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Casey, *From Jewish Prophet*, IBS 16, April 1994.

***FROM JEWISH PROPHET TO GENTILE GOD. A REPLY
TO PROFESSOR O'NEILL.***

Maurice Casey.

In a recent book, the published version of the Cadbury lectures which I delivered under the title *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*, I proposed a new explanation of the origins and development of New Testament Christology.¹ In an article in this journal, Professor J.C.O'Neill offered a critical assessment of this work, based on a debate which we began at the British New Testament conference in 1992.² The purpose of this article is to respond to his criticisms. To put this response in context, I begin with some comments on my hypothesis, and on the analytical techniques used to form it.

We all agree that Christianity emerged from ancient Judaism. Where do we go for our understanding of Judaism? We agree to go to primary sources from the ancient period. Most of us agree that, in addition to the New Testament, Jewish primary sources are the most important for understanding Jesus and the earliest period of the church. In this book I make a further suggestion: that profound insight into Judaism, and measuring techniques, can be drawn from Jewish scholarship, that is, from Jewish scholars discussing Judaism as it is to-day.³ The main concept is that of identity, which effectively controls our perceptions of everyone and everything. Identity is the central term currently used both by Jewish people to describe themselves, and by scholars investigating Jews.

¹ P.M.Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God. The Origins and Development of New Testament Christology* (The Cadbury Lectures at the University of Birmingham, 1985-86. Cambridge/Louisville: James Clarke/Westminster/John Knox, 1991). For an account structured on more traditional lines, ending with a defence of this type of theory over against others, P.M.Casey, 'The Development of New Testament Christology', ANRW II.26.5 (forthcoming).

² J.C.O'Neill, 'An Introduction to a Discussion with Dr.Maurice Casey about his Recent Book', IBS 14, 1992, 192-8.

³ Casey, op.cit., esp ch 2, with bibliography at pp.20-21, n.1.

Some of their works analyse Jews who adhere to, or change to, specific forms of Jewish identity, such as Orthodox or Reform Judaism. Others investigate what happens to Jews and Gentiles who are moving in and out of the Jewish sphere. Identity scales are widely used for measuring identity. In this book, I have used an eight point scale: ethnicity, scripture, monotheism, circumcision, sabbath observance, dietary laws, purity laws and major festivals.

The Jesus movement had all eight of these identity factors, for it was located inside Judaism. It ran into severe opposition from scribes and Pharisees, who had an orthodox form of Jewish identity. I use the term 'orthodox' to describe forms of Judaism analogous to forms of orthodox Judaism to-day.⁴ Orthodox Judaism was, and is, concentrated on careful observance of the Torah, with the traditions of the elders and continued expansion of the halakhah, both essential for the application of the Torah to all the details of life. So some orthodox Jews washed their hands before meals, and some prohibited taking Peah on the Sabbath (cf Mk 2.23-28; 7.1-5).⁵ Jesus and his disciples did not wash their hands before meals, and he vigorously defended disciples who did take Peah on the Sabbath. Jesus embodied Judaism from a prophetic perspective.

I turn to Professor O'Neill's first objection.⁶ Informed particularly by the work of De Jonge, I argued that "the messiah" was not a title in Second Temple Judaism, and the term "messiah" or "anointed" on its own was not specific enough to refer to the messianic son of David, nor indeed to any single individual at all.⁷

⁴ For a definition, Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*, 17-18.

⁵ For detailed discussion of Mark 2.23-28, P.M. Casey, 'Culture and Historicity: the Plucking of the Grain (Mark 2.23-28)', *NTS* 34, 1988, 1-23.

⁶ I order these objections as convenient for this response. For what I term his first objection, see O'Neill's 'first question', op.cit., 196-7; for the second objection, see his comments on p.194; for the third objection, see his 'second question', pp.197-8.

⁷ Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*, 42, citing M. de Jonge, 'The Use of the Word "Anointed" in the Time of Jesus',

Casey, *From Jewish Prophet*, IBS 16, April 1994.

