

Evangelical Protestants, Jews, and the Epistle to the Hebrews in mid-nineteenth-century Britain*

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On 14 May 1867, the Reverend Charles Schwartz (1817–1870) of the Free Church of Scotland delivered his inaugural address as the president of the Hebrew-Christian Alliance at Willis's Rooms in London. He looked forward to a time in which the nation of Israel accepted Christ as their Messiah and would be “changed from a persecuting Saul into a professing Paul; and if what Paul achieved by the grace of God in bringing to the Gentiles the knowledge of Christ is marvellous in our eyes, what will it be if a whole nation of Pauls, as it were, shall proclaim to the astonished world the crucified and glorious Saviour.” Schwartz was clear in his conversionist purpose. Israel must be “trodden down” until it accepted Jesus as the Messiah. Yet conversion did not entail for Schwartz, as it did for many nineteenth-century Protestant missionaries, a rift with Judaism. Jews were called to embrace a “Hebrew Christianity” based on the acceptance of a Jewish Jesus as the Messiah of scriptural prophecy. Schwartz was cutting in his disdain for the growing number of Protestants who played down the Jewishness of Jesus or else suggested that he had come to liberate Christians from the Old Testament. A Dutch minister, Schwartz noted, had recently complained that modern artists made Jesus look too Jewish: “He thought that rather offensive.”¹ As well he might, for Schwartz was born a Jew in Prussian Poland before converting to Christianity as a student, then working for British missionaries, taking orders in the Free Church of Scotland and finally succeeding another convert clergyman as the minister of the cavernous Trinity Chapel, Newnham Street, just off Edgware Road, London.² But there was another

1 “Hebrew-Christian Alliance”, *The Scattered Nation; Past, Present and Future* 2 (1867): 156.

2 Aaron Bernstein, *Some Jewish Witnesses for Christ* (London: Operative Jewish Converts' Institution, 1909), 467–8. See also Michael Darby, *The Emergence of the Hebrew Christian Movement in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 153–70.

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stumbling block: representing Jesus as “a Greek instead of a Hebrew Messiah” robbed Christians of their faith. He would become a mere “law-giver, a man becoming God, no longer God becoming man. It is Greek, yea, the devil’s theology.”³ The “professing Paul” was the preservative against these errors: a Jew who grasped that the coming of Jesus fulfilled scriptural prophecy and his sacrificial death the law. He could argue for the saving righteousness of faith in Christ in using the conceptual vocabulary of the Pharisees, because he had been one of them.

The problem of how to isolate “Hebrew” from “Greek” elements in the Christian faith was, as Schwartz recognized, an increasingly pressing and difficult one for nineteenth-century Protestants. While much liberal Protestant or broad-church thinking was devoted to establishing that true Christianity both inherited the promises of ancient Israel and totally broke with the Judaism of its time, this essay concentrates on evangelical Protestants who were driven by their deep commitment to the conversion of Jews to emphasize that Christianity remained essentially Jewish. It argues that they found in Paul an icon of an intellectual project at once aggressive and defensive, depending on whether they were addressing Jews or fellow Christians. The aggression was directed at Jews. Believing as they did that Paul had been trained in a “rabbinical” reading of the Old Testament that mixed allegorical and typological techniques derived both from Palestine and Alexandria, they hoped that studying his thought would assist in persuading Jews that conversion to Christianity represented the completion rather than the abandonment of their Scriptures. Their Paul saw the Jewish nation as a valued interlocutor and affirmed the equality of Jew and Gentile in salvation. Historians have already demonstrated that the Christian Zionism of many early nineteenth-century evangelicals was powered by the belief that Old Testament prophecy and Paul’s Epistle to the Romans pointed to the identification of “Israel” not with the body of the Christian faithful but with Jews throughout history.⁴ A particular evangelical reading of Scripture, though, was just as significant in shaping “reasoning with the Jews” by missionaries. Scholars who have established the centrality of Jewish conversion to the public culture of nineteenth-century Britain note that it was anchored in proof texts from Scripture, but have not much explored how the reading and study of the

3 “Hebrew-Christian Alliance”, 157.

