of the 'righteousness of God', a concept which has loomed large in the history of (especially confessional) interpretation, owing to its importance in Romans. In the lutheran and bultmannian tradition it had been understood as the gift of righteousness which God confers on the believing individual as the basis of a new forensic relationship with himself. Against this, Käsemann argued that Paul's use of the expression derived not from the general forensic concept of righteousness but from a technical usage which could be traced back to Deuteronomy 33,21, which persisted in jewish apocalyptic literature and which was still current in jewish Christianity. In this usage the term connotes not primarily a gift bestowed on man but the power of the covenant God acting in favour of his people. Certainly, it is also a gift, but only in so far as it is first and foremost God's power. God bestows salvation on his people in the very act of becoming their Lord. 'God's power becomes gift when it takes possession of us and, so to speak, enters into us. . . . The gift which is being bestowed here is never at any time separable from the Giver'.⁷

Further, Käsemann argued, Paul differed from jewish and jewish christian tradition in his belief that in Christ God's righteousness exploded into universality, extending beyond the scope of the jewish covenant to the entire creation: God's righteousness consists in his reaffirming his rights as *creator*, instituting not a renewed covenant but a new creation.

'God's power reaches for the world and the world's salvation lies in being recaptured for the sovereignty of God'.⁸ It is within these cosmic horizons that the individual's justification is to be viewed: his righteousness is the universal dominion of the creator, freely accepted.

Here Bultmann's position has been turned inside out. The 'apocalyptic' elements in Paul's thought are no longer marginalized but made central and determinative; Paul's theology turns out to be not, first and foremost, anthropology but cosmology;⁹ the salvation that forms the subject of Paul's preaching consists not simply in a proper human self-understanding, and not primarily in a righteousness conferred on individuals, but in the vindication of God's power over a rebellious creation and the transformation of humankind in the power of God's Spirit.¹⁰

Clearly, the debate over the 'righteousness of God' is not just about the literary antecedents of a pauline expression, nor simply about the academic exegesis of Paul. This would hardly explain the barthian passion which Käsemann brings to the theme. What is at stake for Käsemann is the truth of the gospel today: more precisely, whether the purity of the reformed tradition is to be protected from existentialism and all manner of religious 'enthusiasm'. Constitutive for pauline theology is a 'radicalized doctrine of God and creation, acquired in the light of the cross of Christ'.¹¹ Everything human is, and remains, no more than the *nihil* from which God, in Christ, creates. Thus Käsemann seeks to radicalize the *extra nos* of the lutheran tradition. Ironically, this involves a departure from Luther's own preoccupation with the justification of the individual.

Nowhere are Käsemann's own theological concerns more manifest than in his use of the pauline notion of faith.¹² Faith, for Käsemann, is through and through a polemical concept, defined (against all kinds of contemporary theological positions) more in terms of what it is not than of what it is. It does not call attention to itself as the individual's decision (against Bultmann and ultimately against the lutheran tradition). It is not a virtue, a religious attitude or experience, or allegiance to a body of doctrine or an ecclesiastical tradition (against pietism and Roman Catholicism). As faith in the one who creates out of nothing, raises the dead and justifies the ungodly, it excludes all preoccupation with ecclesiology and 'salvation history', if by that is meant a perceptible continuity in history which could afford religious people a spurious assurance. In a word, faith is authentic only when it kicks away all human, religious and historical props (whether in the protestant or roman catholic tradition) to rely on God's creative word.¹³

Criticisms of Käsemann's reconstruction suggest themselves even to those (still the majority) who do not seriously question the historical assumptions of his method. For example, there is more of Käsemann than of Paul in much of his theological polemic; oracular solutions abound; and not infrequently the theological edifice is made to rest

on uncertain exegetical foundations. This last is true not least of his understanding of the 'righteousness of God' in Paul. The texts he adduces do not prove that it was a technical term in apocalyptic literature and in none of the places where Paul uses the expression is the cosmic dimension of his thought very obvious. The Bultmannians have rightly protested that the direct correlative of the 'righteousness of God' in Paul's thought is the faith of the individual, which is given too little emphasis in Käsemann's synthesis.¹⁴ Still, the cosmic outreach of Paul's thought is hardly to be doubted, and Käsemann has expressed it with singular power. The impact of his synthesis is likely to be felt for many a decade; and apart from the reactions of Bultmann's loyal disciples,¹⁵ there has been no serious challenge to his interpretation of Paul, unless it be from the work of E. P. Sanders, to whom we now turn.