Professor O'Neill believes otherwise. He cites four passages, objecting to widespread conjectural emendations in two of them.⁸ The first is CD II,12. This is a difficult passage, and it is not surprising that scholars generally emend כַּשְׂרִיר to כַּשְׂרִיר, changing the ך of the mediaeval text to a ך, for in our period, 'it is well known how easily *yod* and *waw* are confused'.⁹ The general context of CD II,12 concerns people, divided into the righteous and the wicked over a massive period of salvation history. If we were to keep the mediaeval text, we might translate the immediate context as follows:

'And in all of them he [sc God] raised him up people called by name, so that a remnant might be left to the land and to fill the face of the world with their seed. And by the hand of his anointed one he made known to them his holy spirit and seers of truth, and by exegesis they established their names [??]. And those whom he hated he led astray' (CD II,11-13).

If we do interpret the text like this, it is extremely difficult to see who is referred to as 'the anointed one'. The teacher of righteousness might make sense, but he is not generally so referred to, and a sudden reference to him hardly fits the general context. Nor is the terminology sufficient to recall a single figure such as Moses or David. It is certainly not a sudden reference to the future Davidic king, and it follows that it cannot be taken as evidence for the expectation of 'the Messiah'. The conventional emendation is much better and makes excellent sense, referring to a long line of anointed figures by whom God revealed himself and his will. Moreover, 4QD^a makes it clear that the text of II,13 is corrupt. Professor O'Neill has not taken proper account of the large number of variant and implausible readings in the extant texts of CD.¹⁰ What would he do

NT 8 1966, 132-48; M. de Jonge, 'The Earliest Christian Use of *Christos*. Some suggestions', *NTS* 32, 1986, 3231-43.

⁸ O'Neill, op. cit., 196.

⁹ S.A.White, 'A Comparison of the "A" and "B" Manuscripts of the Damascus Document', *RQ* 12, 1987, 537-53, at 550.

¹⁰ See the textual apparatus of M.Broschi, *The Damascus Document Reconsidered* (1992).

with CD IX,2, where the mediaeval text has **מביא**, and 4QD^e has **מביא**? Would he really keep the readings **בי** at II,6, **רזעי** at III,1, and **דיק** at IV,2, so that the ‘bosom’ instead of the ‘boundary’ (**דוק**, Mic 7.11) is far removed? We should not treat mediaeval manuscripts as if they were holy writ, with plenary inspiration down to the last jot and tittle.

Similar comments must apply to CD VI,1, where the mediaeval text again has the singular **משיח**, and 6Q15 has a hole at the vital point. If we do follow the mediaeval text, we have a reference to ‘the commandments of God given by the hand of Moses and also through his holy anointed one’. In this context, a single anointed figure would have to be Aaron, and cannot possibly be the future Davidic king. The conventional ‘emendation’ is however more plausible. Moreover, the future expectation of CD is of an anointed priest, ‘the anointed one from Aaron and from Israel’ (CD XII,23-XIII,1; XIV,19; XIX,10; XX,1). This is part of the varied expectation which I outlined in ch 6 of *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*, and it does not fit properly with Professor O’Neill’s simple and single figure, whom he calls ‘the Messiah’.

Professor O’Neill refers to two passages from the Similitudes of Enoch. The text of this work cannot be emended because it has not survived. We have only the Ge‘ez translation, the text of which is the most corrupt document I have worked on. Some people got very excited at the discovery of perhaps our earliest ms, Tana 9, which is as stunningly early as the fifteenth century. Like all Ge‘ez mss, it has the ‘weeks’ of 1 En 91-93 in the wrong order. Only the fragments of the original Aramaic from Cave 4 at Qumran confirm the obvious scholarly conjecture that the authors began with the first ‘week’ and moved through the weeks in chronological order, ending with the tenth and last week.¹¹ The corrupt text of the Similitudes is evidently not a unified piece. Fortunately, there is no doubt about the reading *masihu* at 1 En 48.10, nor *masihu* at 52.4, and both should go back to an original **משיח**. The context of 48.10 is clear as well. Here the kings of the earth are downcast, following

