Albert Schweitzer and the Jews*

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Albert Schweitzer's engagement with Judaism, and with the Jewish community more generally, has never been the subject of substantive discussion.[1] On the one hand this is not surprising—Schweitzer wrote little about Judaism or the Jews during his long life, or at least very little that was devoted principally to those subjects. On the other hand, the lack of a study might be thought odd—Schweitzer's work as a New Testament scholar in particular is taken up to a significant degree with presenting a picture of Jesus, of the earliest Christian communities, and of Paul, and his scholarship emphasizes the need to see these topics against the background of a specific set of Jewish assumptions. It is also noteworthy because Schweitzer married a baptized Jew, whose father's academic career had been disadvantaged because he was a Jew. Moreover, Schweitzer lived at a catastrophic time in the history of the Jews, a time that directly affected his wife's family and others known to him. The extent to which this personal contact with Jews and with Judaism influenced Schweitzer either in his writings on Judaism or in his life will in part be the subject of this article.

This article, then, is predominantly a piece of intellectual biography that attempts to illuminate a significant, yet under-studied, aspect of one of the twentieth century's

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[1] For partial exceptions see Verena Mühlstein, *Helene Schweitzer Bresslau. Ein Leben für Lambarene* (Munich: Beck, 1998) 22–28 and 225–33; Nils Ole Oermann, *Albert Schweitzer. Eine Biographie* (Munich: Beck, 2009) 213–21; and Thomas Suermann, *Albert Schweitzer als "homo politicus". Eine biographische Studie zum politischen Denken und Handeln des Friedensnobelpreisträgers* (Berlin: BWV, 2012) 165–90. In the main, these discussions, the most thorough of which is Suermann's (his work came out after I had completed this article), are taken up with Schweitzer's reaction to the rise of Nazism and do not concern themselves with his writings, their implications for his understanding of Judaism, or the extent to which these might have affected his reaction to the Nazis' anti-Semitic policies.

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most important public intellectuals. In accomplishing its task, it will look again, and from a different perspective from the normal one, at Schweitzer's New Testament oeuvre, including his highly influential *Von Reimarus zu Wrede. Eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* and *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*.[2] The attitude that Schweitzer takes toward the Jews within these works, either explicitly or implicitly, will be placed in the wider context of contemporaneous New Testament scholarship, especially in Germany, and its understanding of ancient Judaism, a subject that in recent times has become highly contested.[3] An attempt will be made to show the distinctiveness of Schweitzer's position on this matter. Consonant with this interest, the article constitutes a case-study of Jewish-Christian relations in the early to mid-twentieth century, albeit through the prism of a singular and atypical personality.

Judaism in Schweitzer's New Testament Scholarship

Arguably, Albert Schweitzer's most important contribution to academic study comes in his works on Jesus and Paul, which were published between 1901 and 1930.[4] These should be understood as a whole for they constitute an interconnected

[2] See n. 4 below for full references to these works.

[3] Particular attention might be drawn to Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), the conclusion of which formed the inspiration for her *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), which addresses the question of New Testament scholarship and anti-Judaism more directly. An extensive response to this latter work, encompassing many of the major issues relating to the subject, was written by Robert Morgan, "Susannah Heschel's Aryan Grundmann," *JSNT* 32 (2010) 431–94. Heschel in turn responded to Morgan in "Historiography of Antisemitism versus Anti-Judaism: A Response to Robert Morgan," *JSNT* 33 (2011) 257–79. Another important and recent contribution to the subject is Anders Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann* (Studies in Jewish History and Culture 20; Leiden: Brill, 2009), which contains a detailed bibliography.

[4] These publications include *Das Abendmahlsproblem auf Grund der wissenschaftlichen Forschung des 19. Jahrhunderts und der historischen Berichte* (Heft 1 of *Das Abendmahl im Zusammenhang mit dem Leben Jesu und der Geschichte des Urchristentums*; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1920; ET *The Problem of the Lord's Supper according to the Scholarly Research of the Nineteenth Century and the Historical Accounts* [ed. John Reumann; trans. A. J. Mattill; vol. 1 of *The Lord's Supper in Relationship to the Life of Jesus and the History of the Early Church*; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1982]); *Das Messianitäts- und Leidensgeheimnis. Eine Skizze des Lebens Jesu* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1901; ET *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God: The Secret of Jesus' Passion and Messiahship* [ed. and trans. Walter Lowrie; London: A&C Black, 1925]); *Von Reimarus zu Wrede. Eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1906; 2nd ed. 1913; ET *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* [trans. W. Montgomery; London: A&C Black, 1910]; 2nd ET *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: First Complete Edition* [ed. and trans. John Bowden et al.; London: SCM, 2000]); *Geschichte der paulinischen Forschung von der Reformation bis auf die Gegenwart* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1911; ET *Paul and His Interpreters: A Critical History* [trans. W. Montgomery; London: A&C Black, 1912]); *Die psychiatrische Beurteilung Jesu. Darstellung und Kritik* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1913; ET *The Psychiatric Study of Jesus: Exposition and Criticism* [trans. Charles R. Joy; Boston: Beacon, 1948]); and *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1930; ET *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* [trans. W. Montgomery; New York: Macmillan, 1955]). The fact that Schweitzer's final work that

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account of Christian origins. In his understanding both of Jesus's ministry and the theology of Paul, Schweitzer attributes a central role to the idea of eschatology and, insofar as he invokes the use of parallel material to explain the thoughts of these two individuals, he uses Jewish material.

Jesus

Schweitzer understands Jesus as a messianic figure who believed that God's kingdom would arrive in the immediate future, bringing about God's final act of redemption. When this occurred, Jesus, who conceived of himself as the Messiah but only in secret, would be transformed into the Son of Man, conceived of as a heavenly messianic figure, and his followers would also undergo a transformation. In the midst of his ministry, Jesus sent out his followers to announce the arrival of this kingdom and to call the people to repentance in the face of the coming judgment (Matt 10:23), believing that, before they returned, the kingdom would have arrived. But it failed to come, and Jesus, experiencing a moment of crisis, vowed to bring about its arrival by engineering his own death, a decision arrived at through reflection on the Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah.[5] His final journey to Jerusalem was the beginning point of a strategy to provoke the authorities into killing him. Against this reconstructed background, the key to understanding the Last Supper lies in Jesus's words about not drinking again of the vine until he had drunk of it in paradise (Mark 14:25 and parallels), understood by Schweitzer to mean that Jesus's death would bring about the advent of the kingdom.

This account, which attributes a high degree of historicity to the Synoptic Gospels (in particular to Matthew and Mark), is based on a view that Jesus operated within a body of thought that was eschatological and Jewish, or "Jewish-eschatological," as Schweitzer puts it. Thus, Schweitzer, in order to lay out Jesus's aims, starts with a discussion of the development of Jewish eschatology from the prophets'

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was exclusively on the New Testament, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, was published in 1930 can be misleading. In fact Schweitzer had arrived at most of his thoughts on this subject by 1910, and probably before that. That this work was only published in 1930 was the result of the course that Schweitzer's life took once he became a medical missionary in Africa in 1913. On this see James Carleton Paget, "Schweitzer and Paul," *JSNT* 33 (2011) 223–56. Schweitzer did continue to write on the New Testament, in works not exclusively devoted to this subject, after 1930 but such writings generally repeat what he had argued before. See, for instance, Albert Schweitzer, *Reich Gottes und Christentum* (ed. Ulrich Luz, Ulrich Neuenschwander, and Johann Zürcher; Werke aus dem Nachlass; Munich: Beck, 1995; ET *The Kingdom of God and Primitive Christianity* [ed. Ulrich Neuenschwander; trans. L. A. Garrard; New York: Seabury, 1968]). In this work Schweitzer changes his opinion on the role of Deutero-Isaiah as a motive behind Jesus's decision to die, but much remains the same (see 154). All works that have been translated will be cited in their English versions.

[5] "Wrestling with the fact that the Kingdom of God still fails to appear there dawns on Him the perception that it can only come when He, as the Messiah-to-be, has by suffering and death made atonement for those who have been elected to the Kingdom, and thereby saved them from the necessity of going through the pre-Messianic Tribulation" (Albert Schweitzer, *Out of my Life and Thought* [trans. C. T. Campion; New York: Holt, 1949] 39). (For the original see Albert Schweitzer, *Aus meinem Leben und Denken* [Leipzig: Meiner, 1931].)

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understanding of the kingdom, beginning with Amos and running through the book of Daniel and later apocalyptic writings such as *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*.[6] In this context Schweitzer observes a movement from a this-worldly expectation brought about by changed ethical circumstances (the prophetic view), to one that posits an otherworldly, heavenly reality brought about by a heavenly messianic figure (associated with Daniel and given some expression in Enoch), to one that synthesizes the two previous views by positing a temporary messianic kingdom followed by a transcendent and eternal reality in a general resurrection of the dead (associated with *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*)—the position that Schweitzer thought prevailed at the time of Jesus.[7]

The similarities between Jesus's eschatological vision and the perspectives described above is not the subject of the present article, but a few observations are necessary. While Schweitzer is clear that Jesus operated within the basic framework of an eschatology that he had inherited,[8] he argues that Jesus substantially revised aspects of that eschatological inheritance[9] or, at least, that his eschatological views show clear differences from those known to have existed at the time in which he lived. These relate both to Jesus's understanding of the character of the Messiah (an earthly secret appearance, followed by a transcendent heavenly transformed state in the new kingdom) and to the nature of the new kingdom (a single, otherworldly kingdom preceded by a general resurrection and marked by the transformed state of the predestined, a kingdom that will not just include the last generation but all previous generations).[10] The fact that Jesus, along with John the Baptist, saw the coming kingdom as imminent also, according to Schweitzer, marked him out for messianic expectations that were little in evidence among Jesus's contemporaries.[11] Most of the distinctive elements in Jesus's thought show him, in Schweitzer's view, to be a brilliant and sovereign spirit and the promulgator in some respects of

[6] For slightly different versions of Schweitzer's reconstruction of the history of Jewish eschatology, see, inter alia, Schweitzer, *Quest* (2nd ET), 242–61 and Schweitzer, *Reich Gottes*, 36–149.

[7] See Schweitzer, *Quest* (2nd ET), 242. Schweitzer is not as schematic as some have thought, and he is clear, for instance, that the eschatology of the *Psalms of Solomon* is not reflective of the synthesis we find in *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*.

[8] "The picture of the future in the preaching of Jesus has the same basic character as that depicted by the authors of the Apocalypses of Ezra and Baruch, and in some way this will have corresponded to the views of the scribes and also of the people" (Schweitzer, *Quest* [2nd ET], 238). It was in part the view that Jesus reflected, as well as interacted creatively with, the Jewish culture of his time that was crucial to the argument of Schweitzer's medical dissertation that Jesus was not, contrary to some views, mad. See Schweitzer, *Psychiatric*.

[9] See Schweitzer, *Quest* (2nd ET), 243–61.

[10] See ibid., 253, where Schweitzer suggests the possibility that the righteous of the last generation will perish in the final tribulation.

[11] See ibid., 249.

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a new teaching,[12] solving complex problems that had emerged in the development of Jewish eschatology.[13]

What observations might we make about this reconstruction as it relates to the subject under discussion? First, the issue of Jesus's Jewishness is not as such a subject of concern for Schweitzer, at least not in any explicit way, in spite of the fact that Schweitzer argues that Jesus should be understood exclusively as an individual who thought within categories inherited from his Jewish background. Schweitzer is certainly aware of the extent to which some of his predecessors went to distance Jesus from Judaism.[14] He makes this point, for instance, when discussing the work of Julius Wellhausen on Jesus.[15] And more particularly, he develops this observation in a lengthy treatment of Wilhelm Bousset's work of 1892, entitled *Jesu Predigt in ihrem Gegensatz zum Judentum*.[16] Schweitzer states that the latter's attempts to treat the leading ideas of the preaching of Jesus (which clearly reflect the world that molded his thought) as of secondary importance are wrong. Consistent with this, Schweitzer overtly rejects the approach in studies of Jesus that assumes that his Jewishness, understood as his eschatology, was no more than the superficial husk of a distinctive core that concerned itself with Jesus's apparently universal message.[17]

[12] Schweitzer argues that what Jesus did to previous expectations was to simplify them (ibid., 257). For hyperbolic language about Jesus's achievements in interacting with previous traditions, see ibid., 259.

[13] See especially his comments in ibid., 248–53, where the character of the problems Jesus solved is discussed.

[14] See Heschel, *Abraham Geiger*, 127, where she states that "Schweitzer neglected to note the terrible problem that arose when Christians discussed the religious life of the historical figure of Jesus: he was Jewish." The point is only half true—Schweitzer is not concerned with this issue per se but because of his own interests with presenting Jesus as an eschatological prophet the matter is discussed intermittently.

[15] See Schweitzer, *Quest* (2nd ET), 211, where he mentions Julius Wellhausen's *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte* (Berlin: Reimer, 1894), and an extended footnote on 505 (n. 12), where he refers to *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien* (Berlin: Reimer, 1905).

[16] Wilhelm Bousset, *Jesu Predigt in ihrem Gegensatz zum Judentum. Ein religionsgeschichtlicher Vergleich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1892).