E. P. Sanders: the shattering of venerable traditions?

Sanders's two books, *Paul and palestinian judaism [PPJ]* (1977) and *Paul, the law and the jewish people [PLJP]* (1983) are probably the most provocative works on Paul in recent decades. His thesis constitutes a thoroughgoing challenge not only to Käsemann's reconstruction but to the whole tradition of lutheran (and much non-lutheran) pauline interpretation.

In brief: nearly all pauline scholars have got Paul wrong. They are fundamentally mistaken about the Judaism of Paul's day (alleging that it was obsessed with earning salvation and calculating merits) and have interpreted Paul's invective against the law in terms of the reformation controversy (sheer grace *versus* works-righteousness).¹⁶ This misconstruction of Paul is rendered the more serious in the lutheran tradition by the fact that this tradition places the doctrine of justification at the centre of Paul's theology and takes it as the starting-point for interpreting Paul's confrontation with Judaism. This is to misunderstand both Paul and Judaism.

In *PPJ* Sanders sets out to demolish this traditional interpretation of Paul and Judaism by comparing the two religions. To compare one religion with another, he insists, each must be viewed holistically, that is, with an eye to its basic 'pattern'. Constitutive of this 'pattern' is the manner in which the religion is perceived by its adherents to function. This is revealed not in what they do on a day-to-day basis but in their answers to the soteriological questions: first, how one 'gets in' the group of those who are to be saved and, second, how one 'stays in'. Sanders proceeds to examine first Judaism and then Paul with these questions in mind.

With regard to Judaism, he subjects (nearly) all the pertinent jewish literature to close scrutiny, examining relevant passages in their contexts and in the light of what he takes to be their authors' presuppositions. He finds, first, that the literature contains not a hint of the notion that

salvation is to be earned or that merits are decisive and, second, that the basic presupposition of Judaism was the covenant of grace, which in fact *excluded* legalistic works-righteousness. One 'gets in' not by law-observance but through God's elective grace; law-observance is the gladly accepted means of 'staying in', of responding to the will of the covenant God. The requirement of law-observance in no way conflicts with elective grace, which indeed remains operative in the constantly offered opportunity of repentance and forgiveness. This 'pattern' of Judaism Sanders described as 'covenantal nomism'.

With regard to Paul, Sanders aligns himself with Schweitzer and against the lutheran tradition by refusing to place Paul's teaching on justification at the centre of his theology. Paul's central theological concerns are reflected not so much in his righteousness terminology as in the language which speaks of participation in Christ (dying and rising with Christ, etc.); the hub of his theology is his conviction that the believer becomes one with Christ and that this effects a transfer of lordship and the beginning of a transformation which will be completed with the coming of Christ.¹⁷ In Paul's soteriological scheme, therefore, one 'gets in' by the act of faith which results in participation in Christ and 'stays in' by not engaging in unions which are destructive of the union with Christ. The 'pattern' of Paul's religion, which represents an 'essentially different kind of religiousness' from that of Judaism,¹⁸ Sanders calls 'participationist eschatology'.

In the light of this holistic comparison of the two religions Sanders is able to contend that what divided Paul and Judaism were their mutually exclusive answers to the question, how one 'gets in' the community of those whom God intends to save (faith in Christ/adherence to the jewish covenant); but on the question which is most commonly thought to have divided them (the relationship between grace and works) there was in fact substantial agreement: in Judaism, as in Paul, works were not a means of earning salvation (of 'getting in') but only the condition of 'staying in'. Hence Paul's invective against the law had absolutely nothing to do with the issues which were later to divide the Reformers and Roman Catholicism. His battle-cry, 'not by works of law', concerned *only* the condition of entry to the proper way of salvation, and was never aimed at defects intrinsic to the system of law or at alleged jewish attitudes (legalism and works-righteousness), about which Paul says not one word.

The basis of this novel approach to Paul is Sanders's contention that Paul worked from solution to plight, not *vice versa*, as is commonly supposed, especially in the lutheran tradition. This means: Paul did not begin with a phenomenological critique of Judaism but with the dogmatic judgment that Christ is sole and universal saviour. It was this, and this alone, which caused him to reject the entire system of Judaism (jewish covenant and law) as the true way to salvation. 'In short, this is what

Paul finds wrong with Judaism: it is not Christianity'.¹⁹

If all this is correct, it certainly does cut the ground from beneath the lutheran interpretation of Paul and necessitates a thorough rethink of the manner in which most scholars see Paul's polemic against Judaism.