¹¹ Cf J.T.Milik, *The Books of Enoch. Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* (1976) 47-9, 245-69.

the revelation of the name of that son of man (*walda sab'e zeku*, 48.2). Their fault is given at 48.10: they have denied the Lord of Spirits and his Anointed. There should be no doubt as to who the anointed is: in this context he must be 'that son of man', to be identified at the end of this work as Enoch himself. Similar considerations apply to 52.4, if the text is in order. The main figure is the Elect One, clearly referred to at 51.3,5; 52.9, and therefore surely the anointed one. There is no sign of a Davidic king. Once again, therefore, we may not take these passages as evidence of a unified concept of 'the Messiah'. Rather, the position of Enoch as the eschatological judge reflects the great variety of expectation in the Judaism of this period. The two passages referred to by Professor O'Neill show how flexibly the term 'anointed' could be used, and the rest of the Similitudes, with other eschatological parts of 1 Enoch, show that it might not be regarded as a necessary term.

Further, Professor O'Neill thinks we should not play down 'their King, Christ the Lord' at Ps.Sol.17.32. This translation of a translation is extraordinarily Christian. The text cannot be emended because it has not survived. The Greek translation has καὶ βασιλεὺς αὐτῶν χριστὸς κύριος. It is usual to emend κύριος to κυρίου because Jewish texts normally refer to 'the Lord's anointed', this text was transmitted by Christians for centuries before our earliest ms, which cannot be dated before the tenth century, and other errors of this kind are known to have arisen. The other main version, the syriac, has **ܘܡܠܟܘܬܗܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ**. We must surely infer an original text **ܘܡܠܟܝܗܘܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ**, 'and their king the anointed of the Lord'. Here the term 'anointed' is indeed used of the future Davidic king, but not until he has been discussed for several verses. There is no danger that we might imagine that the Lord's anointed was Aaron or Enoch, let alone Cyrus (Is 45.1). There should be no doubt that **ܡܫܝܚܐ** was occasionally used with reference to the future Davidic king. Equally, however, it was not a fixed title, nor was it specific enough to refer to the future Davidic king, or indeed to any particular person, unless other words were used in the context to make the reference clear. That is satisfied by the mockery of Mark 15.32, which uses the term 'king', but not by Peter's confession or the high priest's

question (Mk 8.29; 14.61), both of which have been framed in terms characteristic of the early church.

We are now in a position to see what is wrong with the first set of questions put by Professor O'Neill.¹² He has read Jewish texts with Christian spectacles, and framed questions from a later Christian perspective. 'If', he asks, 'there was widespread expectation of a redeemer figure... and if Jesus' mockers thought he was a false Messiah, why did not the possibility occur to Jesus and his disciples that he was in fact the true Messiah, the king of Israel?' Because Jewish expectation had not crystallised to this extent, and the dichotomy 'false Messiah' versus 'the true Messiah, the king of Israel' was not culturally available until later. Rather, Jesus' most dedicated opponents used the false charge of claiming to be king because they could persuade Pilate to crucify him on that charge. His disciples did not think he was a king because that was not what he claimed to be, and he was not like one, neither like David nor like Athronges (Jos. B.J.II,60-65; A.J.XVII,278-84). They addressed him as 'rabbi', because he taught them how to be good Jews, and they remained loyal to him because he recreated Judaism from a prophetic perspective. 'Why were Jesus and his disciples so isolated from being deeply affected by the key question that was agitating Jews at the time: When would the Messiah appear, and how would he be recognized when he came?' This question does not occur in Jewish sources of this period, and approximations to it only occurred after expectation had crystallised into a more fixed form, after disasters in which he had not appeared, after a disaster in which Simeon son of Kosiba had been hailed as Messiah by Rabbi Aqiba, and after it was very important that he had not been Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus and his disciples were fully immersed in Judaism of the Second Temple period. There, expectation was very varied. Jesus and his disciples did believe that he was the final messenger sent by God bring Israel back to God before the final establishment of his kingdom: they did believe that he fulfilled the expectation of John the Baptist: they did believe that he fulfilled the scriptures: and they accepted the atoning function of his death. After his death, they believed he had been

