

Cambridge University Press

0521810418 - Paul and the Power of Sin: Redefining 'Beyond the Pale'

T. L. Carter

Excerpt

[More information](#)

1

INTRODUCTION

The context of the power of sin

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines sin as 'A transgression of the divine law and an offence against God, a violation (especially wilful or deliberate) of some religious or moral principle.' According to this definition, a sin is committed when someone does something wrong: human beings are the subject and sin the object. Without a perpetrator, sin would have no existence. Yet the apostle Paul portrays sin differently. In his letter to the Romans, sin comes to life. Humanity is no longer the subject, but the object. It is no longer the person who commits the sin: rather, sin is at work within the person.¹ In conjunction with death, sin rules over the entire world (Rom. 5:12–21). The law is powerless before it. It exploits the commandments of God for its own ends, using them to provoke the very things they were intended to prevent (7:7–13). Human nature, sold out to sin, is powerless to resist. Those who end up doing the evil that they deplore recognise, to their dismay, that sin has taken charge of their behaviour (7:13–25). In Romans 5–8, sin is the active agent and humanity its passive victim.

Two recent German monographs have explored what lies behind this distinctive portrait of sin. According to Röhser, sin is not some demonic being that holds sway over humankind.² Sin should not be referred to as a power, since this term is colourless and unbiblical. Instead, Paul conceived of sin as a personified deed. Drawing on a number of existing metaphors, the apostle personified sin in order to stress the full extent to which people are responsible for their actions. Röhser's case is strongest in Romans 5–6, where it is possible to understand the singular *ἁμαρτία* as

¹Cf. E. Lohmeyer, 'Probleme paulinischer Theologie III: Sünde, Fleisch und Tod', *ZNW* 29 (1930), pp.1–59.

²G. Röhser, *Metaphorik und Personifikation der Sünde* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1987).

Cambridge University Press

0521810418 - Paul and the Power of Sin: Redefining 'Beyond the Pale'

T. L. Carter

Excerpt

[More information](#)2 *Paul and the Power of Sin*

a metaphor for acts of sinning.³ However, in Romans 7:7–25, ἁμαρτία takes on an identity of its own that is quite independent of the act of sinning and as Paul defines its relationship to the law, its character as 'power' becomes explicit.

Umbach takes issue with Röhser's depiction of sin as 'personified deed'.⁴ According to Umbach, the concept of sin as deed is subordinated to the concept of sin as power in Paul's letters. For Paul, the term 'Sin' is always a power to which humankind 'in Adam' is completely subjected and from which they can only be freed by the power of the Spirit of God. According to Umbach, the concept of sin as a power is not really introduced until Romans 5:12–21, although Paul does refer to it in Galatians and 2 Corinthians 5:21. Elsewhere in his letters, Paul avoids the term when referring to deviant behaviour in the church because for him the term ἁμαρτία conveyed the deeper and more fundamental notion of sin as a power. On this basis, Umbach argues that Paul saw the church as a sin-free zone, since Christians have been freed from the power of sin and are now governed by the Spirit of God.

Although Umbach's stress on the power dimensions of Paul's sin language corrects Röhser's over-emphasis on sin as deed, he overplays his hand. It is by no means the case that ἁμαρτία always denotes sin as a power, since there are a number of occasions when it can denote the act of sinning.⁵ Furthermore, he places too much emphasis on Romans 5:12–21. Although he acknowledges that it is only at this point that Paul introduces the concept of sin as a power, Umbach writes as if Paul had this passage in mind whenever he wrote in his other letters about sin. So if elsewhere Paul does not use ἁμαρτία to refer to deviant behaviour, Umbach implies that Paul avoids the term because ἁμαρτία necessarily denotes the power of Romans 5 that dominates unregenerate humanity. Where Paul does use the singular term ἁμαρτία in Galatians and 2 Corinthians 5:21, Umbach loads these references with semantic freight imported from Romans 5:12–21, even though Romans may well reflect a later development in the apostle's thought. If the error of illegitimate totality transfer is to be avoided, the meaning of each occurrence of ἁμαρτία will depend upon its own particular context.

³Cf. K. Koch, 'Sühne und Sündenvergebung um die Wende von der exilischen Zeit', *EvTh* 26 (1966), pp.217–39; B.N. Kaye, *The Thought Structure of Romans with Special Reference to Chapter 6* (Chico: Scholars, 1979).