But is it correct?²⁰ Two general criticisms may be touched on here regarding Sanders's reconstruction of rabbinic Judaism and Paul's theology respectively. First, Sanders argues that the concept of covenant (implying the primacy of grace) formed one of the twin constitutive elements in the self-awareness of Judaism as attested in the available literature. But this involves a degree of special pleading. Covenant, in fact, and the divine initiative play an extremely limited rôle in the mass of rabbinic literature surveyed by Sanders. The reason for this, he asserts, is that they were presupposed. But if the question is what gives a religion its character there is surely something unreal about appealing to its 'presuppositions' while failing to be struck by its *preoccupations*. The very texts reviewed by Sanders evince such a massive preoccupation with legal minutiae that it is not easy to accept Sander's plea that this only shows how seriously the rabbis sought to have people respond to the covenant of grace. What sort of divine grace is it that concentrates the mind so earnestly on matters which, by Sanders' own admission, 'are often at the third remove from central questions of religious importance'?²¹ (When Roman Catholicism was dominated by legalism it could still claim that it was merely responding to grace, though, of course, grace rarely got a mention in the manuals.)

Second, with regard to Paul, we are left wondering whether any coherent sense can be made of his various statements about the law if lutheran categories are to be ruled out of court.²² Large parts of his polemic appear to be victimless; and if all he had to say about the law was that it was not the proper 'entrance requirement', why on earth did he choose such a complicated way of saying it?

In *PLJP* Sanders clarifies his position while renewing his attack on the lutheran tradition. Paul's statements on the law, he assures us, are coherent, but only in the sense that each of them is traceable to one or other of his dogmatic concerns (which have nothing to do with any actual experience of Judaism). Beyond that, they are 'unsystematic', i.e. mutually inconsistent; 'different questions, different answers' (to quote the formula with which Sanders sums up his conclusions). In other words: Paul's polemic against the law adds up to little more than an embarrassed apology for his personal conviction that salvation comes through Christ (hence not through the law).

According to Sanders, Paul's lack of 'system' is apparent in three main respects. First, his manifesto, 'not by works of law', refers *only* to the debate about 'entrance requirements' (how one 'gets in'): change the topic, and Paul says yes to the law. This is shown—second—by the fact

that when the question is about correct behaviour for Christians, Paul has no qualms about answering: they (must) observe the whole mosaic law (cf. e.g. Gal 5,14; 1 Cor 7,19; Rom 8,4), minus only those requirements which would give offence to Gentiles. Finally, the artificial nature of Paul's claim that the law is related to sin is shown by the tortured and mutually conflicting accounts he gives of this relationship (Gal 3,19ff; Rom 7,7-13; 7,14-25).

Some remarks on the first, and most important, of these points must suffice here.²³ Paul's message, 'not by works of law', is nowhere more insistently proclaimed than in Galatians. But precisely here the question at issue is not simply about 'getting in' but also, and more directly, about 'staying in'. Paul urges that submission to the law is incompatible with the freedom to which Christ has called believers, and this freedom they must *safeguard* if they wish to remain in Christ (5,1-6.13). This shows that Paul did not have one principle for 'getting in' and another for 'staying in' but that, on the contrary, his insistence on 'faith, not works' implied a thoroughgoing theological axiom which he thought must govern christian life from beginning to end.²⁴

In general, it is doubtful whether Sanders's basic position (that Paul's negative statements on the law were unrelated to any actual experience of the law) takes full account of the evidence. According to Phil 3,6 it was when (and, by implication, because) Paul was so completely taken up with the righteousness of the law that (in his subsequent estimation) he was furthest removed from God's intentions,²⁵ and according to Rom 10,1ff, it was (in Paul's perception) precisely his compatriots' zealous pursuit of their 'own righteousness' which prevented them from submitting to the righteousness of God.²⁶ From these two texts alone it is clear that Paul criticized the law not simply because it was not Christ but because (in the lesson of his own experience) there was something about it which inhibited people from being open to the gospel. It may be that the categories of reformation polemic have been too zealously employed in the past to explain this state of affairs. But has Sanders proposed a satisfying alternative?²⁷