4 Donald Lewis, *The Origins of Christian Zionism: Lord Shaftesbury and Evangelical Support for a Jewish Homeland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Bible affected conversionist thinking and vice versa.⁵ If the claim that Jews formed an enduring ethnic nation was for later nineteenth-century freethinkers and some liberal Protestants a harbinger of a secularized, biological antisemitism, then for missionaries it was the key to making conversions. As Stanley Leathes (1830–1900), the professor of Hebrew at King’s College London, wrote in an 1877 missionary symposium, the “permanent and inefaceable characteristics of the Jewish nation” were unique in the “annals of ethnology”. Its resilience vindicated Paul’s claim in Romans that the gospel was given “to the Jew first” and suggested that arguments which had worked to convert Jews in the apostolic age would reach their ethnic descendants today.⁶

The symbiotic relationship between Hebrew scholarship and Jewish missions in the period needs little emphasis. Michael Alexander (1799–1845), the first professor of Hebrew at King’s College London, went on to be the first Bishop of Jerusalem, with a ministry to Jewish Christian converts. His patron and successor at King’s, Alexander McCaul (1799–1863), a prime mover in the foundation of the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity amongst the Jews, considered that the study of rabbinical sources could help to persuade “modern Judaism” that it had misread its Messianic and Christological Old Testament.⁷ Philosemitism, scholarship, and conversionism converged elsewhere in Protestant Europe. Franz Delitzsch (1813–1890), the founder of the Institutum Judaicum (1886) in Leipzig, combined advocacy of the study of the Talmud with opposition to racial antisemitism but also an unflinching belief that the New Testament continued while also completing and superseding the Old.⁸ This fusion of scholarly and missionary interests extended from the study of rabbinical sources to the study of Paul’s epistles, whose

5 See e.g. Michael Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion: The “Jewish Question” and English National Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 15 and passim.

6 Stanley Leathes, “The Relation of the Jews to their own Scriptures”, in *Jews in Relation to the Church: A Course of Lectures*, ed. P. C. Claughton (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1877), 65.

7 Paul Joyce, “King’s College London, Samuel Davidson, and the Scope of Biblical Studies”, *Journal of Theological Studies*, 65 (2014): 407–24.

8 C. M. Clark, *The Politics of Conversion: Missionary Protestantism and the Jews in Prussia, 1728–1941* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 244–5, 273–4; Alan Levenson, “Missionary Protestants as Defenders and Detractors of Judaism: Franz Delitzsch and Hermann Strack”, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 92 (2002): 383–420; Anders Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews*, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pt II.

Greek language was thought to disguise a mastery of the typological and allegorical techniques derived from Philo and the Pharisees and inherited by the rabbis. McCaul, for instance, was a commentator on the Epistle to the Romans as well as on the Old Testament, and remarked in his *Apology* (1844) for Hebrew and rabbinic studies that they could be applied to the New Testament to recover its meaning for its first, Jewish hearers.⁹

This essay concentrates on two commentaries produced in the third quarter of the nineteenth century on one Pauline text, the Epistle to the Hebrews. Of course, the attribution of Hebrews to Paul had been doubted throughout the history of the church and by the mid-nineteenth century was denied by most leading German critics and many British ones. Yet, while conscious of the critical problems, evangelicals were emotionally attached to Paul's authorship of or strong influence on Hebrews. As the convert clergyman Moses Margoliouth (1820–1881) argued in 1861, if Paul did not write it, “as some maintain, the author of that wonderful work was moved beyond all doubt by the same Spirit as the great Apostle was.”¹⁰ If the Epistles to the Romans or Galatians suggested the antitheses between Jew and Christian, the religion of law and the faith of grace that were later invested with polemical significance by liberal writers, then Hebrews allowed commentators to emphasize continuities between dispensations. Many were the sermons preached on its opening words: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son”. The symbolic reading of Leviticus in Hebrews suggested that the ceremonial law of Moses was typical of the priestly office of Christ that Jews were now invited to accept. The authors of these commentaries had markedly diverse origins which coloured how they used Hebrews to recover a conversionist reading of the Old Testament. The Reverend Joseph Benjamin McCaul (d. 1892), Alexander's less celebrated son, followed him into Anglican orders then briefly into teaching at King's. He ended his career as a rather obscure, splenetic clergyman, but nonetheless produced a commentary on Hebrews that powerfully articulated evangelical assumptions about it. Adolph Saphir (1831–1891), a Hungarian Jew before his conversion by Schwartz in Pest, became a celebrated preacher in the Presbyterian