¹²

Op.cit., 196-7.

Casey, *From Jewish Prophet*, *IBS* 16, April 1994.

vindicated by God who had raised him up, and as they sought to understand their lives and his role, they applied to him a variety of Jewish terms and beliefs, including 'anointed'. An early form is found at Acts 2.36, where his status appears to be dated from his resurrection. Another early speech of Acts has the verb 'to anoint', and quotes the noun from the scriptures (Acts 4.25-6, quoting Ps 2.1-2).

Professor O'Neill's view involves another serious problem, that Jesus did not claim to be the Messiah, indeed he may reasonably be thought, on the basis of the synoptic evidence, not to have mentioned him. Professor O'Neill comments, 'His silence about that matter can perhaps be explained by the law that the Messiah was forbidden to say who he was until the Father made it known.' There was no such law, not even after the fall of Jerusalem, when the term 'Messiah' did crystallize into a title.

On all these grounds, therefore, I do not accept Professor O'Neill's first objection. For his second objection, we must move from the ministry of Jesus to later in the New Testament period. I have proposed a three-stage model of Christological development. In the first stage, the Christian community was Jewish, as the Jesus movement had been. The driving force of Christological development was still the recreation of Jewish identity from a prophetic perspective, with the added need to understand Jesus' death without the coming of the kingdom. In the second stage, Gentiles entered the Christian community in significant numbers, without becoming Jewish. This greatly increased the need for Christological development. The Pauline and deutero-Pauline epistles belong to stage 2, as do 1 Peter, Hebrews and Revelation. In ch 6, I propose a dynamic model for the development of Jewish figures such as Enoch and Wisdom. This permitted the addition of beliefs and functions to these figures, in accordance with the needs of the community. New items were not necessarily borrowed. Nor were these figures genuinely divinized, not even when beliefs and functions were borrowed from earlier material about God. For example, at Wsd 10-11, the author attributes to Wisdom the major events of salvation history, so that she plays the role given in the OT account to God. She is not however hailed as a goddess, because this would have

violated the boundary marker of Jewish monotheism.¹³ I proposed that the development of New Testament Christology followed the same dynamic model. This is accordingly a generative, rather than a borrowing theory. It allows such items as Paul's interpretation of baptism as dying and, as it were, rising with Christ to be seen in terms of its social functions, including that of legitimating Christian morals. This function could not be produced within Judaism, where morals were already found in the Law. It is sufficient reason for this interpretation of baptism to have been produced: we should not suppose that it was borrowed.

Within this general scheme, I produced a new explanation of how Christians came to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead. This builds on existing radical scholarship of the most standard kind. For conventional reasons, I argued that the earliest form of this belief was in Jesus' exaltation to heaven, not in bodily resurrection. I accepted the view that his tomb was not at this stage believed to have been empty, and that this is why it is not mentioned in our earliest sources for belief in his resurrection, 1 Cor 15.3ff and the early speeches of Acts. I sought to make two new contributions to this debate, and thereby to produce a viable theory. Conventional radical scholarship has always lacked a driving force, a powerful reason why the earliest Christians should have believed that Jesus had risen from the dead. My first contribution was to provide one, the embodiment of Jewish identity in the historic ministry of Jesus. I argued that Jesus' recreation of Jewish identity was such a powerful force that, when he was crucified, his disciples could not believe that God had abandoned him, but had to believe rather that God had vindicated him. Conventional radical scholarship has also lacked a mechanism, a means by which the earliest Christians could have believed that Jesus rose from the dead. My main contribution to this was the development of messianic and intermediary figures studied in ch 6. This shows that the Jewish community did add items of belief to many different figures when this satisfied their needs. I argued further that heavenly vindication was one example of this, and

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From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God, 90, cf 92-94, 114-7.