J. C. Beker: the dawning triumph of God

In his *Paul the apostle: the triumph of God in life and thought* (1980), one of the most impressive books on Paul in recent years, J. Christiaan Beker takes up again the slightly old-fashioned, but still indispensable, task of making theological sense of Paul. Seconding a trend which received its canonical status with Käsemann's famous essays,²⁸ Beker maintains that the decisive framework of Paul's thought is the future hope of jewish apocalyptic. The heart of his theology is the death and resurrection of Christ interpreted apocalyptically, that is, viewed from the perspective of God's imminent triumph. Put differently: the dawning triumph of God

is the coherent theme of Paul's gospel, and all other elements of his theology are distorted unless seen in this perspective. Hence if we wish to understand Paul's gospel, we have to resist 'all attempts to spiritualize his apocalyptic hope or to collapse it into christology and a timeless 'already'. 'The coherent theme of the gospel is unthinkable apart from apocalyptic. In that sense, apocalyptic thought patterns are not to be demythologized or regarded as incidental linguistic "husk"''.²⁹

All this, however, is not to advocate a return to what Beker terms 'timeless construals' of Paul's theology (exemplified most recently by the Bultmannians, including Käsemann), which takes no account of the manner in which Paul's gospel is refracted in the particular missionary circumstances behind each epistle. Utilizing the insights of structural linguistics (N. Chomsky), Beker distinguishes between a primary language (a coherent core of meaning) and a secondary one (the expression of this meaning in contingent circumstances). 'Paul's hermeneutic consists in the constant interaction between the coherent centre of the gospel and its contingent interpretation'.³⁰

Though Beker does not enter into dialogue with Sanders, his insights do in fact suggest a rather basic objection to Sanders's claim that Paul's polemic against the law had nothing to do with alleged Jewish attitudes like self-righteousness and 'boasting': for in fact the themes which most scholars perceive in Paul's polemic against the law in Galatians, Philippians and Romans are re-applied in the 'contingent' controversy with the Corinthians over human wisdom (1 Corinthians). This suggests that these themes reflect some fairly consistent theological criteria which take into account Paul's perception of human attitudes; and that Paul is not arguing in a dogmatic vacuum either in his rejection of the law or in his dismissal of human wisdom. 'Let him who boasts boast in the Lord' (1 Cor 1,31).

There is much that can be said in criticism of Beker's synthesis.³¹ For example, there is a procrustean element in his attempt to expound certain aspects of Paul's thought in his chosen framework. He himself seems to be aware of this when he observes that Galatians, which focuses on the eschatological *present*, 'threatens to undo' his thesis about the essentially futurist, 'apocalyptic' perspective of Paul's theology; and when he admits that the chapters on sin and death and on the law 'at first sight . . . seem to interrupt the flow of the argument'.³⁷ Could it be that no *one* conceptual framework can adequately account for all the dimensions of Paul's thought?

More important: what does Beker mean by 'apocalyptic'? Since the term is endlessly debated and variously defined in all departments of modern biblical studies, and some would wish to take it out of currency,³³ it is perhaps not a very reliable one to work with. Beker wants it to connote 'vindication, universalism, dualism and imminence'.³⁴ But are

these traits essential to Jewish apocalypses, and do all the essential concerns of these literary works re-emerge in Paul's theology? And are those which do re-emerge confined to 'apocalyptic'?

Be that as it may, most are not accustomed to accepting 'apocalyptic' as useful coinage for conveying certain important dimensions of Paul's thought. There is no harm in that, provided we remember, first, that Paul is far too complex and versatile a figure to be adequately explained by any one cluster of ideas, and, second, that whatever Paul borrowed from Jewish 'apocalyptic' was to a very large extent transformed and redefined in his mind by the particularity of Jesus Christ and the Christian understanding of his death and resurrection.³⁵

Wayne A. Meeks: sociology or theology?

No account of the contemporary Pauline scene could omit to mention a method of research which is fast gaining ground as a means of understanding the beliefs of primitive Christianity and especially Paul: the use of sociological insights.³⁶ This kind of research seeks to relate the beliefs of Christians to their social experiences; or, more exactly, to examine the extent to which social experiences favoured the acceptance of, and interacted with, religious beliefs.