[17] "Is it historically permissible to treat the leading ideas of the preaching of Jesus which so clearly bear the marks of the contemporary mould of thought as of secondary importance for the investigation, and so endeavour to trace Jesus' thought from within outwards and not from without inwards?" (Schweitzer, *Quest* [2nd ET], 206). See also ibid., 481 and 483 for further objections to such an approach. Bousset's work, some of whose conclusions were to be revised in his *Die Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (Berlin: Reuther and Reichard, 1903), to which Schweitzer does not refer, was in part a response to a trend Bousset saw in contemporary theology, exemplified especially in Johannes Weiss's *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1892), of drawing too close a comparison between Judaism and Jesus and so losing sight of his uniqueness (on the relationship between Weiss and Bousset, the importance of Weiss's book for Bousset's *Gegensatz*, and their different positions on Judaism, see Gerdmar, *Theological Anti-Semitism*, 146–47). Schweitzer also notes that von Harnack is wrong to proceed in such a way but devotes little space to von Harnack's very popular work, *Das Wesen des Christentums. Sechzehn Vorlesungen vor Studierenden aller Fakultäten im Wintersemester 1899/1900 an der Universität Berlin* (ed. Claus-Dieter Osthövener; 2nd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), even though the

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But in spite of these comments, the importance of the problem of Judaism for an account of Jesus's life does not constitute a specific concern of Schweitzer: it is only a concern insofar as it touches on the issue of eschatology.[18]

Schweitzer's lack of interest in the question of Jesus's Jewishness is striking because those liberal Protestant theologians who sought to write lives of Jesus and whose work was a central concern of Schweitzer were much taken up with this issue. For if Jesus was to be interpreted nondogmatically and in his historical environment, how, then, was his uniqueness to be understood?[19] Their answer often lay in a polemical interaction with what was known, tendentiously, as "Late Judaism" (*Spätjudentum*), and often these theologians pointed to the particularism and legalism of the Judaism out of which Jesus emerged in their attempt to show how Jesus preached a gospel in opposition to these. This is the central thrust of the work of Bousset, Adolf von Harnack, and even of Schweitzer's teacher, Heinrich Holtzmann, though to differing degrees. Schweitzer is aware of the issue, and, on one occasion in his *Quest*, he notes that it is unsurprising "that it is precisely the representatives of the study of Late Judaism who lift Jesus out of the Late-Jewish world of thought. . . . It is only the expression of the fact that here something new and creative enters into an uncreative age, and of the clear consciousness that this Personality cannot be resolved into a complex of contemporary ideas."[20] While Schweitzer appears in these comments to assent to a liberal view of the uniqueness

reaction to it was much more significant than the reaction to Bousset's work.

[18] See esp. Schweitzer, *Quest* (2nd ET), 207, where Schweitzer discusses Bousset's view that Jesus opposed eschatology because of its world-denying attitude, and ibid., 206, where he discusses particularism and eschatology.

[19] See Heschel, *Abraham Geiger*, 160–61, and her chapter entitled "Fixing the Theological Gaze: The Reception of Geiger's Work" (ibid., 186–228). Interestingly, she records an exchange between Geiger and Holtzmann, resulting from Holtzmann's response to Geiger's *Das Judentum und seine Geschichte in vierunddreißig Vorlesungen* (Breslau: Jacobsohn, 1910), in which Geiger presents Jesus as a Pharisee (for Holtzmann's response see Heinrich Julius Holtzmann, "Jüdische Apologetik und Polemik," *Protestantische Kirchenzeitung* 10 [1865] 225–37). Responding to Holtzmann, Geiger notes: "You would like to save for Christianity something new, something hardly guessed at before, and you cannot do so in any other way than by again placing Judaism low down, not only in the temporal expression of its appearance but also in its essence and its deepest sentiment" (quoted in Heschel, *Abraham Geiger*, 208). Note also Christian Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse: Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany* (trans. Barbara Harshav and Christian Wiese; Studies in European Judaism 10; Leiden: Brill, 2005), esp. 159–216, where he describes the debate that both von Harnack's comments on Judaism in *Das Wesen des Christentums* and Bousset's work devoted to ancient Judaism elicited among members of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* movement. Note esp. pp. 190–204 for a discussion of typical features of "Late Judaism" (*Spätjudentum*) under the titles, in the original German edition, of "Religion des Partikularismus" and "Gesetzliche Ethik." (For the German edition see Christian Wiese, *Wissenschaft des Judentums und protestantische Theologie im wilhelminischen Deutschland. Ein Schrei ins Leere?* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999].) The desire both of Heschel and of Wiese to expose the relationship between liberal Protestant Christianity and anti-Jewish sentiment was anticipated by George Foot Moore in his "Christian Writers on Judaism," *HTR* 14 (1921) 197–254, esp. 242–43 and 253.

[20] See Schweitzer, *Quest* (2nd ET), 215.

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of Jesus in relation to the world into which he entered (on this see below), in the comment that follows, he shows his awareness of the debate that I have just outlined: "But the question cannot be avoided whether the violent separation of Jesus from Late Judaism is a real solution"—and, in a qualified vein, he answers no.[21]

It is perhaps interesting in this context that Schweitzer fails to mention the work of the scholars associated with the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* school, men such as Abraham Geiger, Leo Baeck, Felix Perles, Ismar Elborgen, and others.[22] They often drew attention to the relationship between liberal theology and anti-Judaism and sought to defend Judaism against what they saw as its unfair representation by liberal theologians.[23]

A second point relates to the question of Schweitzer's own presentation of Judaism at the time of Jesus and to the manner in which he describes Jesus's interaction with that phenomenon. At one level, it is relatively free from the usual sharply negative comments about "Late Judaism" found among his contemporary liberal theologians and others. Without any reluctance and in an apparently wholehearted, minimally qualified way, Schweitzer describes Jesus's worldview as Jewish-eschatological.[24] Yet, as will become clear in our discussion of his appraisal of Paul, ancient Judaism interests Schweitzer principally as a tool for understanding Jesus's ministry, and he understands Judaism almost exclusively in terms of its eschatological character—Judaism is, in some sense, eschatology, and Schweitzer's knowledge of Judaism beyond the Bible and certain apocryphal and pseudepigraphical works is superficial, even on occasions faulty, not least in his account of the existence of a Jewish-eschatological dogma (or a "Late Jewish" view, as he dubs it) at the time of Jesus.[25]

Schweitzer's perception of Jesus's Jewish background is also not immune from certain well-known prejudices. Schweitzer's assertion, to which reference

[21] Ibid. See also ibid., 277, where Schweitzer gives voice to what might in part at least be deemed the other side of the coin of this issue, namely the desire to turn Jesus into a figure acceptable to German culture. But discussion of this form of modernization, though highly critical, does not engage directly with the problem of the Jewishness of Jesus as a theme of historical Jesus research.

[22] Heschel, *Abraham Geiger*, 3.

[23] See n. 19 above for Geiger's exchange with Holtzmann on the liberal Protestant portrait of Jesus, as recorded by Heschel.

[24] Interestingly, this sentiment comes out best in the introduction to *Paul and His Interpreters*, written a couple of years before the second edition of *Quest*. There Schweitzer writes: "The teaching of Jesus does not in any of its aspects go outside the Jewish world of thought and project itself into a non-Jewish world, but represents a deeply ethical and perfected version of the contemporary Apocalyptic. Therefore the Gospel is at its starting-point exclusively Jewish-eschatological" (*Paul and His Interpreters*, ix).

[25] This point is made by T. Francis Glasson, "Schweitzer's Influence—Blessing or Bane?," *JTS* 28 (1977) 289–302, but had already been made in Schweitzer's own time by such scholars as R. H. Charles (see *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, in Judaism, and in Christianity; or, Hebrew, Jewish, and Christian Eschatology from Pre-Prophetic Times till the Close of the New Testament Canon* [London: A&C Black, 1913), viii).

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has already been made, that Jesus entered an uncreative age,[26] hints at a negative view of "Late Judaism." So, for instance, in his comments on the Pharisees in his popular *Gespräche über das Neue Testament*, published in a liberal Protestant church newspaper between 1901 and 1904, Schweitzer writes about the so-called "externalization" (Veräusserlichung) of religion apparently manifested in the customs and prescriptions of the Pharisees, and he presents Jesus as an opponent of this. His comments, however, are not uniformly hostile and are, at times, even sympathetic.[27] Nevertheless, Schweitzer is clear that rabbinic Judaism offers little or no insight into Jesus's ministry, marking, as it does, a decline from the period represented by, for instance, *4 Ezra*. As he writes in his *Quest*, "Jewish theology completely lost contact with the wider spiritual movements, became rigid and involved itself in unproductive commentary on the Law."[28] Consistent with this implied critique is Schweitzer's claim that Jesus's eschatological position led him not to disobey the Torah but to move beyond it to a more internalized, absolute ethic at the center of which stands the Sermon on the Mount.[29]

[26] See *Quest* (2nd ET), quoted above.

[27] See Albert Schweitzer, *Gespräche über das Neue Testament* (ed. Winfried Döbertin; Munich: Beck, 1994) 72–73, esp. 72, where he describes the piety of the Pharisees in harsh terms, noting that "through this obduracy the Pharisees had wounded Jesus's heart, and consequently he showed them no leniency. Instead he denounced them, and with them, any form of exaggerated externalization in the religious realm for all time." (Durch diese Härtigkeit hatten die Pharisäer Jesu Herz verwundet, darum kannte er keine Nachsicht mit ihnen, sondern er hat sie, und damit jede übertriebene Veräußerlichung in der Religion, für alle Zeiten gebrandmarkt.) See also Schweitzer, *Mystery of the Kingdom*, 270: "With all their learning they are blind leaders of the blind, who, instead of making the people receptive for the Kingdom, harden their hearts, and instead of drawing out from the Law the higher morality which renders men meet for the Kingdom, labour against it with their petty outward precepts." But Schweitzer is not absolute in his condemnation. As he notes in the same section in *Gespräche* from which we have quoted, the form of Pharisaism Paul attacked was a fossilized version of what the movement had been at the beginning of its history, and the Pharisees were, in any case, sincere in their attempts to make the Jews more pious, and that should not be forgotten (see *Gespräche*, 73). Moreover, Schweitzer notes that his readers have no right to judge the Pharisees, leaving that to the great figures of history, for their faults are the readers' faults, and over and above them (the readers) the Pharisees were sincere and enthusiastic (ibid., 73). See also Schweitzer's comments in his unfinished essay, "Die Ethik des Judentums," printed in Albert Schweitzer, *Kultur und Ethik in den Weltreligionen* (ed. Ulrich Körtner and Johann Zürcher; Werke aus dem Nachlass; Munich: Beck, 2001) 311–13, and dated November 1919, where he seems to go to greater lengths to soften the sense of the Pharisees as externalizers of religion, stating: "Even the Pharisees are not the spiritless externalizers of morality, given the devastating claims of Jesus" (Selbst die Pharisäer sind nicht die geistlosen Veräußerlicher der Moral, als welche sie, nach den vernichtenden Aussprüchen Jesu, gelten [311]). He goes on then to explain why, in the face of hellenization, the Pharisees placed so much emphasis on the observance of the law. But that they were more than just "narrow-minded zealots for ceremonial prescriptions" (engherzige Eiferer für zeremonielle Bestimmungen [311]) is clear from the fact that Hillel was one of their number.

[28] Schweitzer, *Quest* (2nd ET), 234. He goes on to argue that rabbinic literature cannot, therefore, shed light on the period of Jesus's ministry.

[29] See Schweitzer, *Gespräche*, 131; and Schweitzer, *Reich Gottes*, 106–9, for a more detailed engagement with this question.

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Also significant are aspects of Schweitzer's portrayal of Jesus. While he depicts Jesus as an individual who reflects the culture out of which he emerged, he also asserts that Jesus interacted with it creatively and in a uniquely sovereign manner. So, in describing Jesus's engagement with Jewish-eschatological thought, and in depicting his own distinctive contribution to it, Schweitzer writes "of the deliberate shaping of a superior and thoughtful spirit,"[30] reflecting the liberal concern to depict Jesus historically but in such a way that his uniqueness is preserved.[31] Schweitzer is not keen, however, to use such assertions of Jesus's uniqueness to escape the specifics of his setting, and this is the case even when he comes to talk about the absoluteness of Jesus's ethical demands—these still emerge out of the eschatological orientation of his thought, and it is consideration of this fact in its fullness, and in a way that eschews forms of spiritualization, or attempts to differentiate between the "nut and husk" of his message, that gives Jesus's thought its greatness.[32] And yet Schweitzer, who is more explicit than any of his contemporaries about the implications of the eschatological specificity of Jesus's message and life—what he terms at one point the "too historical" aspect of his reconstruction[33]—and more agonized in his discussions of its hermeneutical implications,[34] still develops ways of allowing Jesus to transcend that specificity and to become "the one great

[30] Schweitzer, *Quest* (2nd ET), 257. Also see ibid., 347–49.

[31] For Schweitzer, Jesus thought creatively within Jewish categories. See Schweitzer, *Psychiatric*, 60–64.

[32] See Schweitzer, *Quest* (2nd ET), 481 and 485, where he talks about allowing the compelling force of Jesus's personality and his preaching of the kingdom their full expression and so enabling the offensive and alien elements to be recognized calmly. Something of the complex relationship between specificity and universalism is also conveyed in Schweitzer, *Quest* (2nd ET), 212, in a passage we have already quoted where Schweitzer questions the validity of separating Jesus from Judaism, asking instead whether "the very essence of Jesus' creative power *does not* consist in taking out one or other of the parts of the eschatological machinery, but in doing what no one had previously done, namely, in setting the whole machinery in motion by the application of an ethical and religious motive power" [italics mine]. On this same complex point, see Schweitzer's essay, written in 1919, entitled "Ethik und Kultur im Denken Jesu," in *Kultur und Ethik in den Weltreligionen* (ed. Ulrich Körtner and Johann Zürcher; Werke aus dem Nachlass; Munich: Beck, 2001) 134–45, at 139: "The timelessness of Jesus's ethics is based on its strange time-bound particularity. Because it reckons with the end of the world and ignores the ongoing questions of the organization of society thrown up by the world of that time, it does not grow obsolete and retains its meaning in every time. No longer predicated on any length of time, it can be applied to any time." (In ihrer einzigartigen zeitgeschichtlichen Bedingtheit ist die Zeitlosigkeit der Ethik Jesu begründet. Weil sie mit dem Weltende rechnet und von allen in der damaligen Welt bestehenden Fragen der Organisation der Gesellschaft absieht, veraltet sie nicht und behält in jeder Epoche ihre Bedeutung. Keine Zeit mehr voraussetzend, läßt sie sich in jede Zeit einsetzen.) Here universalism emerges in a complex way out of particularity. For similar comments see "Albert Schweitzers Selbstdarstellung," in Albert Schweitzer, *Vorträge, Vorlesungen, Aufsätze* (ed. Claus Günzler, Ulrich Luz, and Johannes Zürcher; Munich: Beck, 2003) 360–74, at 369.

[33] See esp. Schweitzer, *Quest* (2nd ET), 405–6, 479.