⁴H. Umbach, *In Christus getauft – von der Sünde befreit: Die Gemeinde als sündenfreier Raum bei Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).

⁵E.g. Rom. 3:20; 4:8; 14:23; 2 Cor. 5:21; 11:7; possibly Rom. 5:13, 20; 6:1; 7:7; cf. J.D.G. Dunn, *Romans*, 2 vols. (Waco: Word, 1988), vol.I, p.149.

Cambridge University Press

0521810418 - Paul and the Power of Sin: Redefining 'Beyond the Pale'

T. L. Carter

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

3

As Umbach observes, references to the power of sin are not evenly distributed throughout Paul's letters. The majority are found in Romans 5:12–8:11, where Paul uses the singular noun ἁμαρτία 41 times, personifying sin and making it the subject of its own actions. Yet the question of the law is never far from Paul's mind in these chapters. After introducing the power of sin in Romans 5:12, Paul immediately clarifies its relationship with the law in 5:13. He goes on to imply that the law actually made sin abound (5:20), and by this means he introduces the discussion of dying to sin in 6:1–14, which culminates in the statement that sin will not rule over the recipients of his letter, because they are not under law, but under grace. This contrast between law and grace then introduces his exposition of enslavement to sin in 6:15–23. Those who have died to sin with Christ have also died to the law, which aroused sinful passions within their members (7:1–6). The arrival of God's law only served to reveal sin in all its sinfulness, since sin took advantage of the commandment by using it to provoke the very desire it forbade, thereby deceptively using the commandment to bring forth death instead of life (7:7–12). Those sold under sin find that any desire to do good is overruled by indwelling sin, so that they are held captive to the 'law of sin' in the body's members (7:13–25): it is only the law of the Spirit that brings release from sin's control (8:1–11), so achieving what the law was powerless to do, since it was weakened by the flesh. The requirements of the law are fulfilled in those who walk according to the Spirit.

Outside Romans, Paul uses the symbolism of the power of sin infrequently, but each reference occurs within the context of Paul's discussion of the Jewish law. In 1 Corinthians 15:56, sin is identified as the sting of death and the law as the power of sin. This verse encapsulates much of Paul's thinking in Romans on the relationship between sin and the law, but it bears little relation to the content of the rest of 1 Corinthians and can easily be isolated from its present context. For these reasons, it will be argued in chapter 3 that 1 Corinthians 15:56 should probably be regarded as a gloss.

The only other unambiguous references to the power of sin occur in Galatians. In Galatians 3:21–22 Paul declares that, instead of the law bringing righteousness and life, scripture has instead imprisoned the universe under sin, so that the promise might be given to those who have faith: the all-encompassing power of sin is introduced as part of Paul's argument that Gentiles and Jews alike are justified by faith, not works of the law. Another possible reference occurs in Galatians 2:17, where Paul defends himself against the charge that seeking justification apart from works of the law makes Christ the servant of sin. As in Romans, Paul

Cambridge University Press

0521810418 - Paul and the Power of Sin: Redefining 'Beyond the Pale'

T. L. Carter

Excerpt

[More information](#)4 *Paul and the Power of Sin*

uses the power of sin in Galatians to address the question of the status of law-free Gentile believers within the church.

This exclusive association of the power of sin with the law establishes Paul's discussion of the law as the context within which the power of sin needs to be understood, a factor which is ignored by both Röhser and Umbach in their studies. Apart from 1 Corinthians 15:56, all the above references to the power of sin and the law form part of Paul's attempt to establish the position of non-observant Gentile believers within the church. The question of Jewish–Gentile relations within the early church thus formed the social context in which Paul formulated his theology of the power of sin.⁶ Yet from Augustine onwards,⁷ Paul's sin language has been studied at a theological and doctrinal level, in isolation from that social context. This study will explore the role played by the power of sin in Paul's attempts to deal with the question of Jewish–Gentile relations within the early church, and will analyse how his sin language was shaped and influenced by this particular social context. In essence, the thesis of this study is that the issue of the relationship between Jewish and Gentile believers in the early church constitutes the socio-historical context in which the symbolism of the power of sin in Paul's letters needs to be understood. In placing all humanity under the power of sin, Paul was primarily concerned to establish that the Torah-observant Jew had no advantage over the law-free Gentile.