9 Alexander McCaul, *Apology for the Study of Hebrew and Rabbinical Literature* (London: Wertheim, 1844), 9.

10 Moses Margoliouth, *The End of the Law: Two Sermons . . . To which is Added a Letter, with Numerous Notes, to W. J. C. Lindsay . . . Being a Preliminary Examination of the “Essays and Reviews.”* (London: Rivingtons, 1861), 64.

Church of England. McCaul tightly scaffolded verses from Hebrews with quotations from Philo and the Talmud to demonstrate the Jewishness of Paul's rhetoric. Saphir's reading was not antiquarian but romantic, based on an intense identification with Paul as a man who had contained but dissolved the opposition between Jew and Gentile, evolving a spiritual mode of reading the Old Testament that did justice to its literal sense while evoking its Christian spirit.

While concentrating on connections in evangelical minds between Hebrews and conversionist thinking, the essay suggests that the privileging of this text also had a strongly defensive purpose. It expressed the mounting anxiety of evangelical Protestants about the definition and intellectual viability of Christianity. There was nothing new in this, for the search for Judaism in and Jewish modes of reading the Scriptures by Christians has always reflected their quest for self-definition.¹¹ What gripped evangelicals such as McCaul and Saphir in the third quarter of the nineteenth century was dread that liberal Protestants were leading Christians to lose faith in the authority of the Bible. Enthusiasts for higher criticism were picking holes in the authorship and dating of the Old Testament, while a new wave of investigations into the historical Jesus – works such as Ernest Renan's *Vie de Jésus* (1863) or J. R. Seeley's *Ecce Homo* (1866) – suggested in different ways that Jesus was not really the Messiah of the Hebrew Scriptures and that his claim to veneration lay in his promulgation of a religion of love and humanity which broke with the desiccated legalism of Judaism. Ferdinand Christian Baur's studies of Paul, which were from the mid-1850s disseminated by Unitarians and liberal Anglicans, reinforced the sense that authentic Christianity involved a radical break with Jewish legalism.¹² Existing scholarship has highlighted the Jewish scholars who resisted such thinking and insisted on the Jewishness of Jesus, but this essay argues that evangelical missionary Protestants and their scholarly auxiliaries had good reason for emphasizing the Jewishness of Paul's message.¹³ As Margoliouth put it in attacking *Essays and Reviews* (1861), "Christian philosophers" might rattle the chains connecting the

11 See David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The History of a Way of Thinking* (London: Head of Zeus, 2013).

12 See James Carleton Paget, "The Reception of Baur in Britain", in *Ferdinand Christian Baur und die Geschichte des frühen Christentums*, ed. Martin Bauspiess, Christoph Landmesser, and David Lincicum (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 335–86.