Casey, *From Jewish Prophet*, *IBS* 16, April 1994.

suggested that this was the cultural nexus of development of the belief that God had indeed vindicated Jesus.

With these two main points added, I clarified the process of development, from belief during the ministry that Jesus would rise from the dead, through the belief that he had risen, to narratives which made clearer and clearer that this was a bodily resurrection which left his tomb empty. In particular, I noted that visions and study of scripture were two major means of verification in the Judaism of the period, and that these were the means by which the earliest Christians came to be sure that he had indeed risen. I also sought to clarify the development of legitimating narratives, which gradually excluded any possibility other than the later belief that Jesus had risen bodily.

Professor O'Neill challenges this.¹⁴ Noting some examples of individuals believed to have survived death, he asks, 'Is there any comparable Jewish statement that God has raised or will raise someone from the dead that does not imply the resurrection of the body?' This question has been phrased with Christian statements too much in mind, and does not lead to examination of Jewish sources in their own right. Early Jewish sources have little to say about the interpretation of sentences like 'God has raised someone from the dead' because extant texts were not written by people whose beliefs could be helpfully expressed like that. Jewish sources do have a great deal to say about survival after death, because this was a significant concern, especially after the martyrdom of people who were killed because they insisted on keeping the covenant.

A significant proportion of extant texts do not treat this matter in terms of the resurrection of the body. For example, Josephus describes the beliefs of the Pharisees as follows: 'They hold a belief that souls have power to survive death, and under the earth there are rewards and punishments for those who have led lives of virtue or wickedness. Some receive eternal punishment, while others pass easily to live again' (A.J. XVIII, 14). This presents belief in the continued existence of the soul, rather than the resurrection of the body. In this, it typifies several passages of Josephus, in which

¹⁴ O'Neill, *op.cit.*, 194.

similar beliefs are attributed to Essenes and others (cf B.J. II,153-8; III,372-8) . None of these passages implies that people who survive death will leave an empty tomb behind. Moreover, we know from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus that Jesus shared such a view. Both the rich man and Lazarus go to their eternal fates at once, and 'it is clear that they have not left their tombs empty. Nor presumably did father Abraham, who was already in the next world with powers to send a messenger from the dead if he wished, a process described as "going from the dead" at Luke 16.30 and "rising from the dead" at 16.31.¹⁵

This evidence is fundamental in enabling us to understand how the earliest followers of Jesus could believe that God had raised Jesus from the dead, without believing in an empty tomb. To find it, we must ask questions which enable us to understand Jewish beliefs in their own right, not phrase questions in terms of later Christian beliefs, which ensure that our understanding of purely Jewish sources is distorted. The next important factor is the omission of the empty tomb from our earliest sources, 1 Cor 15.3ff and the early speeches of Acts. This is a devastating hole in the standard Christian myth of Christian origins. There were thousands of Jews in Jerusalem when Jesus was executed. Most of them did not believe that God raised him from the dead. His followers, who did, did not point out his empty tomb. Indeed, there is no authentic tradition as to where it was. In that sense, the evidence of the narrative of Acts is more important than the formula in 1 Cor 15.3ff, for Luke had plenty of narrative space to tell us about the empty tomb, if he had had the necessary information. Moreover, if Jesus had been raised from a decent rock-hewn tomb in which no-one had been laid, it is culturally extremely probable that his followers would have venerated the site. Of that there is no early trace either.