[34] On this see James Carleton Paget, "Albert Schweitzer's Second Edition of *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*," *BJRL* 88 (2006) 3–39, at 26–37.

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man."[35] Not only has Jesus, according to Schweitzer, by his death and apparent failure, destroyed the old eschatological view and so allowed his followers the right to lay hold of what transcends that setting,[36] but Schweitzer also argues that Jesus's ethical enthusiasm (understood by Schweitzer in terms of a commitment to the kingdom), which transcends the particularity of his own setting, can still be appropriated by his followers.[37] He can restate such views in ways that make him sound like a typical theological liberal in his commitment to a transcendent ethic with its origins in Jesus:

> The mighty thought underlying the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount, that we come to know God and belong to Him through love, Jesus introduces into the late Jewish, Messianic expectation, without being in any way concerned to spiritualize those realistic ideas of the Kingdom of God and of blessedness. But the spirituality which lies in this religion of love must gradually, like a refiner's fire, seize on all ideas which come into communication with it.[38]

It would be wrong, then, to argue that Schweitzer's presentation of Jesus as an eschatological enthusiast, enmeshed in his own world, implies that he, Schweitzer, was somehow an enthusiast for the "Late Judaism" from which Jesus emerged. As has already been noted, he sometimes betrays, in muted form, the prejudices against "Late Judaism" that were typical of his age, and one could argue, too, that like most liberal theologians committed to historical study, he can still present a Jesus who breaks out of his own particularity and appears in some sense a unique and transcendent figure.[39] But, importantly, he does this without engaging in extended polemic about the supposed "Late Judaism" of Jesus's day, which was so much a mark of German theologians of his era. Moreover, he does not make such stereotypical representations of Judaism, insofar as they have any place in his account, a key factor in his explanation of Jesus's ministry and aims. In part this might be explained by the fact that Schweitzer chooses eschatology as the key to understanding Jesus,[40] or more broadly the Jewish apocalyptic tradition, with the result that his account is less taken up with negative assertions about Judaism—Jesus, after all, is not a religious reformer, but principally a teacher, as he often is

[35] There are many places in Schweitzer's writings where he uses grandiose language to describe Jesus. See Schweitzer, *Mystery of the Kingdom*, 274–75 and Schweitzer, *Quest* (2nd ET), 479, 487.

[36] Schweitzer, *Mystery of the Kingdom*, 274–75.

[37] See Schweitzer, *Quest* (2nd ET), 481–83 and Carleton Paget, "Second Edition," 30–34, and relevant secondary literature cited there. See also citations in n. 30 above.

[38] Schweitzer, *Out of My Life*, 54. See also 58, where Schweitzer seeks to endorse the central tenet of liberal Christianity: that the ethical is the essence of religion.

[39] For this point about liberal theological presentations of Jesus, see Heschel, *Abraham Geiger*, 160–61, 226–27, though she does not mention Schweitzer in this context.

[40] Interestingly, Johannes Weiss, who also lays particular emphasis on Jesus's eschatological message in his *Predigt Jesu* (see n. 17 above), is also strikingly free of anti-Jewish sentiment. See also Gerdmar, *Theological Anti-Semitism*, 171–76.

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for other liberal theologians, and so the need for the establishment of difference at an ideological level is not Schweitzer's main concern. Hence, though Schweitzer may have entertained views about Judaism's particularity, as this expressed itself in its apparent legalism, these barely feature as significant elements in his reconstruction of Jesus's ministry.[41] Jesus, for Schweitzer, is not the teacher of universalism amidst a people taken up with nationalistic and legalistic concerns. He is an apocalypticist whose face is set absolutely on the kingdom of God—such a vision is Jewish-eschatological even if it also results in something eternal and binding, which is not Jewish, or rather eschatological, but universal.[42] But such an observation, whatever its merits, should not detract from the fact that Schweitzer's work on Jesus, in its attitude to Judaism, is singular and distinctive; without a sense of embarrassment or difficulty, he identifies the central fact of Jesus's ministry as a specifically Jewish characteristic.

Paul

Schweitzer's work on Paul, consisting of two major publications, is a continuation of his work on Jesus. This is explicitly stated in his preface to *Paul and His Interpreters* of 1911 (ET 1912): "Any one who deals with the teaching and the life and work of Jesus, and offers any kind of new reading of it, ought not to stop there, but must be held under obligation to trace . . . the pathway leading to the history of dogma." Outlining what that might mean he asks: "How could the doctrinal system of Paul arise on the basis of the life and work of Jesus and the beliefs of the primitive community; and how did the early Greek theology arise out of Paulinism?"[43] It is the call for an integrated account of the history of early Christianity that forms the background for Schweitzer's own work—hence the need for a clear account of the motivating forces of Paulinism. Indeed it is exactly the radical character of Schweitzer's own account of Jesus's ministry that makes the need for an account of Paul and of the development of Christianity beyond Paul necessary.

Schweitzer's understanding of Paul's theology, hinted at in *Paul and His Interpreters* and presented more fully in *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, can be briefly summarized. It is Schweitzer's contention that Paul, like Jesus, thinks within Jewish-eschatological categories. The fact of Christ's death and resurrection

[41] "Particularity" (*Bedingtheit*) is a term used by Schweitzer (see n. 32 above) but never in the negative way that it was often used by Protestant New Testament scholars to describe Jewish legalism and nationalism (see the reference to Wiese's discussion of this in n. 19 above). Particularity is something specifically bound up with historical existence and, in his discussion of Jesus, with eschatology.

[42] See n. 34 above. While Schweitzer can describe the historical Jesus as an enigma and a stranger (Schweitzer, *Quest* [2nd ET], 478), this is bound up with Jesus's eschatological view, which seems alien to the modern world, and not with what one might term his Jewishness, understood in some abstract way. As I have stated, Schweitzer is not concerned with Jesus's Jewishness as a problem, either for himself, or, at least in any consistent way, for other German theologians who form a part of his narrative of the quest of the historical Jesus.

[43] Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters*, v.

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as the Messiah means that the conditions of redemption have in part begun. Just as in Jewish apocalyptic texts such as *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* the Messiah and those whose salvation he effects are identified with each other, so Christians because of Christ's death and resurrection begin proleptically, through the spirit (understood as the spirit of Christ), to experience their own salvation "in Christ." As such they find themselves enabled to act in a manner that allows them to become ethically other than the world, suffused by a sense of love, as captured in Paul's account of love in 1 Cor 13.[44] The fact of the Christians' changed status—that they inhabit a different world, albeit in anticipation of the actual coming of the kingdom, as 1 Corinthians 15 indicates—also has a consequence for their attitude towards the Jewish law. That law is now regarded as no longer having any hold over them, for it comes from the natural world of which the Christians are no longer a part; in fact, the law and eschatology are understood to have always been incompatible "because of the intrinsic impulse of eschatology to an immediate and absolute ethic."[45] But if this is the case, why does Paul appear to support Jews who observe the law? The answer lies in what Schweitzer terms Paul's theory of the status quo ante, which holds that the state in which people are called to be Christian should be the state in which they remain (see 1 Cor 7:2). It is important to note, then, that for Schweitzer Paul's supposed antipathy to the Jewish law only arises out of his own eschatological convictions, and it is only where the issues about Gentile adherence to the law arise, as in Galatia, that Paul feels forced to address the question of the law at all.[46]

Schweitzer, then, claims that a correct understanding of Paul construes him as thinking from within Judaism. "Paul," he writes, "belongs to Late Judaism."[47] And he continues:

> To apply the comparative method to Paul would, therefore, generally speaking, mean nothing more or less than to explain him on the basis of Late Judaism. Those who give due weight to the eschatological character of his doctrine and to the problems and ideas which connect it with works like the Apocalypse of Ezra are the true exponents of 'Comparative Religion.'[48]

"Late Judaism" is again understood, as in the case of Jesus, as the Judaism of those Jewish writers taken up with questions of eschatology (Schweitzer, in *Paul and His Interpreters*, excludes any consideration of rabbinic material from an assessment of Paul, passing over it with a few negative comments as with his work on Jesus[49]). And

[44] It is precisely Paul's achievement that he has ethicized the concept of living proleptically in Christ.

[45] Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 189.

[46] For a helpful discussion of these factors in Schweitzer's thought, see E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM, 1977) 476–81.

[47] Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters*, 176.

[48] Ibid., 177.

[49] Ibid., 49 and 51. Roland Deines states that Schweitzer fails in *Paul and His Interpreters* to deal with the question of Paul and Pharisaism as a theme in Pauline research (*Die Pharisäer.*

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Paul, like Jesus, adapted such thoughts in the light of changing circumstances—that is, according to Schweitzer, he adapted them thoughtfully. But such adaptation is not the equivalent of the formation of a new religion. As Schweitzer writes, refuting the idea prevalent among some scholars that Paul founded a new religion:

> For him [Paul] there was only one religion: that of Judaism. It was concerned with God, faith, promise, hope and law. In consequence of the coming, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it became its duty to adjust its teachings and demands to the new era thus introduced, and in the process many things were moved from the shadow into the light and others from the light into the shadow. "Christianity" is for Paul no new religion, but simply Judaism with the centre of gravity shifted in consequence of the new era. His own system of thought is certainly for him no new religion.[50]

In asserting the Jewish identity of Paul so strongly Schweitzer was flying in the face of a number of tendencies within the scholarship of his own time. Amidst a growing enthusiasm for the study of the "Orient" and its religions, a number of Christian scholars had sought to argue that Paul's thought was best understood against the background of the world of Hellenistic religion, not least that of the so-

Ihr Verständnis im Spiegel der christlichen und jüdischen Forschung seit Wellhausen und Graetz [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997] 16 n. 40). We should, however, note that in the preface to *Mysticism* Schweitzer draws attention to the fact that he has attempted to deepen his knowledge of "Late Judaism" through consultation with Gerhard Kittel, an acknowledged expert on ancient Judaism and rabbinics (at this point in Kittel's life he had not shown himself publicly to be an anti-Semite—this was to manifest itself in 1933 with his infamous lecture "Die Judenfrage," on which see William Horbury, *Herodian Judaism and New Testament Study* [WUNT 193; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006] 178–79). Deines states that Kittel criticized Schweitzer in his review of Paul Fiebig's *Altjüdische Gleichnisse und die Gleichnisse Jesu* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1904) for claiming that Fiebig's work had brought the study of the New Testament and rabbinics to an end, when in fact neither Fiebig nor indeed Kittel believed that to be the case (*Pharisäer*, 429). Perhaps Schweitzer read this passage in Kittel and sought his advice, though Kittel's expertise on Judaism was well known at the time and so consultation with him on this matter would have seemed natural. In a positive review of *Mysticism* the Jewish scholar Ernst Jacob, while castigating Schweitzer for his continued adoption of what he terms Kittel's word, "Late Judaism" (*Spätjudentum*), preferring "Early Judaism" (*Frühjudentum*) himself, is clear that in this work Schweitzer takes more account of rabbinic material than he does in *Paul and His Interpreters*, though such material plays very little role ("Neue Literatur über Paulus und das Urchristentum," *MGWJ* 75 [1931] 328–35, at 329–33). W. D. Davies, while generally very positive about Schweitzer's work on Paul, criticizes him for his attitude to rabbinic Judaism, specifically for his stark distinction between it and apocalyptic ("Paul and Judaism," in *The Bible and Modern Scholarship: Papers Read at the 100th Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, December 28–30, 1964* [ed. J. Philip Hyatt; Nashville: Abingdon, 1965] 178–86, esp. 184–86; repr. in W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* [4th ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980] vii–xvi). Sanders is clear that Schweitzer had little knowledge of rabbinic literature and was largely dependent for his account on Ferdinand Weber, *Jüdische Theologie auf Grund des Talmuds und verwandter Schriften* (ed. Franz Delitzsch and Georg Schnedermann; Leipzig: Dörffling and Franke, 1897), mentioned, somewhat negatively, by Schweitzer at Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters*, 48 (for Sanders's comments see *Paul*, 39 n. 22).

[50] Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters*, 227. For further bold assertions of the same see Schweitzer, "Selbstdarstellung," 373–74.

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called mystery religions. Scholars such as Richard Reitzenstein, Adolph Deissmann, and Wilhelm Bousset had argued this case with vigor,[51] and their conclusions were one of the chief targets of Schweitzer's work on Paul. Among other things, such exponents of the so-called "history of religions" (Religionsgeschichte) approach had, in Schweitzer's opinion, created a huge gap between Jesus and Paul, believing the latter to be the second founder of Christianity. Schweitzer, by asserting Paul's background in Jewish-eschatological thinking and so his identity as a Jew, was directly refuting this assertion.[52] But in arguing such a case Schweitzer went against a more ingrained tendency in German theological scholarship, in part linked to what has been described above. Building on the Lutheran assertion that the center of Paul's gospel lies in his doctrine of justification by faith, this tendency asserted that Paul was the advocate of a religion of moral universalism over against Jewish particularism with its emphasis on nationality and law. This view, advocated with great clarity by F. C. Baur, was one from which much German scholarship failed to emancipate itself.[53] By arguing for the primacy of the idea of eschatological mysticism in Paul's theology, and in partial extension of this view, for the subsidiary role of justification within that system,[54] Schweitzer, a Lutheran minister, and the son, nephew, and grandson of the same, removed a central pillar in the universalist reconstruction of Paul. Paul, on Schweitzer's account, is not primarily a critic of prevailing forms of Jewish religiosity, nor a critic in any essentialist or qualitative way of the Jewish Torah nor by extension Jewish particularism, but an exponent of what it means to be the follower of the dead and now raised Messiah, Jesus, in a new eschatological age.[55] W. D. Davies notes this point, claiming that Schweitzer's description of justification as a subsidiary crater in Paul's thought means that the

[51] For a discussion of this work and its origins see Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (Publications of the German Historical Institute; Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 284–91.

[52] Broadly speaking it would be right to argue that Schweitzer's own approach to Paul is a "history of religions" approach, as he himself admits. It is simply that the religion with which he seeks to compare Paul's thought is Judaism. When he writes in the passage quoted above on p. 374 about "true exponents of 'Comparative Religion'" (see Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters*, 177), the word translated as "comparative religion" is *Religionsgeschichte*.