13 Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

Old and New Testament; but the “converted Israelite” knew that the “Mosaic or Levitical economy” explained and was explained by Christ.¹⁴

Like many academic sons of academic highfliers, the Rev. Joseph Benjamin McCaul was doomed to play a profitable second fiddle to his father, the Rev. Alexander McCaul. Having been educated at King’s College London, where his father was successively the professor of Hebrew and divinity, he worked there for two years as the Censor and divinity lecturer before retiring due to ill health. He eked out his income as an assistant librarian at the British Museum – where his diligence impressed Macaulay – and as a curate to Thomas Hartwell Horne (1780–1862), the renowned biblical critic and evangelical vicar of St Edmund the King, Lombard Street.¹⁵ McCaul then became chaplain to Joseph Cotton Wigram (1798–1867), the evangelical Bishop of Rochester – a close friend of his father, who shared his conversionist enthusiasms. Retaining his chaplaincy under the bishop’s successor, Thomas Legh Cloughton (1808–1892), a high churchman who shared the interest of the McCauls in the Jews, he finally settled as the vicar of St Michael, Bassishaw.¹⁶ McCaul’s network of clerical patrons thus included high as well as low churchmen. Although “free from any extremes of party”, his vehement political conservatism and xenophobia reflected the darkening temper of Anglican evangelicalism at mid-century.¹⁷ A ferocious anti-Catholic, he was also a pessimist about the survival prospects of cities that ignored the Old Testament’s punitive God. In his words, the “Jesuit and the Atheist” were leagued against “England’s greatness”, namely the Bible.¹⁸ Joseph owed not only his career and his clerical attitudes to his father but also his understanding of how Hebrew scholarship bore on the New Testament and its use in the conversion of

14 Margoliouth, *End of the Law*, 45.

15 For McCaul’s early career, see “Testimonials in Favour of J. B. MacCaul” (London: privately printed, 1858) supporting his candidacy for the chaplaincy of Dulwich College. They included a fairly supportive reference from his father.

16 Demolished in 1900, its site lies under what is now the Barbican Centre, London.

17 “Testimonials”, 12. On evangelical pessimism see David Hempton, “Evangelicals and Eschatology”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 31 (1980): 179–94.

18 For these attitudes see the early squib J. B. McCaul, *Sainte Impudentia, or, A Pylgrimage to Westmyenster: Contaynyng the Wonderful History of a Pope, a Cardynal, a Lyon, & a Bull* (London: Partridge and Oakey, 1850); *Darkness that May be Felt, a Warning to England at the Present Crisis, a Sermon* (London: John F. Shaw, 1866); *Sunday Reflections on Current Topics: with an Introductory Essay on the Meaning of the Word “Christian”* (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1872), 63 and passim; *The City of God’s Choice; or, The Privileges and Responsibilities of the Citizens of London: a Sermon* (London, 1875).

Jews. The pious biographical sketch he published of Alexander was one long illustration of the identity of scholarship and missionary purpose, Joseph emphasising that his “profound acquaintance with the Hebrew mind and the Rabbinic writings presently afforded him a vantage-ground which no other missionary had ever attained since the Apostolic ages.”¹⁹

McCaul’s commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews (1871) embodied these convictions. Hebrews was a text dear to his father, Joseph recording in Alexander’s biography that he had read it thirteen times during a six-week missionary voyage to Russia.²⁰ The commentary was also Joseph’s only major scholarly production, aside from a *Concise Exposition of St Paul’s Epistle to the Romans* (1882) for ordinands, which presented Romans as a companion to Hebrews, sharing “its supreme value and preciousness as a setting forth of the way of salvation”.²¹ Evangelicals had always been drawn to Hebrews because its high Christology and elaborate doctrine of atonement furnished talking points against deistic and Unitarian writers. McCaul’s commentary resembled earlier works in being defensive of Paul’s authorship. What it added was the title page’s claim to offer a “paraphrastic commentary, illustrated from Philo, the Targums, the Mishna and Gemara, the later rabbinical writers, and Christian annotators”. McCaul believed that the citation of Jewish literature produced in the centuries immediately before and after the life of Christ could demonstrate that in Paul’s time the “reasoners, and the reasoned with, had much in common”: Paul and other apostolic “professors of Christianity claimed to expound the well-grounded hopes of the Jewish people (as laid out in the Old Testament Scriptures)”. The Paul who wrote Hebrews had been “strictly Jewish” in thought and argument: he had found the Christ that he preached in the Old Testament, using typological methods of reading prevalent among Jews.²²

Joseph McCaul’s argument and methodology were intended to assist missionaries. His father had been a leading light in the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity amongst the Jews (LSPCJ) until the mid-

19 Joseph B. McCaul, *A Memorial Sketch of the Rev. Alexander McCaul, D.D.: Rector of St. Magnus, and Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis, King’s College, London* (London: Rivingtons, 1863), 3.