The legacy of Augustine

Since the fifth century, the writings of Augustine have exercised a decisive influence over the theology of sin in the western church. Augustine himself was clearly aware that Paul wrote his letter to the Romans in order to address the question 'whether the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ came to the Jews alone because of their merits through works of the Law, or whether the justification which is of faith which is in Christ came to all nations, without any preceding merits for works'.⁸ Yet in his controversy

⁶Cf. B. Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament: an Appraisal* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 1990), p.156: 'The social situation has to be included if we are to understand the reality the texts speak of, and not simply as a kind of "background" that might be useful to know about, but as a dimension of the meaning itself of this text and reality.'

⁷For a review of the pre-Augustinian perspective on sin, cf. R.A. Greer, 'Sinned we all in Adam's Fall?', in L.M. White and O.L. Yarbrough, eds., *The Social World of the First Christians* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 1995), pp.382–94.

⁸*Epistolae ad Romanos inchoata expositio*, 1; cf. P.F. Landes, *Augustine on Romans: Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans: Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Chico: Scholars, 1982).

Cambridge University Press

0521810418 - Paul and the Power of Sin: Redefining 'Beyond the Pale'

T. L. Carter

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Introduction

5

with Pelagius at the beginning of the fifth century, Augustine used Romans primarily as a quarry of scripture references to support the doctrine of original sin. On the basis of Romans 5:12–21, Augustine argued that the entire human race sinned in Adam, and that this original sin alone suffices to damn even unbaptised infants.⁹ In order to strengthen his hand against Pelagius, Augustine also revised his own interpretation of Romans 7:14–25. Initially he had thought that the 'wretched man' was under the law, bound to mortality as punishment for inherited original sin, and to sensuality as punishment for his own repeated sinning;¹⁰ in his autobiographical *Confessiones*, he had even used the language of Romans 7 to portray his own pre-conversion struggles.¹¹ However, in the light of Pelagius' teaching that unaided human nature was capable of sinlessness, Augustine argued that Romans 7 must refer to Christian experience, since only the grace of God could produce the delight in the law referred to in 7:22.¹²

In *de spiritu et littera* Augustine wrote a detailed exposition of key passages from Romans in order to counter the Pelagian teaching that without God's help the mere power of the human will was able to advance towards perfect righteousness. Yet he did not do so without reference to Paul's original aim in writing the letter, which was 'to commend the grace which came through Jesus Christ to all peoples, lest the Jews exalt themselves above the rest on account of their possession of the law'.¹³ At one point in the treatise Augustine may betray an awareness that his own anti-Pelagian exposition stands in tension with Paul's original meaning. In his exposition of Romans 2:11–16, Augustine is concerned to argue against Pelagius that those who have the law written on their hearts are Christian believers, who are able to keep the precepts of the law because their human nature has been restored by grace. Yet he recognises that others see a reference to unbelievers in these verses and accepts that their

⁹*De peccatorum meritis et remissione*, I 10.9; 11.10–39.70; *contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum* 4.7; *de nuptiis et concupiscentia* II 5.15; *de civitate Dei* 13.14; *enchiridion* 26.27; cf. G. Bonner, 'Augustine on Romans 5:12', in F.L. Cross, ed., *Studia Evangelica*, 7 vols. (Berlin: Akademie, 1969), vol.V, pp.242–7; A. Vanneste, 'Saint Paul et la Doctrine Augustinienne du Pêché Originel', *Studiorum Paulinorum Congressus Internationalis Catholicus*, 2 vols. (Rome: Analecta Biblica, 1961), vol.II, pp.513–22; B. Delaroche, *Saint Augustin: Lecteur et Interprète de Saint Paul dans le 'De peccatorum meritis et remissione' (hiver 411–412)* (Paris, Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1996).

¹⁰*Ad Simplicianum* 1.1.10–11.

¹¹*Confessiones* 8.10.

¹²*De gratia Christi* 1.39.43; *de nuptiis* 27.30–31.36; *duas epistolas* 1.8.13–11.24; *contra Julianum* II 3.5; 4.8; 5.13; III 26.61; *retractationes* 1.22–25; 2.27; cf. M. Huftier, *Le Tragique de la Condition Chrétienne chez Saint Augustin* (Paris: Desclé, 1964).