[53] See Ekkehard Stegemann, "Der Jude Paulus und seine antijüdische Auslegung," in *Auschwitz—Krise der christlichen Theologie. Eine Vortragsreihe* (ed. Rolf Rendtorff and Ekkehard Stegemann; Abhandlung zum christlich-jüdischen Dialog 10; Munich: Kaiser, 1980) 117–39, at 123–25. Further discussion of this and related points is found in Gerdmar, *Theological Anti-Semitism*, 98–120, esp. 103–9. For a discussion of the persistence of anti-Jewish interpretations of Paul, see Sanders, *Paul*, 2–12, 33–69.

[54] Schweitzer was not the first to question the centrality of justification for Paul. William Wrede had already done the same, but Wrede had not done this as part of a more Jewish portrayal of Paul. In fact Wrede is clear about Paul's opposition to Judaism and sees the doctrine of justification as bound up with that concern rather than with a theory of redemption. See William Wrede, *Paulus* (2nd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1907) 72–79. For Schweitzer's comments on Wrede, see *Paul and His Interpreters*, 166–70.

[55] For Schweitzer's thoughts on justification see Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 205–26.

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way was opened to considering Paul as fulfilling, rather than opposing, Judaism.[56] As Schweitzer was to claim, for Paul Christianity is the true Jewish religion.[57]

But Schweitzer was not interested in pursuing this apparent implication of his work. As E. P. Sanders has pointed out, Jewish apocalypticism serves simply as the point of departure for his description of Paul's thought,[58] and Schweitzer's conclusions do not lead to detailed reflection on the nature of the relationship of Pauline Christianity to Judaism, nor indeed to considerations, at least explicitly, of why it is that a movement that began within Judaism became Christianity.[59] But, while neglecting any explicit engagement with these matters, Schweitzer, as with his work on Jesus, is wise to the fact that the Jewishness of Paul is an ongoing concern of commentators. So in seeking to explain why it is, in his opinion, that scholars generally prefer to argue that Paul is the beginning point of the so-called hellenizing process of Christianity, he suggests that this is "because he [Paul] detached Christianity from Judaism, and because otherwise his thoughts do not seem to be easily explicable."[60] After all, if Paul's views are assumed to be purely Jewish-eschatological, the problem of how the gospel became hellenized becomes more acute (precisely these points had been made to explain why scholars had sought to avoid eschatological interpretations of Jesus's ministry). Schweitzer, then, goes on to explain further why scholars have generally moved away from a view of Paul as what he terms a Jewish-eschatological thinker:

> Moreover, the theological study of history is apt, even though unconsciously, to give ear to practical considerations. At bottom, it is guided by the instinct that whatever in the primitive Gospel is capable of being Hellenised may also be considered capable of being modernised. It therefore seeks to discern in Paul's teaching—as also in that of Jesus—as much as possible that "transcends Judaism," that has the character of "universal religion" and "essential Christianity." It is haunted by the apprehension that the significance of Christianity, and its adaptation to our times, is dependent on justifying the modernisation of it on the lines hitherto followed and in accordance with the historical views hitherto current.[61]

For Schweitzer, as in his studies of Jesus, it is a Christian desire to modernize Paul, to make him a man amenable and relevant to the present age, which makes a view of him as a Jewish-eschatological thinker uncongenial. In these short and

[56] See Davies, "Paul and Judaism," esp. 184–86.

[57] Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters*, 227.

[58] "Schweitzer . . . had not sought to deal thoroughly with the question of the *relation* of Pauline theology to that of Judaism. Jewish apocalypticism serves, rather, as the point of departure for his description of Paul's thought" (Sanders, *Paul*, 8) [italics in original].

[59] I say "explicitly" because Schweitzer does go on to show how it was that Paul's Jewish-eschatological message came to be hellenized, but this account of the hellenization of Christianity does not lead to any reflections on the so-called "parting of the ways."

[60] Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters*, x.

[61] Ibid.

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undeveloped comments as to motive, which are more prominent in Schweitzer's earlier work on Paul, *Paul and His Interpreters*, than in his later work, *Mysticism*,[62] nowhere does he mention the role of anti-Jewish prejudice, no doubt because he saw the fault of interpreters as emerging from their essentially intellectual and hermeneutical concerns. Furthermore, Schweitzer is uninterested in pursuing the wider theological consequences of his "Jewish" view of Paul. In fact it is unclear that Schweitzer really has a strongly developed sense of the Jewishness of Paul, in spite of his apparently unambiguous comments on this matter. In his reflections at the end of *Mysticism*, for instance, he engages with the question of the ongoing relevance of Paul. For Schweitzer the apostle becomes the beginning point of what one might term the demythologization of eschatology, and by extension, the Jewish-eschatological view, precisely because his Paul begins to see the future promise of eschatology invading the present.[63] And in such a conclusion, Paul, rather than being a Jew, becomes the patron saint of Christian thinkers.[64] Reading this conclusion, one can see why Schweitzer could at one point claim that Paul "detached Christianity from Judaism."[65] But in this concluding chapter Schweitzer is wrestling with hermeneutical issues that his own work so acutely raises. It still remains the case that the historical Paul is a Jew thinking Jewishly and with no intention of founding a new religion, wherever his thoughts may have led. In making such an assertion and doing so in books almost entirely free of anti-Jewish censure, Schweitzer was, among his contemporaries, strikingly distinctive.[66]

[62] It would be wrong, however, to think that *Mysticism* is less taken up with exploring the Jewish background of Paul than *Paul and His Interpreters*.

[63] "A faith of the present arises within the faith of the future. Paul connects the expectation of the Kingdom and of the redemption to be realised in it with the coming and the death of Jesus, in such a way that belief in the redemption and in the Coming of the Kingdom becomes independent of whether the Kingdom comes quickly or is delayed. Without giving up eschatology, he already stands above it" (Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 380). Schweitzer goes on to assert that Paul thinks out so thoroughly belief in Jesus as the coming Messiah that it becomes freed from its temporal limitations and valid for all time.

[64] Ibid., 376.

[65] See Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters*, x, quoted above.

[66] Stegemann holds Schweitzer's avoidance of an anti-Jewish interpretation of Paul to be singular ("Paulus," 130), though he does not discuss why Schweitzer may have come to the apparently exceptional views he did. See also Erich Gräßer's assertion: "*Today* one writes such sentences lightly. At that time they were audacious sentences and they stood in sharp contrast to prevailing opinions about Paulinism among liberals, who had pushed what was Jewish as far into the distance as possible and had placed at the forefront of Pauline theology the moral, purely spiritual, personal conception of religion." (Solche Sätze schreibt man *heute* leicht. Damals waren sie kühne Sätze. Sie waren der liberalen Vorstellung vom Paulinismus stracks zuwider. Denn diese hatte das Jüdische möglichst zurückgeschoben und in den Vordergrund der paulinischen Theologie die sittliche, rein geistige, persönliche Auffassung des religiösen Verhältnisses gestellt [*Albert Schweitzer als Theologe* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1979] 171–72]) [italics in original].

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Judaism as a Religion in Schweitzer's Non–New Testament Work

Albert Schweitzer was very interested in what one might now term "comparative religion." He wrote one general book on the subject[67] and a book devoted to Hinduism and Buddhism.[68] He took an interest in Zoroastrianism and wrote extensively on Chinese religious thinkers,[69] though much of this work was published posthumously.[70] And yet, beyond his comments on Judaism in his books on New Testament subjects, Schweitzer remained uninterested in the history of Jewish thought and religiosity. So, in his extant works, Judaism is only ever discussed as a prelude to the discussion of Christianity, and normally then in relation to the evolution of the idea of the kingdom of God, or the development of what Schweitzer refers to as the Jewish-eschatological view. For Schweitzer, "Amos and Isaiah have created the conception of the Kingdom of God. Late Judaism developed it in fantastic ways, no doubt partly under the influence of ideas from Zarathustra's religion, with which exile made the Jews acquainted. Jesus brings the Kingdom idea to its ethical perfection, without inveighing against its late-Jewish form."[71] In the same book and elsewhere he argues that it was precisely Christianity's movement away from this Jewish-eschatological heritage, and its adoption of a more individualized theology of redemption, based on the sacraments, which led to a diminishment of Christian theology. As he writes: "This much, however, is certain: as the Jewish outlook is abandoned, the ideas which constitute the uniqueness and greatness of the teaching of Jesus—the ideas of the Kingdom of God and of an ethic directed toward the Kingdom—lose their vitality in the Christian religion."[72]

Given these comments, some might think it striking that the book *Religions of the World* contains no further discussion of Judaism. In what is essentially a qualitative comparison between religions, which Schweitzer typologizes in terms of the extent to which they are optimistic or pessimistic, monistic or dualistic, and influenced by ethical motives,[73] Schweitzer chooses to discuss chiefly Christianity and the

[67] See Albert Schweitzer, *Das Christentum und die Weltreligionen* (Munich: Beck, n.d.; ET *Christianity and the Religions of the World* [trans. Johanna Powers; London: Allen and Unwin, 1923]).

[68] See Albert Schweitzer, *Die Weltanschauung der indischen Denker. Mystik und Ethik* (Munich: Beck, 1935; ET *Indian Thought and Its Development* [trans. Lilian M. Rigby Russell; New York: Holt, 1936]), and, for further discussion of the same, see the series of chapters in Albert Schweitzer's *Kultur und Ethik in den Weltreligionen* designated "Kultur und Ethik in den Weltreligionen" (ed. Ulrich Körtner and Johann Zürcher; Werke aus dem Nachlass; Munich: Beck, 2001) 13–175.

[69] See Albert Schweitzer, *Geschichte des chinesischen Denkens* (ed. Bernard Kaempf and Johann Zürcher; Werke aus dem Nachlass; Munich: Beck, 2002).

[70] He did not take a developed interest in Islam, though he was fearful of its advance through Africa, commenting at some length as to why it might be appealing to some Africans and why he found the prospect of such an advance uncongenial. See his "Von der Mission. Gedanken und Erfahrungen," in Albert Schweitzer, *Vorträge, Vorlesungen, Aufsätze* (ed. Claus Günzler, Ulrich Luz, and Johann Zürcher; Werke aus dem Nachlass; Munich: Beck, 2003) 316–59, at 333–34.

[71] Schweitzer, *Religions of the World*, 24–25.

[72] Ibid., 25.

[73] Ibid., 36–37.

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Indian and Chinese religions. And further failure to engage with Judaism beyond the so-called "Late Jewish" period, roughly the middle of the second century, can be seen elsewhere in his own works on the New Testament, as discussed above, and in other religio-philosophical works.[74] Because of this apparent lack of interest in post–New Testament Judaism—coupled with the sense that Schweitzer finds post–New Testament Judaism problematic[75]—some might argue that Schweitzer reflects Christian forms of supersessionism. While it is true that there are moments when Schweitzer can sound a supersessionist-like note,[76] these are rare, even in

[74] See Schweitzer, *Reich Gottes*, 36–150, as well as Albert Schweitzer, *Wir Epigonen. Kultur und Kulturstaat* (ed. Ulrich Körtner and Johann Zürcher; Werke aus dem Nachlass; Munich: Beck, 2005) 376–78. In the latter passage Schweitzer engages in a detailed discussion of the qualities required of a *Kulturstaat*. He notes that there are some such states in the history of the world whose real achievement has never been properly appreciated because that achievement, moral in its content, came with little outward success as measured, for instance, in military victories or the attainment of empires. Schweitzer contends that one of the best examples of such a *Kulturstaat* is that of the Jews. He then delineates how the prophetic, ethical vision exemplified in Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah began to influence the Jewish hierarchy and how the small and insignificant nation of Judea became a proper *Kulturstaat*. He states that it did not lose its character as such after the Jewish nation ceased to be a state in territorial and political terms. He then concludes: "Through Christianity, which emerged from it, it [Judaism]—in combination with Greco-Roman thought—laid the foundation for our culture and our 'culture-states'" (Durch das aus ihm hervorgegangene Christentum hat er [der jüdische Staat] mit dem griechisch-römischen Denken den Grund zu unserer Kultur und unseren Kulturstaaten gelegt [ibid., 377]); and he attributes indirectly to Judaism the idea that all cultures are spiritually members of the one culture of humanity. Such a view is easy to arrive at when one recalls that the idea of the kingdom of God, first articulated among Jews, is precisely the foundation of all *Kulturstaaten*. He continues more forcefully: "In this way the 'culture-people' that became such through the simplest of processes is at the same time the one that has produced the greatest stimuli and the only one that has not declined. This is explained by the fact that its ascent was an inward one and was accompanied by no other external circumstances. . . . Judaism survived because it was only a 'culture-people' spiritually and therefore could adapt to all conditions of life." (So ist das in dem einfachsten Prozeß gewordene Kulturvolk zugleich dasjenige, das die größten Anregungen gegeben hat, und das einzige, das nicht unterging. Das liegt daran, daß sein Aufstieg ein innerlicher und von keinen äußeren Umständen begleitet[er war]. . . . Es [das Kulturvolk] blieb erhalten, weil es nur geistig Kulturvolk war und sich daher allen Lebensbeding[ungen] anpassen konnte [ibid., 377]). But again little real interest is shown in Judaism (he goes on to make some comments about the way in which Jewish concentration on morality has meant that the aesthetic dimension of life has been forgotten, and that this constitutes the major difference between Jewish and non-Jewish culture), even though Schweitzer vows to take his discussion further.

[75] See the following comment from Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters*: "The picture [of Judaism in an earlier period] which they [rabbinic scholars] draw for us shows only a sun-scorched plain, but this yellow, wilted grass was green and fresh once" (49); see also n. 49 above.