20 *Ibid.*, 4.

21 Joseph McCaul, *A Concise Exposition of St Paul’s Epistle to the Romans* (London: S. Bagster and Sons, 1882), 1.

22 Joseph McCaul, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: in a Paraphrastic Commentary, with Illustrations from Philo, the Targums, the Mishna and Gemara, the Later Rabbinical Writers, and Christian Annotations, etc., etc.* (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1871), v (hereafter, *Hebrews*).

1850s, when he withdrew from it in protest at financial mismanagement; a lobbyist for the Jerusalem Bishopric; and an architect of Palestine Place, the cluster of institutions at Bethnal Green that supported converted Jews.²³ McCaul too was critical of the LSPCJ's administration, yet his commentary might have been a manual for its work, suggesting how Scripture be read to succour recent converts.²⁴ Hebrews suggested itself as a text because McCaul's Paul had written it for Jewish Christians under siege from Jews and tempted to slide back to their old religion. It was a "handbook, based upon ancient Rabbinic interpretation, of the points at issue between the believers in the claims of Jesus of Nazareth and those who suppose that the Mosaic dispensation is only temporarily suspended on account of the sins of the Jewish nation, and will yet be restored to its primitive splendour, with its august apparatus of sacrifice and temple worship." Paul proved to "Christian Israelites" that the ceremonial portion of the Mosaic law had been terminated by the advent of Christ, the self-sacrificing high priest. They had "gained everything, instead of losing, by their acceptance of Jesus".²⁵ McCaul's stress on Paul's mastery of the rabbinical interpretation of the Old Testament was driven by his antipathy to rabbis throughout history. Although absorbed in the study of Jewish antiquities, McCaul lacked a historical sense: in his eyes rabbis had always been and remained bitter opponents of Christ. In his footnotes, he cited the attacks which had driven the prominent convert Uriel Dacosta (1585–1640) to suicide in order to allege that the pressures experienced by Paul's fledgling Jewish converts had never abated. From a "Rabbinic point of view", the murder of Jesus and Stephen and the persecution of Paul after his conversion by the Jews were all "meritorious".²⁶ Paul alone had penetrated the "rancorous hatred and spiteful contempt" of "Rabbinic Jews" by demonstrating that the promises of the Jewish past were fulfilled not squandered by conversion. In seeking to turn rabbinic learning against its inventors, McCaul was following his father, whose *The Old Paths; or, a Comparison of the Principles and Doctrines of Modern Judaism with the Religion of Moses and the Prophets* (1837) was a celebrated – or notorious – polemic against Judaism. Even the figure of Dacosta was cribbed from his father's writings.

While McCaul offered a supercessionist reading of Hebrews, it is

23 See [Alexander and Joseph McCaul], *A Voice from the Tomb* (London, 1866).

24 See J. B. McCaul, ed., *The Rosenthal Case: Incorrect statements of the London Jews' Society's Missionaries in Jerusalem* (London, 1866).