¹³*De spiritu et littera* 9.6.

Cambridge University Press

0521810418 - Paul and the Power of Sin: Redefining 'Beyond the Pale'

T. L. Carter

Excerpt

[More information](#)6 *Paul and the Power of Sin*

interpretation of Paul's words makes a valid point: 'It may be that this is his way of proving what he had already said, that there is no respect of persons with God, and what he says later, that God is not the God of the Jews only but also of the Gentiles . . .'¹⁴ This second interpretation is fully in accord with Augustine's summary of the original purpose of the letter, and this suggests that Augustine himself may have been aware that his preference for the first interpretation was determined more by the need to counter Pelagius than by his own understanding of the letter's historical context.

Yet, while Augustine himself was aware that Romans addressed the question of Jews and Gentiles, it was his own theological interpretation of the letter as a treatise on human sin that decisively influenced subsequent understanding of the letter, particularly in the Reformation period. Unlike Augustine, Luther made the straightforward assertion that, 'The chief purpose of this epistle is . . . to destroy all wisdom and righteousness of the flesh . . . and to affirm and state and magnify sin, no matter how much someone insists it does not exist.'¹⁵ After Luther's death, Protestant orthodoxy took its bearings from Calvin's *Institutes*, which defined original sin as 'a hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused into all parts of the soul, which first makes us liable to God's wrath then also brings forth in us "works of the flesh"'.¹⁶ Paul's epistle to the Romans was used to support and undergird this doctrine without any reference to the letter's historical context.

With the Enlightenment came a readiness to read biblical authors on their own terms, rather than interpreting their writings through the grid of later doctrinal formulations. John Locke, who openly opposed the principle of hereditary depravity, pierced behind 1300 years of dogmatic interpretation when he argued that the aim of Romans was to establish that 'god is the god of the Gentiles as well as the Jews, and that now under the gospel there is no difference between Jew and Gentile'.¹⁷ The importance of the historical setting of the letter was also underlined over a century later by F.C. Baur, who regarded Romans as a key historical source for his reconstruction of the history of the New Testament period, since it contained the deepest and most comprehensive account of Pauline universalism against Jewish particularism. Baur interpreted the letter against the background of the supposed conflict between the

¹⁴Ibid., 49.28.¹⁵*Lectures on Romans* 1.1.¹⁶*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2.1.8a.¹⁷J. Locke, *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul*, ed. A. Wainwright, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), vol.II, p.483.

Cambridge University Press

0521810418 - Paul and the Power of Sin: Redefining 'Beyond the Pale'

T. L. Carter

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

7

Petrine and Pauline parties of 1 Corinthians 1:12, and argued that Paul was writing to the predominantly Jewish Christian community in Rome in order to oppose their particularist understanding of the gospel.¹⁸ However, although he set Romans within a particular social context, Baur's understanding of history as the vehicle for the self-disclosure of God's Spirit led him to define sin in terms of contemporary Hegelian philosophy, rather than seeking to understand it in the light of the historical context he reconstructed.

Baur was succeeded by Pfleiderer in undertaking the task of setting the writings of primitive Christianity in their historical connections. Unlike Baur, Pfleiderer argued that Paul wrote to effect a reconciliation between the oppressed and aggrieved Jewish minority in the church and the victorious Gentile Christian majority. Pfleiderer noted that Jewish belief in the law formed an 'insuperable barrier' separating Pharisaic Judaism from Gentiles, whether Christian or not. Yet, instead of examining Paul's theology of sin within that social context, Pfleiderer concentrated on identifying Jewish and Hellenistic elements in his thought. According to Pfleiderer, Paul's theology of sin was influenced by popular Hellenistic animism: sin was a demonic spiritual being, enthroned in the flesh of the human body.¹⁹

The first genuine attempt to understand Paul's sin language in its original social context was undertaken by Wernle, who emphasised that Paul related righteousness to the community, rather than to the individual. Wernle broke new ground by considering the different Pauline communities in turn: whereas in Thessalonica the problem of sin simply did not arise, Paul encountered the reality of sin in the incestuous man in Corinth. Paul saw this as an incident of sin crossing the boundary from the world into the church, but the overriding strength of his eschatological expectation enabled him to discount this as an exceptional event. Wernle argued that Paul's decision to excommunicate the offender reveals the communal dimensions of his thought, since all his instructions had the primary aim of cleansing the community and of producing a clearer separation from the world.²⁰