Professor O'Neill comments on 1 Cor 15.3ff. He suggests that ἐτάφη, 'he was buried', at 1 Cor 15.4 entails the resurrection of the body, and enquires as to why else it should be used in addition to ἀπέθανεν, 'died'. This misses the main point, that the earliest sources do not mention the empty tomb. Why a given word is used

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Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*, 67.

Casey, *From Jewish Prophet*, *IBS* 16, April 1994.

has to be a matter of conjecture, but it is not difficult to make one here. It was possible to survive crucifixion, especially if one were crucified for only six hours (cf Mk 15.25,34-7). That Jesus was buried functions as further evidence that he was really dead. His burial may have been put in formulae when Jesus was known to have been buried in a common tomb for criminals (cf Acts 13.29), an unsuitable site for pointing to, let alone venerating: be that as it may, that Jesus was buried says nothing about *how* he was believed to have been raised, and the empty tomb remains conspicuously absent from the old formula of 1 Cor 15.3ff. This short formula also contains what was accepted by Jesus' followers as real early evidence that he was risen, 'according to the scriptures' and the appearances. Once again, Professor O'Neill has read early sources with later Christian spectacles. We should not accept his second objection.

For the third objection, we move to the third of the three stages in my proposed model of Christological development. In stage 2, when there were still many Jews in the Christian communities, Jewish monotheism was a restraining factor which limited Christological development. In the Johannine community, this restraining factor was removed. The community who produced John's Gospel had Gentile self-identification: that is to say, whoever they were, they felt they were not members of an alien group whom they called 'the Jews'. So Thomas could declare 'My Lord and My God' (Jn 20.28), while 'the Jews' sought to stone Jesus for blasphemy, on the ground that he made himself God (Jn 10.31-33, with the preceding discourse, concluding 'I and the Father are one'). People with Gentile self-identification therefore removed what Jewish people felt as a boundary marker of their Jewish identity. Ever since, Gentile Christians have perceived their view of Jesus as within the bounds of monotheism, but the Jewish community has perceived the deity of Jesus as a violation of Jewish monotheism. Hence my title, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*. Professor O'Neill is quite right to stress that I do not think that Gentile Christians believed that they were giving up monotheism, nor do I suggest that Christians are pagans now. This means, however, that the question as to whether Christians were 'still bound by its [i.e. Judaism's] key confession

that the Lord our God is one Lord'¹⁶ is a matter of perception rather than reality. Christians generally believe that they were, and are, so bound: many Jews believe that Christians are not so bound, and this belief is already reflected in the polemic of the Fourth Gospel. It is only at the end of the New Testament period, therefore, that the presentation of Jesus as the λόγος, made flesh as Jesus Christ, the Son of God, together with the remarkable delineation of the Paraclete, produced a Godhead with the three figures who foreshadow the later Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

Professor O'Neill's third objection begins in the form of a question. 'Why is Dr. Casey so sure that there were not Jews before Jesus who had already come to believe that the Messiah, when he was born, would be the incarnate Son of God who had existed with the spirit, three-in-one from the beginning?'¹⁷ For two reasons. Such belief is not found in Jewish sources, and Jewish sources both before and after the origins of Christianity put forward the Jewish form of monotheism as a boundary marker between the Jewish and Gentile worlds. The so-called two powers heresy should not be used to understand development within Judaism because it was a development which caused removal from Judaism, or marked out separation from it. It does provide a dynamic parallel to the Christology of the Johannine community, which also separated from Judaism. It is also post-Christian, and involves figures such as Metatron or Jesus.

Professor O'Neill suggests that Philo quotes two-power passages, and that it is clear from them that 'the two-power heresy was a trinitarian belief'. This would make the two-power heresy early enough, trinitarian, and not genuinely heretical at this date. We should not however accept Professor O'Neill's exegesis of the passages which he cites, for reasons which I illustrate from the first two passages extant in Greek. *On Abraham* 121 has ὁ ὢν as the scriptural name of the Father of all, as well as αἱ πρεσβύταται καὶ ἐγγυιάτω τοῦ ὄντος δυνάμεις, the eldest powers which are nearest to He Who Is, ἡ μὲν ποιητικὴ, ἡ δ' αὖ βασιλική: the creative power

¹⁶ O'Neill, *op.cit.*, 197.