[76] Something close to a supersessionist position might be found in *Gespräche*, 59: "Everything had to turn out as it in fact did in order that this people [the Jews] could bequeath to the world that for which we must be grateful to it: *Christianity*. It is with these thoughts in mind that one must examine the picture of Israel's history in the time before the birth of Jesus and during his youth, if one wants to understand its higher sense." (Alles mußte kommen, wie es kam, damit dieses Volk [die Juden] der Welt das schenken konnte, was wir ihm verdanken: *das Christentum*. Mit diesen Gedanken muß man das Bild der Geschichte Israels in der Zeit vor Jesu Geburt und während seiner Jugend aufrollen, wenn man ihren höheren Sinn verstehen will [italics in original].) But this sentiment, found in a set of popular addresses on Jesus and the New Testament, is expressed

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sermons, where one might expect it,[77] and they never approach a clear statement that the Christian church replaces Israel; Schweitzer is not sufficiently interested in ecclesiology for this to be a concern of his and nowhere in his writings do we see a clear and unadulterated expression of this idea.[78] Perhaps "absorption" might be a better word than "supersession," capturing the sense that Christianity takes up aspects of Judaism in a different form, what Schweitzer means when he says that Christianity is for Paul "no new religion, but simply Judaism with the centre of gravity shifted in consequence of the new era."[79]

Notable also is the fact that even when Schweitzer had the opportunity to engage in what, for want of a better term, one might describe as Jewish-Christian dialogue, he did not appear to take it up, at least in explicit form. This is illustrated eloquently in his correspondence with Martin Buber, which took place over an extended period from 1928, when Buber wrote to Schweitzer asking him to participate in a conference in Karlsruhe,[80] to 1965, the year in which both men died. The correspondence[81] gives evidence of a strong mutual respect. Both men sent each other copies of some of their books, and Buber in particular shows signs, not so much in his correspondence with Schweitzer, but rather in his own works,[82] of a detailed engagement with some of Schweitzer's work, especially on Jesus and Paul. So Buber, who could on one occasion refer to Schweitzer's "distinctive proximity to Israel" (eigentümliche Israelsnähe),[83] was in strong agreement with Schweitzer that the key to understanding Jesus's ministry lies in his preaching

benignly, however one might understand its implications. It may, however, hint at why Schweitzer ceased to take much of an interest in Judaism beyond the New Testament. In many ways for him Christianity embodied Judaism's greatest thoughts.

[77] See, for instance, his sermon dated January 10, 1904 (Albert Schweitzer, *Predigten, 1898–1948* [ed. Richard Brüllmann and Erich Gräßer; Werke aus dem Nachlass; Munich: Beck, 2001] 512–15), where, in asking why it was that the Jews rejected Christ, he avoids a vituperative answer, asserting that the Jews, though immensely pious and honest, were "sated" (satt) and so not aware that there were other dishes to taste. He likens this state to a condition found among many contemporaries. The answer might not be found acceptable now, but it avoids the usual Christian polemic that might have been elicited by such a question.

[78] For classic expressions of supersessionism among German Protestant scholars see Franz Delitzsch as discussed in Gerdmar, *Theological Anti-Semitism*, 228–30.

[79] Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters*, 227.

[80] The conference was connected with the journal *Kreatur*, which promoted dialogue between Jews, Catholics, and Protestants. Its theme was to be "reality and responsibility" (Wirklichkeit und Verantwortung). Schweitzer was unable to attend. The men first met in 1929 in Frankfurt at a conference at which both gave papers.

[81] See Pamela Vermes, "The Buber-Schweitzer Correspondence," *JJS* 37 (1986) 228–45 and Albert Schweitzer, *Theologischer und philosophischer Briefwechsel, 1900–1965* (ed. Werner Zager in collaboration with Erich Gräßer, with the assistance of Markus Aellig et al.; Werke aus dem Nachlass; Munich: Beck, 2006) 133–49. See also Lothar Stiehm, "Martin Buber und Albert Schweitzer. Geben, Nehmen, Miteinander 1901–1965," in *Den Menschen zugewandt leben. Festschrift für Werner Licharz* (ed. Ulrich Lilienthal and Lothar Stiehm; Osnabrück: Secolo, 1999) 97–116.

[82] Buber's engagement with Schweitzer's oeuvre goes back to 1902, when he read *Abendmahl*.

[83] Martin Buber, *Zwei Glaubensweisen* (2nd ed.; Gerlingen: Lambert Schneider, 1994) 17.

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on the kingdom of God and in an appreciation of his ethical achievement. While broadly enthusiastic for Schweitzer's work on Paul,[84] he disagreed with Schweitzer's assessment of Paul as a Jewish thinker rather than one influenced by the Greek world. So in his well-known work of 1950, *Zwei Glaubensweisen*,[85] in which he sought to explore the differences between Christianity and Judaism in reference to their different understandings of faith or belief (*Glaube*), he states, here commenting on Schweitzer's *Mysticism*: "I, however, can connect the Pauline doctrine of faith . . . only with a peripheral Judaism, which was actually Hellenistic."[86] With Schweitzer's other work, Buber appears less well acquainted.[87]

Schweitzer clearly read Buber (he possessed fourteen of his books, some of which are heavily marked), and in his correspondence he mentions, with some warmth, his experience of reading the latter's translation of the Old Testament into German, and his *Zwiesprache*.[88] Also mentioned are *Das verborgene Licht*,[89] *Die Frage an den Einzelnen*,[90] and, at greater length, *Zwei Glaubensweisen*.[91] But Schweitzer did not take an interest in Buber's more obviously Jewish work, such as that on Hasidism or Moses, or with the Jewish dimension of the work he has read, though at one point he does note how much life there is in rabbinic Judaism.[92] Consistent with this is the fact that discussion of Buber's work in the correspondence barely picks up on the implications of the latter's thought for Jewish-Christian dialogue. So in Schweitzer's listing of questions and observations relating to *Zwei Glaubensweisen*, in a letter dated April 4, 1951, he does not allude to Buber's disagreement with his own Jewish portrait of Paul (a disagreement already referred to above[93]), and

[84] For expressions of enthusiasm for and strong interest in Schweitzer's work on Paul see the letter dated December 5, 1932. Here Buber notes that the effect of Schweitzer's book on Paul has increased since he last wrote to him and that he wants to discuss the matter with Schweitzer further.

[85] See n. 83 above for full bibliographic reference.

[86] Buber, *Zwei Glaubensweisen*, 17: "Ich kann jedoch die paulinische Lehre vom Glauben, die ich hier behandle, nur mit einem randhaften Judentum in Verbindung sehen, das eben ein 'hellenistisches' war."

[87] On this see Vermes, "Correspondence," 229–30.

[88] Martin Buber, *Zwiesprache* (Berlin: Schocken, 1932). The letter where both these works are mentioned is dated December 3, 1932.

[89] Martin Buber, *Das verborgene Licht* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Rütten and Loening, 1924).

[90] Martin Buber, *Die Frage an den Einzelnen* (Berlin: Schocken, 1936).

[91] Letter dated April 4, 1951.

[92] Letter dated December 3, 1932. See Vermes's comment: "Schweitzer for his part did not extend his zone of concern with the Bible so that it entered the preserves of the Judaism, let alone the Hasidism, of Buber the 'arch-Jew'" ("Correspondence," 229). If Schweitzer had read this material, and we have no evidence that he did, he would probably have had little sympathy for Buber's attempt to appreciate the magical, mystical, and ecstatic side of Hasidic culture, or his attempts to use elements of that tradition to revivify Judaism. Such emphases would probably have offended Schweitzer's liberal sensitivities, though whether, as has been suggested to me by Prof. Ruth Harris of New College, Oxford, he would have found aspects of Buber's Hasidism resonant with aspects of African culture that his mission was seeking to disenchant is not clear.

[93] In the copy of *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus* (*Mysticism*) that Schweitzer gave Buber, there was an inscription in which Schweitzer notes the fact of his Jewish portrait of Paul. It is more

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he never discusses the book's central thesis about the different approaches of the two religions to the idea of faith/belief, construed in Judaism as trust and in Christianity as belief in a set of principles. In some ways one might say that insofar as Schweitzer interacted with Buber, he interacted with him as a thinker and even an exegete, but not obviously as a Jew and the creator of a Jewish perspective with which he wished to wrestle. That is not to say that Schweitzer was unaware of the Jewish dimensions of Buber's thought, but that was not something he was interested in highlighting, at least in the extant correspondence. In one sense this is unsurprising: Schweitzer's own Christian faith was unconventional insofar as it was ethical rather than traditionally Christological. For this reason he may in fact have seen less difference between himself and Buber, who, like him, was often regarded with suspicion by his co-religionists.

Contemporary Jews and Judaism in Schweitzer's Life

Albert Schweitzer's Alsatian Context

The extent of Albert Schweitzer's contact with Jews and his awareness of issues relating to them during his own lifetime merits some discussion. He was born into a part of the world, Alsace, that boasted a reasonably large Jewish population,[94] and one that had been the victim of bouts of anti-Semitism for centuries, not least because Jews were often involved in the business of money-lending in a mainly agricultural economy, which lacked adequate credit institutions until later in the nineteenth century.[95] The French Revolution, which led to the extension to the Jews of citizenship rights, had brought about, if at an uneven pace and in spite of anti-Semitic conflict, increasing assimilation, especially among urban Jewish populations. Reaction to Prussia's annexation of Alsace-Lorraine following the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 was especially negative among members of the Jewish cultural elite, who feared that rights gained in the French Revolution might be removed by the less liberal Prussian state.[96] As a result of this quite a number "opted" to move to France (the so-called *optants*).[97] Many also, though perhaps for different reasons, emigrated to the New World, and between 1875 and 1900, the population of Jews in Alsace decreased from 2.7% of the total to 1.9%.[98]

surprising, then, especially given Buber's disagreement with this thesis, that he does not discuss the matter at greater length. However, this could have happened in conversations the two had in their rare meetings.

[94] Before the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine by the Prussian state in 1870, Jews from that area accounted for 57% of French Jewry (see Vicki Caron, *Between France and Germany: The Jews of Alsace-Lorraine, 1871–1918* [Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988] 12).

[95] See Caron, *Jews*, 119. Also see Freddy Raphaël, *Le judaïsme alsacien. Histoire, patrimoine, traditions* (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 1999) and Ruth Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island: Alfred Dreyfus and the Affair that Divided France* (London: Penguin Allen Lane, 2010) 43–45.

[96] See Caron, *Jews*, 27–30.

[97] The majority of Jewish *optants* were from the wealthier classes.

[98] See Caron, *Jews*, 92.

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Immigration into the area by German Jews, who became an increasingly important part of the annexed territory, compensated somewhat for this loss,[99] but also caused tensions with indigenous Alsatian Jews and served to deepen a feeling among the latter of strong allegiance to France.[100] However, attitudes began to change among Alsatian Jews toward the end of the century, partly as a result of the Dreyfus affair, which broke out in 1894. Dreyfus himself was an Alsatian Jew[101] and anti-republican forces in France, who tended to oppose Dreyfus's release from prison on a charge of treason, engaged both in anti-Alsatian and anti-Semitic rhetoric. Alsatian Jews, faced with this kind of prejudiced language, became more willing to accommodate themselves to Prussian rule,[102] especially as the new regime sought, in various ways, to take a firm stand against anti-Semitism.[103] A sign of the more liberal position being adopted toward Jews was seen not only in the elevation of certain Jews to positions of importance in society, but also in the University of Strassburg, which was re-founded after the annexation as the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Universität,[104] and which Schweitzer was himself to attend. Both in terms of the number of distinguished Jews on its staff[105] and the number of Jewish students,[106] it proved itself more liberal than universities in Prussia itself (though not devoid of anti-Semitic tendencies).[107]

In his short autobiographical work, written in the early 1920s, entitled *Memoirs of Childhood and Youth*,[108] Schweitzer recalls how a Jew called Mausche,[109] who

[99] Of the 2,012 Jews recorded as living in Strasbourg in 1902, 1,052 were so-called *Altdeutsche*.

[100] See Caron, *Jews*, 110–17.

[101] On his background see Harris, *Devil's Island*, 42–45.

[102] See Caron, *Jews*, 132–35.

[103] Anti-Semitic feelings were, however, still a presence within Alsatian society.

[104] Caron quotes a passage from Michel Huisman in which it is stated that Strassburg University had up to that point (the quotation comes from 1898) been able to avoid the anti-Semitism of which in many German towns more than one scholar had been the victim (*Jews*, 143). For more on the liberal spirit of the university see John E. Craig, *Scholarship and Nation Building: The Universities of Strasbourg and Alsatian Society, 1870–1939* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) 84.

[105] One of the most distinguished of these was the baptized Jew Georg Simmel, whose work was to influence Schweitzer in various ways.

[106] Caron cites a figure of 8.7% of the student population as being Jewish, though she notes that a high proportion of these were German Jews who had immigrated to Alsace (*Jews*, 173–75).

[107] The well-known historian Friedrich Meinecke, who was appointed to the university's faculty of history in 1901, comments on the strikingly large number of Jews on the staff, among whom he mentions Harry Bresslau, Schweitzer's father-in-law (on whom see below) and Hermann Bloch, describing the institution as "friendly to Jews" (judenfreundlich) (see Friedrich Meinecke, *Erlebtes*, 1862–1919 [Stuttgart: Koehler, 1964] 166). For an assessment of Meinecke's view, see Stephan Roscher, *Die Kaiser-Wilhelms–Universität, Straßburg 1872–1902* (Tübingen: Lang, 2006) 186–89; Roscher seeks to correct, at least in part, Meinecke's impression.

[108] Albert Schweitzer, *Aus meiner Kindheit und Jugendzeit* (Munich: Beck, 1924; ET *Memoirs of Childhood and Youth* [trans. Kurt Bergel and Alice R. Bergel; Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1997]).