In writing Galatians, the apostle's optimism returned, so that he saw entry into the Christian community as effecting a break with previous sins,

¹⁸F.C. Baur, 'Über Zweck und Veranlassung des Römerbriefs und die damit zusammenhängenden Verhältnisse der römischen Gemeinde', *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie* (1836), vol.3, pp.59–178.

¹⁹O. Pfleiderer, *Primitive Christianity: its Writings and Teachings in their Historical Connections*, 2 vols. (Clifton: Reference Book, 1965), vol.1, pp.69, 218, 289f.

²⁰P. Wernle, *Der Christ und die Sünde bei Paulus* (Leipzig, 1897), p.50.

Cambridge University Press

0521810418 - Paul and the Power of Sin: Redefining 'Beyond the Pale'

T. L. Carter

Excerpt

[More information](#)8 *Paul and the Power of Sin*

and although he addressed the problem of the sinful individual in 6:1, he could not conceive that sin had any permanent place in the community. Indeed, the question of how Christians could find peace with God when they sinned did not even occur to him.²¹

Wernle's social analysis was not applied to Paul's letter to the Romans, since he rightly did not number this among the Pauline communities. Instead of investigating Paul's intention in writing Romans, he contrasts the apostle's theory of the relation of the Christian to sin with that of the Reformation:

Den Reformatoren liegt alles daran, daß der Christ trotz der Sünde ein fröhliches Gotteskind sein kann; dem Paulus, daß er aus der Sünde herausgerissen sei und sein Zukunftsleben antrete.

For the Reformers, everything hinges on the way in which a Christian can be a joyful child of God in spite of sin; for Paul, what is important is that he has been delivered from sin and is entering the life to come.²²

The break with sin occurs conclusively on entry into the messianic community, after which it is no longer possible to sin: whoever sins is not a Christian. The possibility of a Christian sinning is faintly raised in Romans, only to receive the answer *μη γένοιτο*.²³ Thus Wernle exonerates Paul from the charge of making Christianity a 'religion of sin', and identifies Augustine as the culprit.

Wernle's insight into the communal dimensions of Paul's thought was temporarily obscured by the rise of the existentialist theology of Rudolf Bultmann. Citing Augustine's dictum that 'our heart is restless until it rests in thee', Bultmann argued that the universal existential question about the authenticity of our own existence furnishes the reader with the pre-understanding necessary to engage with the subject matter of pre-scientific biblical texts.²⁴ The real purpose of Paul's mythical sin language was to express people's understanding of themselves and the world in which they lived. For Bultmann, the ultimate sin is individual

²¹Ibid., p.90.

²²Ibid., p.109.

²³Meyer challenged Wernle on this point from a Lutheran perspective, arguing that Paul was aware of sin both in the church and in his own life: M. Meyer, *Die Sünde des Christen nach Pauli Briefen an die Korinther und Römer* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1902); *Der Apostel Paulus als armer Sünder: ein Beitrag zur paulinischen Hamartologie* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1903); cf. also H. Windisch, *Taufe und Sünde im ältesten Christentum* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1908).

²⁴R. Bultmann, 'The New Testament and Mythology', in H.-W. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma and Myth*, 2 vols. (London: SCM, 1972), vol.I, p.154; cf. Augustine, *Confessiones* 1.1.

Cambridge University Press

0521810418 - Paul and the Power of Sin: Redefining 'Beyond the Pale'

T. L. Carter

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

9

self-reliance, an attitude which he saw exemplified in the supposed Jewish attempt to earn righteousness through works of the law. Bultmann argued that the very attempt to attain life by one's own efforts results in death, and this reveals the deceitfulness of sin: 'Man, called to selfhood, tries to live out of his own strength, and thus loses his self – his "life" – and rushes into death. This is the domination of sin. All man's doing is directed against his true intention – viz, to achieve life.'²⁵