¹⁷ O'Neill, *op.cit.*, 197.

Casey, *From Jewish Prophet, IBS* 16, April 1994.

is called θεός and the kingly power is called κύριος. So the Father has two powers, but this does not make a trinity of three persons, for two reasons. In the first place, these two powers are aspects of God's actions. So at 122, God may appear to the διανοία as one or three: as one when the perception is purified and passes to the basic form which is free from any mixture, but three when a person is not fully initiated and cannot perceive το ὄν without anything else, but only through its actions, creative or ruling. The perception of God as one is the really true perception: the perception of him by means of his creative and kingly powers is a second best way for people who cannot perceive God otherwise. These δυνάμεις permit people to perceive God, transcendent and unknowable from Greek philosophical tradition, vigorously portrayed in Jewish scriptures which tell of an active and knowable God. The discussion at *On the Cherubim* 27-29 is somewhat different. Here we find δύο τὰς ἀνωτάτω εἶναι καὶ πρώτας δυνάμεις, God's highest and chief powers are two, and this time they are ἀγαθότης and ἐξουσία, goodness and authority. They are however similar metaphors, for the διάνοια, contemplating the two cherubim, may consider God's goodness as the power by which he produced everything, and his authority the means by which he rules what he has produced. However, Philo now produces the λόγος as well, so we have more than God and two powers to reckon with.

This takes us to the second reason why we may not suppose that Philo's account is genuinely trinitarian, and it is well illustrated by *On Flight and Finding* 94ff (cf Qu.Ex II,68). Here the θεῖος λόγος the divine Word, described as 'fountain of Wisdom' (97) and 'Image of God' (101), has five δυνάμεις: the first is the ποιητική, called θεός, the second the βασιλική the same two powers as at *On Abraham* 121, the creative and the kingly. The third is ἡ ἕλεως, the gracious power: the fourth is τῆς προστατεύουσας ἃ δεῖ the one which commands what is necessary, and the fifth is τῆς ἀπαγορεύουσας, ἃ μὴ δεῖ the one which forbids what must not be done, probably described as νομοθετικῆς (95). With this number of powers, it should be clear that Philo is not portraying a Trinity. His sextet is concerned with divine activity rather than essence, and particularly with how God can be perceived by people. God himself

is high above all six, as it were seated in the Chariot and speaking the Word (λόγος), who is the charioteer of the powers (101). Some people are capable of perceiving the Word directly (97), whereas others may perceive God through the powers. We must therefore accept the view of Sandmel: 'a *dynamis* is a clue to what God has done or does, and is not a clue to God's essence... The *dynamis* are attainable to less gifted men in that they enter into the perceptible world, as the Logos does not.'¹⁸

It follows that there is no Trinity in Philo. There is a further problem, that none of these powers is incarnate. For incarnation, Professor O'Neill turns to the Word at *On agriculture* 51. This has the λόγος as firstborn son taking on the government of the universe. Ex 23.20 is quoted, but the λόγος does not change its being or appearance in any sense at all, nor is there any necessary connection between governing the universe and taking on flesh. Philo's λόγος effectively functions as the aspect of God by which people know him. It never becomes incarnate.¹⁹ For incarnation, Professor O'Neill turns finally to 11Q Melchizedek. Here Melchizedek is the central figure, and the quotation of 'return on high' from Ps 7 probably does mean that he previously descended, an inference which corresponds to the rest of our knowledge of Melchizedek. There is however no indication that he was born, or became incarnate in any reasonable sense of that term.²⁰ The herald is the מַבְרֵשׁ of Is 52.7 who announces יְהוָה יְבָרֵךְ, 'your Elohim reigns': it is therefore very probable that the herald is not Melchizedek, but a subordinate figure. 'Messiah of the Spirit' is not a title, not even in the conjectural restoration which Professor O'Neill is probably right to believe in, and which recalls Is 61.1. We must surely refrain from seeing the Christian idea of incarnation here too.