[109] It has been suggested to me that "Mausche" might be related to the German word *mauscheln*, which means to engage in shady wheeling and dealing, and so a kind of nickname carrying negative

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dealt in cattle and land, used occasionally to pass through Günsbach, the village near Colmar, in which Schweitzer lived, with his donkey cart. Schweitzer notes that because no Jews lived in the village, this was an event for the boys each time it occurred, and they would run after Mausche and make fun of him, with some of the boys making their jackets look like pigs' ears and jumping up and down beside him. Schweitzer says that he joined in this general baiting, which evidently arose from Mausche's Jewish identity. Schweitzer then comments on how the boys would pursue him to the end of the village but that Mausche would bear all their teasing in silence, and then occasionally turn around and smile at the boys. Such benign stoicism, Schweitzer remarks, impressed him, and made him aware for the first time of what it meant to suffer silently in the face of persecution. "He [Mausche]," Schweitzer writes, "became an educator to me." He continues his account by stating that from then on he greeted Mausche in a kindly manner and that as a high school student he used to shake his hand and travel with him a little of the way. In spite of rumors that Mausche was a usurer and an unscrupulous real-estate shark, his example of forbearance continued to affect Schweitzer positively.[110]

This story is important not only because it indicates the existence in Schweitzer's childhood and beyond of the kind of anti-Semites not atypical of Alsace,[111] but also because of its apparently profound effect on Schweitzer's developing moral sensibilities. Schweitzer chooses, however, to describe these in general terms rather than as they specifically relate to his attitudes toward Jews. In the end the story is not about the Jewishness of Mausche, but about its importance for the moral development of Schweitzer and by extension the lesson that it carries.[112]

Schweitzer tells us that he was fascinated by politics,[113] and it is probably the case that he took a strong interest in the Dreyfus affair, which convulsed France at the end of the nineteenth century and led to huge conflict within French society and beyond. Interest, as we have noted, would have been greater in Alsace as Dreyfus was himself from that region, and Schweitzer mentions his own mother's strong interest in the affair and her pro-Dreyfusard views.[114] Of course, the matter transcended the issue of French attitudes toward Jews and took on a dimension of its own in which a cluster of political, religious, and other specifically French and national questions were raised. But the exposure to this controversy would have made Schweitzer more deeply aware of the existence of anti-Semitic forces in society. This point becomes more likely when we consider that during the period in which the scandal rumbled on (roughly from 1894 to 1906), Schweitzer was a frequent

overtones. But such a view seems an over-interpretation—Mausche was a well-known form of the Jewish name Moses.

[110] Schweitzer, *Memoirs*, 13–14.

[111] For the typicality of the kind of prejudices expressed in this story, see Harris, *Devil's Island*, 44, with relevant bibliography.

[112] This is the case, though, with many of Schweitzer's anecdotes as they appear in this book.

[113] See Schweitzer, *Memoirs*, 44–45.

[114] See Schweitzer, *Out of My Life*, 22–23.

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visitor to Paris through his involvement in the Paris Bach Society. Moreover, by 1908, it seems, he had become a friend of the French classical scholar, historian, and politician Théodore Reinach, who, together with his brothers, Salomon and the campaigning journalist Joseph—all of them liberal Jews—became among the most prominent advocates of Dreyfus.[115] It also seems that he and his wife Helene enjoyed a very close friendship with Théodore's wife, Fanny, who contributed a generous sum of money to Schweitzer as he attempted to gather funds before he set off to Lambaréné.[116] Moving in the society associated with the Reinachs, and in particular, Théodore, Schweitzer would have been at the center of liberal Jewish French support of Dreyfus, even if by the time he became acquainted with the latter, it was after the height of the controversy.[117]

[115] On Théodore Reinach and his brothers Salomon and Joseph, see Harris, *Devil's Island*, especially 161–63 and 187–93. Schweitzer first refers to having dinner with Théodore in Paris in a letter to his future wife, Helene, dated June 29, 1908. He notes that Reinach had invited him to dinner so that he could confirm that the man who wrote *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* also wrote the book on Bach (here referring to the shorter French edition, published in 1905: *J. S. Bach. Le musicien-poète* [with the collaboration of Hubert Gillot; Paris: Costallat, 1905]; Théodore had strong musicological interests and had sought to reform the synagogal chants of eastern Jews). It seems that Reinach, in his capacity as a deputy (he was one of the so-called *bloc des gauches* representatives from 1906–1914), helped smooth Schweitzer's attempts to go to Gabon as a German and not a French citizen, something that had become a sticking point between Schweitzer and members of the Paris Missionary Society, the organization in whose mission station Schweitzer had chosen to work.

[116] There are numerous references to meetings between Fanny and Schweitzer, and then Helene, in letters between the latter two, dating from 1910 (references found in Albert Schweitzer and Helene Bresslau, *Die Jahre vor Lambarene. Briefe 1902–1912* (ed. Rhena Schweitzer Miller and Gustav Woytt; Munich: Beck, 1992; ET *The Albert Schweitzer–Helene Bresslau Letters, 1902–1912* [ed. and trans. Antje Bultmann Lemke with the assistance of Nancy Stewart; The Albert Schweitzer Library; Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003]). It seems that Schweitzer accompanied Fanny to concerts (May 5, 1911; November 18, 1911), played the organ to her (August 9, 1911), and even used her as a confidante with whom to discuss his relationship with Helene (August 23, 1911). For her support of the Lambaréné hospital see a letter dated November 18, 1911, promising a thousand francs a year, discussed by Mühlstein, *Helene Bresslau*, 139 (see also 133 and 142). The closeness of Schweitzer and his wife to Fanny is shown in their decision to give their only child, Rhena, Fanny's second name. On this see Oermann, *Schweitzer*, 183.

[117] While the Reinachs were liberal Jews who were strongly assimilated, they remained committed to the reform of Judaism and the study of its history. In 1884, Théodore wrote his *Histoire des Israëlites, depuis l'époque de leur dispersion jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Hachette, 1884), in which he describes the role of the prophets in transforming Judaism from an animistic religion to one imbued with moral universalism. He goes on to trace a line of Jewish development running from the same prophets to Moses Maimonides and Moses Mendelssohn, seeing the emancipation of the Jews as marking a new point in their history. This emphasis on Jewish rationality over against the mystical and more obscurantist traditions of the Jews (for all of the above see Harris, *Devil's Island*, 191) is not totally dissimilar to Schweitzer's own understanding of the Christian tradition with its heavy emphasis on the prophets and later the Enlightenment, and it is difficult to imagine that Théodore and his younger Alsatian friend did not discuss their similar visions of religion, exchanging opinions about the history of their own traditions—the fact that Théodore had read or at least heard of Schweitzer's *Von Reimarus zu Wrede* (*Quest*) is evidence of some interest and would have provided ample topics for conversation. But if their conversations touched on the history of

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Schweitzer's attendance of the University of Strassburg would have brought him into contact with Jews. While it is unclear that any Jews studied Protestant theology, Schweitzer was also a student of philosophy, where there is evidence of some Jewish students, though no Jewish lecturers, and he subsequently studied medicine in a faculty that had the largest number of Jews in the university, making up about 15% of the student cohort.[118] Of the effect of all of this on him, we can say nothing as Schweitzer at no point reflects on such contacts, either in published works or correspondence.

Albert Schweitzer and the Bresslau Family

Without doubt, however, the most important Jewish association in Schweitzer's life was his wife, Helene Bresslau. Although Helene, along with her two brothers, was baptized as a Lutheran in 1886, both her mother and father were Jews who never converted. Her father, Harry Bresslau, was a distinguished historian of the medieval period,[119] who had spent much of his academic career in Berlin, and had only become a full Ordinarius (the top-ranking German professor) when he was appointed to this position in the department of history in Strasbourg in 1890, a sign of the more liberal attitude in that institution toward Jews. Bresslau had constantly been made aware, often in negative contexts, of his racial identity, and his advancement up the *cursus honorum* of German academia had been impeded on this account. When the historian Henrich von Treitschke, a former teacher of Bresslau, published his infamous essay, "Unsere Aussichten," in 1879, precipitating the so-called *Antisemitismusstreit*,[120] Bresslau had felt moved to respond in some detail and with a personal tone[121] to each of his former teacher's points, surprising even von Treitschke with the vehemence of his defense of Jews within the Reich.[122]

Judaism beyond the second century, Schweitzer gives no evidence of this in his written work, never as far as I have discovered referring to Reinach's *Histoire*.

[118] Schweitzer mentions a conversation with a Jewish student in the medical faculty in Albert Schweitzer, *Die Weltanschauung der Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben. Kulturphilosophie III* (ed. Claus Günzler and Johann Zürcher; 2 vols.; Werke aus dem Nachlass; Munich: Beck, 1999–2000) 2:200.

[119] For a brief account of Bresslau's life see Mühlstein, *Helene Bresslau*; and Horst Fuhrmann, *"Sind eben alles Menschen gewesen." Gelehrtenleben im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Beck, 1996) 104–8. Also note Bresslau's own account of his life in *Die Geschichtswissenschaft der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen* (ed. Sigfried Steinberg; 2 vols.; Leipzig: Meiner, 1925–1926) 2:29–83.

[120] In this text, von Treitschke argues that German society was being invaded by eastern Jews, who, while quickly assimilating themselves and indeed becoming successful, were bringing about the ruin of German society through their materialist tendencies. Von Treitschke feared that after one thousand years of what he termed "German culture," a new period of German-Jewish mixed culture would follow with disastrous results. See Heinrich von Treitschke, "Unsere Aussichten," *Preußische Jahrbücher* 44 (1879) 559–76.

[121] At one point in his response to von Treitschke, Bresslau notes how shocked he was when for the first time, as a seven-year-old boy, he was mocked as a Jew on the streets by other children.

[122] For the relevant texts see Karsten Krieger, *Der "Berliner Antisemitismusstreit" 1879–1881. Eine Kontroverse um die Zugehörigkeit der deutschen Juden zur Nation. Eine kommentierte Quellenedition im Auftrag des Zentrums für Antisemitismusforschung* (2 vols.; Munich: Saur, 2003).

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Bresslau's decision to have his three children baptized had its roots in his own life story and what he understood to be the implications of the *Antisemitismusstreit*.[123] In the more liberal atmosphere of Strassburg University, and Alsace generally, Bresslau appeared to thrive,[124] and in 1905 he was appointed the first Jewish Rektor of a German university.

Schweitzer's first meeting with Helene is difficult to date, but it probably occurred around 1900, and was initiated through a circle of friends, mainly from immigrant German families, with whom Schweitzer socialized. What is clear from letters written between Schweitzer and Helene from 1902 to 1913[125] is that from then on Helene became Schweitzer's chief confidante as he attempted, often in a state of psychological confusion and difficulty, to decide on a course in his life that would properly conform with his strong moral yearnings. Helene was to accompany him on his first trip to Africa, after they had married, but only occasionally after that, owing to ill health.[126] Her devotion to Schweitzer's cause was manifested in a variety of ways and never in doubt, even if the long absences and Schweitzer's reliance on a string of devoted female helpers would cause considerable strain on their relationship.

Schweitzer's association with the Bresslau family over a long period must have made him more sensitive than many Gentiles to issues pertaining to anti-Semitic prejudice. In a letter to Helene dated April 10, 1905, and written in the wake of the news of Harry Bresslau's appointment as Rektor of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Universität, Schweitzer states openly how much he feels for Helene's father after all his sufferings at the hands of "our race," implying a strong sense of the difficulties Bresslau had experienced as a Jew;[127] and one need not doubt that conversations between Schweitzer and Bresslau touched on the issue of anti-Jewish prejudice. In his correspondence with his wife, however, nothing is made of her Jewish origins, and even though Helene herself was employed by Schweitzer to read his New Testament and other publications from this period, there is no substantive discussion in any of the letters of Schweitzer's interpretation of Jesus as an eschatological prophet of Israel's redemption, or of Paul as someone who thought exclusively in

Bresslau's text is found at 1:195–216, and is an "open letter" (Sendschreiben) to von Treitschke. For brief comments on this see Fuhrmann, *Gelehrtenleben*, 106–7.

[123] See Mühlstein, *Helene Bresslau*, 21 for the effect of this event, and German anti-Semitism more generally, on the family.

[124] See ibid., 79, and literature cited there.

[125] Schweitzer and Bresslau, *Briefe*.

[126] She had contracted tuberculosis on their first trip to Africa and never recovered fully.

[127] See Schweitzer and Bresslau, *Briefe*, 88: "Your father has had to endure a great deal from people and has had to tolerate setbacks and injustices inflicted on him by our race" (Dein Vater hat viel von den Menschen zu leiden gehabt und Zurücksetzungen und Ungerechtigkeiten von unserer Rasse erdulden müssen). "Our race" (unsere Rasse) may refer to Gentiles or Germans (Jews in this period would often refer to themselves as a race).

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Jewish categories. Judaism as a subject is absent, except in the one case mentioned above.[128]

In some senses this is unsurprising. As Verena Mühlstein, Helene's most recent biographer, has shown, every attempt was made by Harry Bresslau to assimilate his children to German culture with all that implied (their baptism was but one expression of that).[129] Neither parent was religious nor a practicing Jew in any form, though Helene's mother, Clara, came from a much more religious background than her father (Clara had a brother who had trained in Jewish theology); but she appears to have raised no objections to Harry's decision to have their three children baptized. Against such a background "it is in vain that one looks for a Jewish consciousness in Helene."[130] Insofar as the latter possessed a developed sense of religiosity it could best be described as liberal Protestant.[131]

Schweitzer and Nazism

Of greater significance, given the background of his wife and the personal history of his father-in-law, is Schweitzer's reaction to the beginnings of Nazi rule and its consequences for Jews. Schweitzer was clearly aware of the potential horrors of National Socialism, as his speech to a gathering of Germans in Frankfurt in 1932

[128] In a letter dated January 26, 1908 (Schweitzer and Bresslau, *Briefe*, 198), Schweitzer recalls a conversation with Friedrich Curtius, the well-known Prussian official, who was the so-called Kreisdirektor of Strasbourg. In a discussion about rationalism, the latter had asserted that this was a strong feature of Schweitzer's intellectual make-up, claiming that it was one that he shared with the Jews: "For the foundation of the Jewish spirit consists in a simultaneously superficial and yet penetrating rationalism" (Denn die Grundlage des jüdischen Geistes besteht in einem zugleich oberfächlichen und tiefgehenden Rationalismus). Schweitzer goes on to note that he is aware of the presence of such rationalism in Helene and comments, "It is that which gives you peace, and me also" (Er ist es, der Ihnen diese Ruhe gibt, wie auch mir). While viewing this rationalism positively, Schweitzer fails to comment on the view that it is in some sense Jewish, though his reference to Helene in this context might be significant.