For example, Wayne Meeks, in a programmatic article,³⁷ suggests a correlation between the Pauline belief in the resurrection of a crucified Messiah and the social status of the people who made up the Pauline communities: antithesis and paradox, which lie at the heart of the Pauline kerygma, confirm and interpret the experience of people whose social status within the group was open to challenge in the dominant society ('status inconsistency'). Again, in his book, *The first urban Christians* (1983), Meeks seeks to relate primitive Christian apocalyptic to the peculiar social fabric of the Pauline communities: utopian movements reduce the tension between religious belief and harsh reality ('cognitive dissonance').³⁸

This approach to Pauline studies performs the salutary service of reminding Pauline scholars that the genesis and interaction of abstract ideas cannot in themselves explain the development of Paul's theology. Primitive Christians, like every social group, were deeply affected in their religious beliefs by the realities of their social situation.

However, a *caveat* is needed even here. Like everything else in history, Pauline research rarely takes a step forward without at the same time taking half a step backwards. I mean that there is a tendency in some quarters to apply the sociological method simplistically, on the assumption, that is, that well-nigh everything is explicable by social factors alone. Hence too little allowance is sometimes made for the fact that ideas, *as* ideas, possess a transforming potency of their own, capable of undercutting social forces and moulding social attitudes. The development of religious ideas is an extremely *complicated* process. It is not, I

think, unfair to say that a certain polemical motivation makes some practitioners of the sociological method rather one-sided. This is a bad thing, even if many of their insights are very useful. Add to this the fact that as Meeks himself acknowledges, 'the evidence [for the social condition of early Christians] is fragmentary, random and often unclear'.³⁹ Perhaps there is some danger of replacing a theological dogmatism with one which is only more acceptable because it is newer.

Conclusions?

The question-mark after 'Conclusions' is not a misprint: it is difficult to formulate any conclusions to a review of contemporary pauline discussion which do not themselves take the form of a question.

Perhaps the most obvious questions are those which have remained on the scholarly agenda for the best part of this century, i.e., (a) has Paul a *coherent* theology and (b) if so, where lies the hub of it? Is it to be found in justification, participation in Christ or the dawning triumph of God? Or in all three?

A more basic question is, how much weight is henceforth to be given to certain traditional theological approaches to Paul? Has the bulk of his correspondence to do only with a polemic which took place *once* (and is perhaps largely explicable by social psychology), or has it an abiding religious significance? In particular: can the theological and spiritual heritage of the Reformation, which has helped to mould the religious consciousness of the West, claim a real basis in scripture? Or is the lutheran Paul a chimera?

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NOTES

¹ Hence the concern to establish the identity and beliefs of Paul's adversaries in the different communities. See E. E. Ellis, 'Paul and his opponents: trends in the research' in J. Neusner, (ed.), *Christianity, judaism and other greco-roman cults*, Part 1, pp 264-298.

² See E. E. Ellis, *Paul and his recent interpreters*, (1961); H. Ridderbos, *Paul*, (1977), pp. 13-43; R. Jewett, 'Major impulses in the theological interpretation of Romans since Barth', *Interpretation* 34 (1980) pp 17-31.

³ *The mysticism of the apostle Paul*, [E.T.: 1931 (from the 1911 original).]

⁴ Cf R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament I*, (E.T.: 1952), p 191: 'Paul's theology can best be treated as his doctrine of man'.

⁵ *Commentary on Romans*, (1980). See also, E. Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament themes [Essays]*, (E.T.: 1964); *New Testament questions of today [Questions]*, (1969); *Perspectives on Paul [Perspectives]*, (1971). These collections of lectures and essays deal with the theological issues which pervade the commentary.

⁶ See 'The righteousness of God in Paul', *Questions*, pp 168-182.

⁷ *Ibid.* pp 173f.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p 182.

⁹ 'Anthropology is cosmology in concreto, even in the sphere of faith' (*Perspectives*, p 27).

¹⁰ H. Hubner, *New Testament studies* 21 (1975) pp 462ff., argues that this point of contrast between Bultmann and Käsemann has been overstated.

¹¹ *Perspectives*, p 92.

¹² Cf. 'The faith of Abraham in Romans 4', *Perspectives*, pp 79-101. For a useful account of Käsemann's theology, see G. A. Lewandowski in *Encounter* 35 (1974) pp 222-242.

¹³ 'The Father of Jesus works with poor, fundamentally perishable material, and always most profoundly for and with the dead. . . .[Justification] . . . is *creatio ex nihilo*. . . . As such it must necessarily be, and is bound to remain, *justificatio impij*. It does not base salvation on what we are capable of and what we do; consequently it shatters every human (and more especially every religious) self-sufficiency and self-security. We remain at the point where the justification of the ungodly is valid, in the condition of those who are incapable of self-praise and who have to live from faith alone' (*Perspectives*, p 92).