Bultmann's attempt to interpret Paul's thought in terms of individual self-understanding was attacked by Stendahl, who claimed that the 'introspective conscience of the west' could be traced no further back than Augustine, who was the first to interpret Paul in the light of his own personal struggles.²⁶ Since Paul himself had a 'robust conscience' and was untroubled by any pangs of guilt, Stendahl claimed that the apostle was not concerned with a personal quest for a gracious God, but rather with the social question of the status of Gentile believers within an originally Jewish church. Stendahl misrepresents Bultmann somewhat, in that the latter is not preoccupied with a guilty conscience, but rather with the existential question of care over one's own existence, but Stendahl's thesis that this kind of personal preoccupation cannot be traced back before Augustine still undermines Bultmann's individualistic understanding of Paul.

Bultmann was also accused by Käsemann of reducing theology to anthropology. According to Käsemann, Paul's thought should be understood from the apocalyptic perspective of the divine claim upon the cosmos, and it is not permissible to isolate the individual from the world which is marked by sin and death. Since people's behaviour is determined by the world to which they belong, sin has the character of an inescapable universal force to which everyone is subject both passively and actively. The fact that people are caught in a nexus of destiny and guilt does not absolve them of responsibility, since all confirm in their bodily conduct that they belong to a sinful world. This is particularly the case with the religious person, personified by the Jew, whose desire for life leads to the attempt to attain life by obeying the commandments. This, however, is to snatch what can only be given, and thus typifies the self-willed and rebellious nature of a world which is subject to the power of sin. Käsemann also rejected Stendahl's claim that Paul was concerned with the question of Jewish–Gentile relations, insisting that Jewish nomism represents

²⁵R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols. (London: SCM, 1952), vol. I, p.246.

²⁶K. Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1976).

Cambridge University Press

0521810418 - Paul and the Power of Sin: Redefining 'Beyond the Pale'

T. L. Carter

Excerpt

[More information](#)10 *Paul and the Power of Sin*

the community of 'good' people who turn God's commandments into instruments of self-sanctification.²⁷

This perspective on Judaism was exposed as a parody by Sanders' thorough analysis of Jewish writings from the Second Temple period and beyond, which showed that participation in the covenant and the salvation of the individual were matters of God's grace, not something to be attained by legalistic effort. Asking why Paul rejected Jewish covenantal nomism as a means of salvation, Sanders claimed that Paul thought backwards from solution to plight: since God had provided for the salvation of everyone in Christ, it followed that everyone, Jews and Gentiles alike, were in a plight from which only Christ could save them: 'The real plight of man, as Paul learned it not from experience, nor from observation, nor from an analysis of the result of human effort, but from the conviction that Christ came to be lord of all, was that men were under a different lordship.'²⁸

According to Sanders, Paul simply placed all those not under the lordship of Christ under the lordship of sin. Paul's hamartiology is thus based entirely on his soteriology and this is why the apostle's attempts to demonstrate universal sinfulness in Romans fail to convince: 'The conclusion "all are under sin" is not accounted for by his arguments in favor of it, but by the prior conviction that all must have been under sin, since God sent his son to save all equally.'²⁹

It was the conviction that God had saved both Jews and Gentiles through Christ that prompted Paul to reject Jewish covenantal nomism, but this belief inevitably led to the pressing question as to why God gave his people a law by which they could not be saved. Sanders here traces a development in Paul's thought.³⁰ In Galatians 3:22–24, Romans 5:20, the view is put forward that God gave the law with the express intention of increasing the trespass, so that grace might ultimately reign. God thus intended to condemn by the law, with a view to saving everyone through Christ. That, however, leads to the conclusion that the law is evil, which Paul is anxious to deny in Romans 7. Accordingly, in verses 7–13, he argues that God gave the law with a view to granting life by it, but, contrary to his will, the power of sin twisted the law to its own ends, arousing covetousness in its adherents and so condemning them to death. Paul then

²⁷E. Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul* (London: SCM, 1971), pp.1–31, 60–78; *Commentary on Romans* (London: SCM, 1980).

²⁸E.P Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (London: SCM, 1977), p.500; cf. J. Denney, 'The Doctrine of Sin', *Expositor* 6.15 (1901), pp.283–95.

²⁹E.P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* (London: SCM, 1983), p.151.

³⁰*Ibid.*, pp.70–81.