[129] In his own account of his life, which appeared in the series entitled *Die Geschichtswissenschaft der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen* (for full bibliographic reference see n. 119 above), published in the year of his death, 1926, Bresslau never refers to his Jewish origins, not even to his role in the *Antisemitismusstreit*. This might be seen as a sign of his assimilationist tendencies and as a desire to exclude almost any sense of his Jewishness from his personal life. But it may have had more to do with a sense of hurt at his treatment and a reluctance to go over sad terrain. Bresslau, though assimilated, was keen to promote the cause of Jews in Germany, a fact not only seen in his participation in the *Antisemitismusstreit*, but also in his role in the founding of the short-lived journal *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Judentums in Deutschland*, his authorship of a number of articles on the history of the Jews in Germany, and his membership in the Historische Kommission der Geschichte des Judentums in Deutschland. Such activity was not, of course, incompatible with the development on Bresslau's part of a strongly patriotic spirit, and in the same autobiographical essay he records how he went around Alsace lecturing as a representative of the government, and his sadness at the return of Alsace to France at the end of the First World War. He was expelled from Strasbourg on December 1, 1918, as a "pan-Germanist militant."

[130] Mühlstein, *Helene Bresslau*, 22.

[131] Helene took her Protestantism seriously, and she and Schweitzer appear from their letters to have shared a genuine liberal Protestant piety.

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on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Goethe's death indicates. This does not refer directly to the disturbances of the day, but makes it plain that Germans were at a fateful hour, where the need to resist and preserve the moral spirit are presented as central planks in dealing with the impending future.[132] It was also during this time that Schweitzer attempted unsuccessfully to complete the writing of his own moral philosophy, in which, among other things, he adopted a strikingly more negative stance toward the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, partially influenced, one might argue, by Nazi usage of the philosopher's work to bolster their own beliefs.[133] He was also moved to address in some detail the whole question of the rise of what he termed "neoprimitivism" (*Neoprimitivismus*), an offshoot of which he assumed Nazism to be.[134] In letters dating from the end of 1932, he begins to express his considerable despair at the prospect of Nazi rule in Germany.[135] Hitler's elevation

[132] See Oermann, *Schweitzer*, 213–14. In the speech Schweitzer refers to the political and social ferment of the time, noting that "spiritual existence is threatened by material existence" (mit der materiellen Existenz ist die geistige bedroht). He then continues: "So much of what might be done for culture and education can no longer be continued . . . so great is the distress and concern in which this day falls" (So vieles, was für Kultur und Bildung getan wurde, kann nicht mehr fortgesetzt werde . . . so gross sind die Not und die Sorge, in die dieser Tag fällt). He goes on to delineate, again in general terms, the way in which terrible material developments have influenced economic, social, and ethical life. A more detailed discussion of this speech is now found in Suermann, *Schweitzer als "homo politicus"*, 165–68, where the author gives a helpful description of the tense context in which the speech was delivered, noting that the police were on hand in case the room in which Schweitzer was talking was stormed by the SA. Suermann makes it clear that Schweitzer could not have been unaware of anti-Semitic disturbances before this date caused by the Nazis. Schweitzer had sensed the way Germany was drifting as early as 1930, as a letter where he inveighs against the weakness of German democracy indicates (quoted by Mühlstein, *Helene Bresslau*, 239).

[133] For especially negative comments about Nietzsche in these volumes, written between 1931 and 1945, see Schweitzer, *Kulturphilosophie III*, 1:332–41; 2:322–27 and 345; and the sentence: "With him European thought lost its soundness" (Bei ihm verliert das europäische Denken seine Gediegenheit; ibid., 345). But, in spite of a growing sense of the difficulty of Nietzsche's views, Schweitzer is clear that the philosopher, whom he never explicitly associates with the Nazis, was not properly understood by those who were now intent upon using him. To assume that he provided some kind of template for society's organization was, according to Schweitzer, quite wrong—Nietzsche's genius lay in the questions he asked, not the answers he gave. But people now, Schweitzer notes, were making of him what he never was, precisely because he did not speak to them but rather to Schweitzer's own generation (see Schweitzer, *Kulturphilosophie III*, 1:437). Something of this critique is conveyed in the unglossed statement: "Not what Nietzsche and Kierkegaard thought and said but what one makes of it! Today's thought moves backwards to it." (Nicht was Nietzsche und Kierkegaard gedacht und gesagt haben sondern was man daraus macht! Das heutige Denken führt sich auf sie zurück [*Kulturphilosophie III*, 1:450].) For a helpful account of Schweitzer's changing views on Nietzsche, see Claus Günzler, *Albert Schweitzer. Einführung in sein Denken* (Munich: Beck, 1996) 46–54. While Günzler is clear that "the misuse of Nietzschean thought forced him [Schweitzer] finally to part company with Nietzsche" (die Mißbrauchbarkeit des Nietzscheschen Denkens nötigt ihn letztlich zur Absage an Nietzsche selbst), he is adamant that Nietzsche was central to Schweitzer's own ethical development, a point illustrated by the large number of references to the philosopher in Schweitzer's *Kulturphilosophie III*. Similar comments are found in Günzler's introduction to *Kulturphilosophie III*, 1:27, but he does not develop these at any length.

[134] See especially Schweitzer, *Kulturphilosophie III*, 2:298–330, 311–13, and 426–32.

[135] Letters quoted in Mühlstein, *Helene Bresslau*, 228. The letter Mühlstein quotes comes from

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to chancellor in 1933 precipitated the relatively swift emigration of Helene's family (virtually all emigrated except her mother, who was too old and infirm to travel), and friends of Jewish origin that she and Schweitzer had made in pre-war Alsace. In such emigrations and in the fear expressed by their participants, Schweitzer was faced with the clear reality of Nazism's anti-Semitic character. While Schweitzer gives voice in a few places in his posthumously published third volume on cultural philosophy to the fact of mistreatment of the Jews, his observations are brief and undeveloped.[136] Never, however, did Schweitzer, a consistent opponent of nationalism,[137] make a public statement on the appalling events that were taking place in Germany, either as these related to the Jews specifically, or more generally, and this in spite of calls to him to speak out from a variety of quarters.[138] In 1933, for instance, the German mathematician Max Born, who, though a Lutheran, was classed a Jew under Nazi racial laws owing to his ancestry, pleaded with Schweitzer to return to Europe from Africa and call upon the world to rise up against the barbarism that was Nazism.[139] But Schweitzer replied that he thought the situation in Germany hopeless, and did not feel himself in a position to leave his patients in

the middle of November 1932. Schweitzer's despair at the situation in Germany, deepened by a visit to Berlin, is captured in such words as the following: "Now I almost no longer have the strength to hope. Again and again I say to myself, Why write this? [that is, his third volume on cultural philosophy] . . . Before the new spirit can come, the peoples' madness will have destroyed everything." (Jetzt habe ich fast nicht mehr die Kraft zu hoffen. Immer sage ich mir, wozu dies schreiben . . . Ehe der neue Geist kommen kann, hat der Wahnsinn der Völker alles zerstört [ellipsis in source].)

[136] See *Kulturphilosophie III*, 2:200 and 219. In the latter passage, Schweitzer castigates the failure of a number of unnamed states to allow Jews, fleeing from persecution, to immigrate into their lands, so condemning them to horrendous suffering and destruction. Note also ibid., 303–4 for Schweitzer's reference to the presence of state-sponsored torture but again without any reference to the authorities to whom he is referring.

[137] His opposition to nationalism is seen most clearly in Schweitzer, *Wir Epigonen*, 77–92, but is present throughout his work. For a discussion of this opposition see Suermann, *Schweitzer als "homo politicus"*, 119–31.

[138] It appears that Schweitzer was invited by Joseph Goebbels to Germany after 1933 to give concerts and lectures. Apparently Goebbels concluded his letter to Schweitzer in his customary way with the words "with German greeting" (mit deutschem Gruss). Schweitzer replied signing off "with central African Greeting" (mit zentralafrikanischem Gruss). The story is retold by Theodor Heuss in his paean to Schweitzer on the occasion of the presentation to the latter with the Friedenspreis des Deutschen Buchhandels in 1951. Heuss, then President of the Bundesrepublik and a friend of Schweitzer from their student days in Strasbourg, attributes the story to Werner Picht, one of Schweitzer's many biographers and a personal friend. The correspondence has, sadly, never been found. For a discussion of the matter see Oermann, *Schweitzer*, 219.

[139] See Mühlstein, *Helene Bresslau*, 231. The letter, dated July 2, 1933, is now quoted in Suermann, *Schweitzer als "homo politicus"*, 172. The plea is strong in its tone: "I would like to express my feeling that here in the middle of European 'civilization' a situation has developed that needs a man of your clout. You are a man to whom the world's conscience would listen! . . . I believe that here in this very moment a more important obligation awaits you than in Africa." (Ich möchte nur dem Gefühl Ausdruck geben, dass hier im Zentrum der europäischen 'Zivilisation' eine Lage enststanden ist, die ein [sic] Mann von Ihrem Schlage braucht. Sie sind ein Mann, auf den das Weltgewissen hört! . . . Ich glaube, dass im Augenblick hier Ihrer eine wichtigere Aufgabe wartet, als in Afrika [ellipses in source].)

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Africa. Max Planck also wonders in a letter to Schweitzer, dated August 9, 1938, what kind of effect Schweitzer would have if he decided to make Europe his zone of operation, opining that it would bring no fewer blessings than the ones he brought to Lambaréné.[140] Schweitzer's own niece Carolina Bresslau also asked Schweitzer to give clear expression to his contempt for a Germany that hailed such a dictator as Hitler. But all of this was in vain: Schweitzer remained silent.[141]

There is, as far as I can see, nothing sinister about this silence. Schweitzer, as we have indicated, despised Nazism and all it stood for. He spoke against it in private, and after Hitler came to power he vowed never to set foot in the country until the latter had been deposed (in fact he only returned to Germany in 1948). He and his wife were assiduous in their attempts to persuade both their relatives and other Jews to leave Germany, and they helped a number of individuals resettle, often in the United States.[142] Moreover, it is difficult to discern any indication of an anti-Jewish streak in Schweitzer, a point supported by the fact of his warm relationship with the Bresslau family and also by his friendship with Martin Buber, to which I have already referred.

But while Schweitzer's failure to speak out publicly against the Nazis' anti-Semitism does not imply any sympathy for Nazism, or deeply held antipathy to Judaism, it seems strange and even regrettable. After all, Schweitzer's wife was, according to the Nuremberg Laws, Jewish, as was all her family. Her father, who luckily did not live to see the Nazis in power, had, as we have seen, spoken out against von Treitschke in the *Antisemitismusstreit* about fifty years previously, and one of the slogans of that dispute, itself coined by von Treitschke, namely "the Jews are our misfortune" (die Juden sind unser Unglück), was daubed on the walls of many German towns in the period following Hitler's coming to power. Schweitzer's stock was high in Germany and while technically he was a Frenchman

[140] "And yet I sometimes ask myself what sort of effect you would have if you wanted to make Europe your center of operations; certainly no fewer blessings would come forth than do in Lambaréné" (Ich muss mich doch manchmal fragen, welche Art von Wirksamkeit Sie wohl entfalten würden, wenn Sie sich in Europa Ihr Arbeitsgebiet einrichten wollten; sicherlich würde daraus nicht weniger Segen entspringen als in Lambarene [Schweitzer, *Briefwechsel*, 611]). Note also the possibly conscience-pricking words of Planck in another letter to Schweitzer, dated September 29, 1938: "Sometimes I envy you your quiet life, lived out in peace and harmony, notwithstanding all your work. And yet each of us must fight as well as he can in the particular places that fate has assigned him." (Manchmal beneide ich Sie um Ihr bei aller Arbeit doch geruhiges Leben in Frieden und Harmonie. Und doch muss jeder von uns auf seinem ihm vom Schicksal bestimmten Posten kämpfen so gut er kann [Schweitzer, *Briefwechsel*, 611].)

[141] Mühlstein, *Helene Bresslau*, 231.

[142] One instance of such help relates to Herbert Spiegelberg who, though a Christian, was deemed to be Jewish under the Nuremberg Laws. Spiegelberg, who had originally attended Schweitzer's confirmation classes in Strasbourg, informed Schweitzer in 1933 that because of his origins, he was unable to habilitate. Schweitzer wrote letters of recommendation for him to the U.S. where he was able to immigrate in 1938. See Schweitzer, *Briefwechsel*, 644–99 for the correspondence between the two, and for more evidence of his attempts to help Jews get out of Germany and be repatriated elsewhere, see Suermann, *Schweitzer als "homo politicus"*, 177–78.

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at this time, he was held to be a product of German *Bildungskultur*. As such he had been the recipient of some of its most esteemed distinctions, not the least of which was membership in the Preußische Akademie through which he had met opponents of the regime like Planck and Born. The sense of him as a significant figure in that culture, and indeed in European culture more generally, was voiced by those two men, and no doubt by many others who asked him to speak out against the horrors of the criminal Nazi state. Schweitzer's claim in the face of such requests that the situation in Germany was lost, rendering action against the Nazis pointless, seems odd coming from the man who had a strongly developed but positive sense of the role of resignation in ethical action. Those who sought to improve the world, but despaired at the impossibility of the task, should, Schweitzer claimed, accept the necessity of resignation and simply act out their moral vision.[143] Schweitzer might have been resigned to the uselessness of his intervention in German public life in the mid-1930s and beyond, but, according to his own philosophical position, that should not have prevented him from speaking out. And was not the promulgator of the theory of "reverence for life," the absolute creed of non-violence, bound to say in public what he thought about the violent actions of the Nazis, actions that had directly affected the lives of members of his wife's family? Schweitzer's oversight here, which stands in stark contrast to his willingness, under pressure, to speak out against nuclear weapons in the 1950s as well as other phenomena, such as the forced emigration of German peoples from communist lands, is difficult to understand. Some have put it down to a desire to protect his friends in Germany at the time, who would, so the argument goes, have been endangered if he had spoken out publicly against the Nazis, but there is no evidence for such reasoning on the part of Schweitzer. Others have asserted that his silence should be recognized as a form of political protest, but this seems to be special pleading.[144] Perhaps it was based on a personal and political calculation: he felt that to express his thoughts on this matter would make him appear a less universal figure, for it would align him with a particular group of individuals; in other words such action could be seen as too political.[145] But one could respond that to speak out against Nazism would align him with universal values, and men like Planck, who had implored him to

[143] On the complex role of resignation in Schweitzer's thought see Ara Paul Barsam, *Reverence for Life: Albert Schweitzer's Great Contribution to Ethical Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) 18–21. Schweitzer understands the concept positively, as a way of overcoming the apparently inevitable conflict of wills to live. Although Schweitzer never applies the concept politically, one can see how it might be applied in such a way, especially where political issues are so obviously ethical as they are in any consideration of the Holocaust.