¹⁸ S.Sandmel, 'Philo Judaeus: An Introduction to the Man, his Writings and his Significance', ANRW II.21.1 (1984), 3-46, at 24. Further, L.A.Montes-Peral, *Akataleptos Theos: der unfassbare Gott* (ALGHL 16. 1987), esp 164-81.

¹⁹ For a brief summary, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*, 84-5.

²⁰ Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God* 114-7, 166-8.

Casey, *From Jewish Prophet*, *IBS* 16, April 1994.

We can now see what is wrong with Professor O'Neill's second set of questions, his third objection. 'Why is Dr. Casey so sure that there were not Jews before Jesus who had already come to believe that the Messiah, when he was born, would be the incarnate Son of God who had existed with the Spirit, three-in-one from the beginning?' Because I have read Jewish documents in their own right, and noticed that they do not contain Christian beliefs on this doctrinal scale. 'If, as Dr. Casey himself argues, so much of the development of christology, right up to the last Johannine touch, was done according to patterns already well established in Judaism, why should we not suspect that the developments had already taken place before Jesus was born?'²¹ We may suspect this, but careful study of Jewish documents shows that all these developments had not taken place. Secondly, some developments are quite unJewish. These include the dependence of morals on Christian baptism in Romans 6, and, most fundamental of all, the deity of Jesus in the fourth Gospel. The way in which development took place is fundamental for understanding how the development could happen. The non-Jewish, and finally anti-Jewish contents of this development indicate that we should not confuse mode with content. Thirdly, Jewish patterns are not the only ones involved in the deity of Jesus. This step was not taken until the Johannine community took on Gentile self-identification, and this did not happen until a successful Gentile mission had been in progress for some 50 years. At this stage, therefore, Gentile converts familiar with the deification of Heracles and Domitian could perceive in the deity of Jesus a familiar pattern, as well as a passage from myth and propaganda to truth.²²

I am therefore unconvinced by all of Professor O'Neill's objections. Some people may think that they are of a different kind from each other, the first two traditional, the third unusual. I suggest that all three embody an error of method central to this field of study. They distort Judaism by means of Christian tradition.²³ This is not a

²¹ O'Neill, *op.cit.*, 197 and 198.

²² Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God* 37-8, 116-7, 158-9.

²³ Cf. G. Vermes, 'Jewish Studies and New Testament Interpretation', *JJS* 31 (1980), 1-17; G. Vermes, 'Jewish

Casey, *From Jewish Prophet*, IBS 16, April 1994.

recent mistake, nor is it merely academic, and we ought to stop it. The deity and incarnation of Jesus are a contradiction of Jewish identity, as Jews have told us for centuries. We should not try to read them into Jewish sources.

In quite a profound sense, therefore, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God* is the opposite of much Christian scholarship. In trying to understand the forms of Judaism in which Christianity started, I have turned to Jewish scholarship, because Jews understand Jews better than Gentiles do, and because Jewish scholarship has evolved techniques for understanding movement in and out of Judaism, which is another obvious feature of early Christianity. In the longer term, therefore, the analytical techniques which I have employed are capable of further refinement and development, with a view to explaining not only the development of early Christology, but the origins of Christianity as a whole.

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Literature and New Testament Exegesis: Reflections on Methodology', *JJS* 33 (1982), 361-76; P.S.Alexander, 'Rabbinic Judaism and the New Testament', *ZNW* 74 (1983), 237-46; S.T.Lachs, 'Rabbinic Sources for New Testament Studies - Use and Misuse', *JQR* 74 (1983), 159-73.