¹⁴ E.g., G. Bornkamm, *Paul*, (1971), pp 146f.; H. Conzelmann, *Interpretation* 22 (1968), pp. 178ff.

¹⁵ Against Käsemann's interpretation of the 'righteousness of God', see Bultmann's own reaction in *Journal of biblical literature* 83 (1964) pp 12-16. Cf. G. Klein, *The interpreter's dictionary of the bible*, Suppl., pp 750ff.

¹⁶ This sort of interpretation is a 'retrojection of the protestant-catholic debate into the ancient history, with Judaism taking the role of Catholicism and Christianity the role of Lutheranism' (*PPJ* p 57).

¹⁷ Cf. *PPJ*, p 514.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p 543.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p 552.

²⁰ See, e.g., G. B. Caird in *Journal of theological studies* 29 (1978) pp 538ff.; N. A. Dahl and S. Sandmel in *Religious studies review* 4 (1978) pp 153ff.; R. H. Gundry in *Biblica* 66 (1985) p 1ff.

²¹ *PPJ*, p 71.

²² E.g., J. D. G. Dunn finds Sanders's Paul inconsistent and illogical, 'little more convincing (and much less attractive) than the lutheran Paul': *Bulletin of the John Rylands library* 65 (1983), p 102.

²³ For greater detail, see *Heythrop Journal*, 27 (1986) pp 43-52.

²⁴ See C. J. A. Hickling in *Studia Biblica* 1978, vol 3 (JSNT Suppl. Series 3), p 214: 'The doctrine of grace . . . is in Paul the root of nearly everything else'. See the thesis of S. Kim, *The origin of Paul's gospel*, (1981), especially pp 269-329.

²⁵ Cf. Caird, as cited above, p 540.

²⁶ Sanders (*PLJP*, p 38) argues, not very convincingly, that 'their own righteousness' (Rom 10,3) has nothing to do with 'self-righteousness' but denotes only the righteousness which is peculiar to the Jews; similarly 'my righteousness' in Phil. 2,9.

²⁷ J. D. G. Dunn, *art.cit.*, ('The new perspective on Paul') argues (against both Sanders and the lutheran tradition) that Paul's invective is aimed only at jewish *nationalism* ('works of law' = the badges of national election: circumcision, etc.) But his distinction between 'works of law' and 'law' (which enables him to leave aside large parts of Paul's polemic) seems arbitrary; and in some contexts (Rom 3,19f; 9,11f; 9,30ff) the restricted meaning of 'works' seems highly unlikely.

²⁸ 'The beginnings of christian theology' and 'Primitive christian apocalyptic', *Questions*, pp 82-107; 108-137.

²⁹ *Paul the Apostle*, p 181.

³⁰ *Ibid.* p 11.

³¹ See, e.g., H. O. Betz in *Journal of religion* 61 (1981), pp 457ff; R. P. Martin in *Journal of biblical literature* 101 (1982), p 463ff; M. Thrall in *Journal of theological studies* 33 (1982), p 268ff.

³² *Paul the Apostle*, p 58, p x.

³³ '... a useless word which no one can define and which produces nothing but confusion and acres of verbiage': T. F. Glasson in *New Testament Studies* 27 (1980-1981), p 105.

³⁴ *Paul's apocalyptic gospel*, (1982), p 30. W. D. Davies, *Jewish and pauline studies*, (1984), p 361, rightly complains that neither Beker nor Käsemann makes much reference to the actual jewish apocalypses.

³⁵ Cf. L. E. Keck, 'Paul and apocalyptic theology', *Interpretation* 38 (1984) pp 229-241; V. P. Branick, 'Apocalyptic Paul?', *Catholic biblical quarterly* 47 (1985), pp 664-675.

³⁶ Cf., e.g., G. Theissen: *The social setting of pauline christianity* (1982); W. A. Meeks: *The first urban christians: the social world of the apostle Paul*, (1983).

³⁷ 'The social context of pauline theology', *Interpretation* 37 (1982), pp 266-277.

³⁸ *The first urban christians*, pp 171ff. Cf. 'Social functions of apocalyptic language in pauline Christianity' in D. Hellholm, ed., *Apocalypticism in the mediterranean world and the Near East*, (1983), pp 687-705.

³⁹ *Interpretation* 37, p 270.