[144] These views, associated, respectively, with Johann Zürcher, a follower of Schweitzer who had spent much of his life editing the latter's *Nachlass*, and with Erich Gräßer, another follower who has written at length about Schweitzer and similarly edited some of his *Nachlass*, are reported in Suermann, *Schweitzer als "homo politicus"*, 173, but without comment from the author.

[145] For a helpful discussion of Schweitzer as a *homo politicus*, see ibid. It is notable that Schweitzer never spoke out explicitly against the evils of Communism, in spite of the fact that he was aware of its appalling record on human rights (ibid., 499).

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intervene, had themselves taken a very different stance. Whatever the reason, it might well have seemed, at war's end, that his silence on this matter had been a miscalculation, not to say a moral shortcoming.

A Sense of Guilt?

Such a view may find some support in an event that occurred later in Schweitzer's life. In 1963 Rolf Hochhuth published a play with the German title *Der Stellvertreter*,[146] translated into English as *The Deputy*.[147] Hochhuth's claim in the play is that Pius XII's apparent silence about the Holocaust makes him a culpable and tragic figure, and to this effect the play's central scene is a confrontation between the pope and a Catholic priest, Riccardo, who opposes his policy of studied neutrality. The play was an instant success and inspired a great deal of controversial comment. It seems that the publisher, Rohwolt Verlag, sent Schweitzer a copy of the play. Schweitzer, then, wrote back to them and his letter was to form the preface to the American edition of the work.[148] Why Schweitzer agreed to allow this letter to be published as a preface to the American edition is unclear but striking—as far as I know he wrote no other prefaces to books or plays, and tended not to want to associate himself with controversy of any sort for fear that it would detract from his own message of reverence for life, and it is clear that by the time his preface appeared, the play had been the subject of extended controversy.[149] While the preface is not long, its contents are intriguing. He begins by expressing his thanks to the Hamburg-based publishing firm for sending him the play. He notes that he was an active witness "of the failure which took place in those days, and I believe that *we* must concern ourselves with this great problem of the events of history" [italics mine]. He continues by stating that "we owe this to ourselves, for our failure made us all participants in the guilt of those days." Schweitzer asserts that the failure was not just of the Catholic Church but of Protestants as well, who "became guilty by simply accepting the terrible, inhuman fact of the persecution of the Jews." He repeats his view that the failure lies with philosophy and free thought. For Schweitzer the appearance of *Der Stellvertreter* is significant not only because it indicts a specific individual who placed on himself the great responsibility of silence, but also because it is a solemn warning to contemporary culture to forego any acceptance of inhumanity because it leaves us unconcerned. For Schweitzer

[146] Rolf Hochhuth, *Der Stellvertreter* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1963). My decision to discuss Hochhuth's work in connection with Schweitzer's silence about Nazi persecution of Jews was made independently of Suermann, who now has a similar discussion in *Schweitzer als "homo politicus"*, 173–75.

[147] For a discussion of the play and the controversy it ignited see Margaret E. Ward, *Rolf Hochhuth* (Twayne's World Author Series 463; Boston: Twayne, 1977) 25–47.

[148] Rolf Hochhuth, *The Deputy* (trans. Richard and Clara Winston; Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997).

[149] For a detailed and early account of the controversy stimulated by the play, see *The Storm over "The Deputy"* (ed. Eric Bentley; New York: Grove Press, 1964).

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Hochhuth's drama is not only an indictment of history, but also a clarion call to our time, which, in his opinion, is dominated by a naïve inhumanity.

There are a number of reasons why Schweitzer might have felt moved first to write to Rohwolt Verlag, and then to allow his letter to be used as the preface to the American edition of a highly controversial play. One might lie in his conviction that the world, faced with nuclear destruction (against which Schweitzer spoke so vehemently), had chosen simply to ignore it rather than protest against it. But it is surely also plausible to argue that Schweitzer's enthusiasm for a play that attacked the culpable silence of the pope about the Holocaust gave expression to a personal sense of guilt at his own previous failure to speak out in public against the reality of the persecution and destruction of the Jews in Germany and beyond.[150]

Conclusion

This paper has sought to shed light on an important, but little-studied, aspect of Albert Schweitzer's life and work. It has fallen into two halves, one dealing with what Schweitzer says about Judaism in his written oeuvre, especially those works concerned with the New Testament, and the second dealing with his interaction with Jews and Judaism in his life. Whether the two halves complement each other or are mutually revealing, or both, will be discussed at the end of this conclusion.

Attention needs to be drawn to a number of points. First, Schweitzer, in his studies of Jesus and Paul, is at ease arguing for the view that the key to understanding them lies in interpreting them against an exclusively Jewish background, understood as an eschatological one.[151] While Schweitzer sees both of them as thinking originally within inherited categories, he never indulges in what might be termed a sustained negative critique of their Jewish heritage, or in a well-developed Christian theological rhetoric of supersessionism, especially common among his German theological peers, not least those from a liberal background.[152] True, on occasion Schweitzer

[150] Suermann supports the case I have made above, at least indirectly, by drawing attention to Schweitzer's correspondence with Pastor Martin Niemöller, now available in Schweitzer, *Briefwechsel*, 471–500 (see Suermann, *Schweitzer als "homo politicus"*, 175–77). In a letter dated July 24, 1960, and quoted by Suermann (*Schweitzer als "homo politicus"*, 177), Schweitzer castigates Niemöller, who, like Schweitzer, was a strong opponent of the nuclear arms race, for not opposing Nazism energetically enough, or at least restricting his objections only to Hitler's actions against the church. Elsewhere, in a celebratory volume on the occasion of Niemöller's 70th birthday, Schweitzer, by contrast, questions his criticism of Niemöller for being too ecclesio-centric in his attacks on Nazism—explicitly mentioning persecution of the Jews as an omission—by noting his own distance from those events in Africa and wondering whether he would have been as brave as Niemöller had been (see *Bis an das Ende der Erde. Ökumenische Beiträge zum 70. Geburtstag von Martin Niemöller* [ed. Hanfried Krüger; Munich: Beck, 1962] 26–28).

[151] Note the following comments from his "Selbstdarstellung": "Jesus and Paul can both be explained as having arisen out of Jewish thought" (Jesus und Paulus sind beide ganz aus jüdischen Gedanken zu erklären [Schweitzer, "Selbstdarstellung," 374]).

[152] A read through Gerdmar, *Theological Anti-Semitism*, with its detailed delineation of the different forms of supersessionism and the standard views about Judaism found in a range of 19th- and 20th-cent. Old and New Testament scholars, would make this clear; see especially 580. Interestingly,

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betrays, albeit in a muted form, some typical prejudices about the Pharisees or the rabbis, or related matters; and it is also the case that Schweitzer sees Jesus and Paul in their different ways as thinking out Jewish eschatology to a point where it can drop away and reveal a message of lasting and universal value, but he does so while attempting to retain the importance of what is specifically Jewish, albeit in an inevitably complex way.

Consistent with this attitude is the fact that Schweitzer comments on occasion on the reluctance of his peers to take full account of Jesus's and Paul's Jewishness. But Schweitzer does not make the inability of his peers to come to terms with this fact as he would see it, or the related phenomenon of their harsh comments on Judaism, a separate theme of his own historiography of the study of Jesus or Paul. It is, of course, there in Schweitzer's observations about scholars' attempts to overcome, evade, or generally ignore Jesus's or Paul's eschatological message and actions. Such attempts, however, are rarely expressed as the overcoming of Jewishness per se, and more in terms of the positive, though ultimately distorting and failed attempt, of wanting to modernize Jesus and Paul.[153] Their opinions, for Schweitzer, result more from an interpretive error, from a hermeneutical need, than from a desire to de-judaize. In this context, it is striking, though perhaps not surprising, that Schweitzer fails to engage with the literature of those scholars associated with the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* movement, in whose work the issue of Christian anti-Judaism looms so large.

Related to some of the above is the fact that Schweitzer takes no real interest in the history of the development of Judaism after the time of Christian origins, and in spite of his remarks about the Jewishness of Jesus and Paul, is unconcerned with the question of Jewish-Christian relations, both as they developed in the ancient and later periods and in his own time, a point that emerges, for example, in his correspondence with Martin Buber. This latter point is especially significant as Schweitzer was interested in the study of comparative religions but never Judaism nor indeed Islam. In part this might be explained by Schweitzer's own derogatory, although not deeply informed, views about rabbinic Judaism, which he refers to at one point as "a sun-scorched plain."[154] Such a lack of interest may also lie in Schweitzer's belief that in terms of the paradigms into which he divided the religions of the world—monistic and dualistic, optimistic and pessimistic, ethical and nonethical—Judaism comes very close to Christianity. Related to this observation, there is a sense in some of his remarks about Judaism, not least when

Schweitzer is not discussed by Gerdmar, though, as I have already suggested, he might have been considered in the same broadly positive light as Weiss and Gressmann.

[153] "What surprised and dismayed the theology of the last forty years was that, despite all forced and arbitrary interpretations, it could not keep Him [Jesus] in our time, but had to let Him go. He returned to His own time, not owing to the application of any historical ingenuity, but by the same inevitable necessity by which the liberated pendulum returns to its original position" (Schweitzer, *Quest* [2nd ET], 478–79).

[154] Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters*, 49.

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he writes about its manifestation as a *Kulturstaat*, that he sees its most significant characteristics, understood as ethical characteristics, as being transmitted through Christianity. If this is a form of supersessionism, it is mild, as Schweitzer nowhere passes negative judgment on the fact of the ongoing existence of Judaism, even if he takes little interest in it.

Schweitzer lived at a time when it was difficult to escape the presence of anti-Semitism. While a student and young man he was exposed to it, not least in the Dreyfus affair.[155] More particularly, his close friendship with, and subsequent marriage to, Helene Bresslau would have brought the fact of Jewish suffering even closer to home, as Helene's father, Harry, had been the victim of such prejudice, had written against it at a time of heightened anti-Semitic feeling in the German Empire, and had had his children baptized because of it.

Some might be tempted to argue that Schweitzer's less polemical account of Judaism is best explained by reference to this background, while others might note that precisely such a background makes his failure to engage with anti-Jewish sentiment in Christian theology more problematic. Interestingly, Schweitzer's marriage to Helene does not appear to have increased his sense of curiosity about Judaism or his familiarity with it. But this is probably best explained by the fact that Helene came from a highly assimilated background in which the religious practices of Judaism played no part and where, encouraged by a desire to assimilate, Jewish identity was not overtly emphasized. The fact of Helene's family's Jewishness loomed larger when the Nazis came to power in 1933, and most members decided to emigrate. While expressing his deep loathing of Nazism's racist tendencies, and seeking to account for the rise of what he regarded as a form of neoprimitivism in his cultural-philosophical works as well as helping both family members and others emigrate, Schweitzer chose not to speak out publicly on the subject, in spite of pleas for him to do so. It is difficult to believe that he did not come to see this as a moral oversight, a point that might be supported by his decision to allow his comments on Rolf Hochhuth's play, *Der Stellvertreter*, to form the preface to its American edition, and from other comments.[156]

Is there, then, a connection between Schweitzer's attitude to Judaism as expressed in his written works on the New Testament and elsewhere and his interaction with Jewish issues as these arose in his life? Some might argue that there is a strange disjunction between, for instance, Schweitzer's strong connection with a Jewish family and his failure to engage with Jewish culture beyond his interest in it as a means to understand the two major figures of the New Testament. I have sought, however, to account for this disjunction by arguing that the Bresslau family was

[155] Suermann quotes from an article in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, published to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the death of Émile Zola, Dreyfus's great defender, in which the anonymous author notes that the present times in Germany cry out for a new Zola. Suermann observes that Schweitzer could have been just that person, but he chose not to be (*Schweitzer als "homo politicus"*, 173).

[156] See n. 150 and his comments on this matter to Martin Niemöller.

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highly assimilated and so uninterested, even positively opposed to, giving voice to their Jewishness. Others might argue, here more controversially, that there is in fact a problematic conjunction between his lack of interest in Judaism, beyond the New Testament, together with hints in his work at the idea of supersessionism, and his failure to speak out publicly against the Nazis and their anti-Jewish policies.[157] Against such a connection, we might note that Schweitzer experienced little difficulty in affirming Christianity's Jewish origins, and though he sought to show how the particularity of ancient Christianity was not an insurmountable obstacle to affirming its universal significance, he did this without engaging in extended polemic against Judaism. In fact his work appears strikingly free of anti-Jewish sentiment, or forms of supersessionism, when one considers the intellectual and social context out of which he emerged. Schweitzer, I would contend, did not have a problem with Judaism, at least not one to which he gave any expression. Moreover, we should be clear that Schweitzer's failure to speak out against Nazi oppression can be paralleled in his failure to protest against certain communist regimes—he wished not to be seen to be a partisan figure but one who somehow transcended the particularities of politics.[158] This does not, for obvious reasons, make his failure to speak out against the Nazis' anti-Semitic policies any less problematic, as Schweitzer seemingly came close to acknowledging. But it makes it less easy to argue that Schweitzer's apparent lack of interest in Judaism beyond the period of the New Testament and his mild supersessionism can be directly linked to his failure to criticize in public the Nazis and their anti-Semitic policies. Some may dispute such a conclusion and think that the evidence I have presented points in another direction. It is, I hope, one of the contributions of this article to have presented the evidence as far as is possible, however one understands its interpretation.

[157] For the relationship between exegesis and anti-Semitism, see Gerdmar, *Theological Anti-Semitism*, 593–609.

[158] In this context it is important to note that Schweitzer was not like some theologians and indeed many others, who spoke out against Nazi oppression more generally but failed to mention the Jewish persecution. He simply failed to speak out against Nazi oppression publicly at all. Again this should not be taken as an exculpatory observation, but one that may show that Schweitzer had no particular problem with Judaism. In this context reference should be made to n. 150 above and Schweitzer's criticism of the specific character of Niemöller's attack on the Nazis.

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