25 McCaul, *Hebrews*, 2.

26 *Ibid.*, 3–5.

striking that most of his aggression was directed not at stiff-necked Jews but at Christian sceptics about the literal and plenary inspiration of the whole Bible. McCaul insisted that Paul understood the Levitical priesthood as the type of the self-sacrificing Christ because he was concerned about critics within his own Church who denied the authority of the Old Testament. Both in the commentary and in his sermons at St Michael's, McCaul reiterated that "the religious system which we profess can assert no paramount claims, either to our obedience or to our faith, apart from the testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures to the Messiahship of Jesus."²⁷ From the later 1850s, "under the silly deception of what they call 'Higher Criticism'", prominent members of his church had suggested that the Old Testament was too historically shaky and morally flawed to be authoritative.²⁸ They urged that excessive emphasis on the claim that Jesus was the atoning Messiah supposedly predicted by Isaiah obscured his real standing as the benign founder of a new religion of love and mercy. For McCaul, as for other evangelicals, this "transcendent sentimentalism" destroyed the standing of the clergy as "Ambassadors of God". Because Christ's title meant no more nor less than the Messiah, any church that questioned "the authority of the Old Testament Messianic writings" as interpreted by the Apostles was "trading under a false name": "It is not the 'Doctrine of Christ' which the inspired founders of Christianity preached."²⁹ Christian morality for McCaul was founded on the revealed moral code of the Old Testament and would not survive its disappearance.³⁰ Nor would missions to Jews. The "most impracticable adversary that the modern missionary has to cope with is the Jew, who . . . [had] turned his back upon the Hope of the Fathers". It was vital that Christians continue instead to emulate Paul who had "arouse[d] a glow of holy and patriotic emulation in their susceptible Jewish bosoms" by presenting the Old Testament as a procession of heroes who lived in expectation of Christ.³¹

In the decade before McCaul published his commentary, John William Colenso (1814–1883), the heterodox bishop of Natal, had in his eyes emerged as the most dangerous enemy to the Old Testament. *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined* (1862–4) dissected the tissue of

27 McCaul, "Preliminary Essay", in *Sunday Reflections*, 1.

28 McCaul, "We Have not Followed Cunningly Devised Fables", in *ibid.*, 170.

29 McCaul, "Preliminary Essay", 4–6.

30 See J. B. McCaul, *The Ten Commandments; the Christian's Spiritual Instructor and Rule of Daily Life* (London: Saunders, Otley and Co., 1861); *City of God's Choice*, 13.

31 McCaul, *Hebrews*, 169–170.

numerical and factual errors and impossibilities in these texts, casting doubt on their Mosaic authorship and suggesting that belief in their literal inspiration and moral authority could not be binding on Christians. Alexander McCaul lambasted Colenso on its appearance and Joseph followed suit in ten letters to *The Record*, a leading organ for Anglican evangelicals.³² Joseph McCaul assailed Colenso for suggesting that the Pentateuch had no more authority than the writings of “Sikh Gooroos”, an insight that he sarcastically noted had been withheld from the apostles. He sought to dismiss Colenso as a lawn-sleeved Voltaire, who thought that it sufficed to quote ludicrous bits from the Pentateuch to discredit it. Like Voltaire, his ignorance of Hebrew made him leap to conclusions about what counted as credible. McCaul claimed therefore to scupper Colenso on narrowly “philological” grounds, just as the Abbé Guenée (1717–1803) had once marshalled the testimony of Jews against the “buffooneries of Voltaire”.³³ His test case was one of Colenso’s notorious posers. How could Leviticus 4:11–12 and 6:10–11 say that priests were obliged to carry offal from sacrificed animals to the edge of the Israelite camp in the wilderness? A requirement which, given the camp’s size, must have been not just humiliating but mathematically impossible. McCaul argued that Colenso had been led astray here by his ignorance of Hebrew idioms: the conjugation of the relevant verb implied not that the priests must carry the offal themselves but just that they must order it to be carried away.³⁴ This enemy of rabbinical intransigence dragged in Jewish scholars from Abraham Benisch (1811–1878) to the Chief Rabbi’s son Hermann Adler (1839–1911) to support his case that Colenso’s supposed discovery just reflected his ignorance of Hebrew “vernacular”.³⁵

McCaul’s defence of Paul’s intellect in Hebrews worked along similar lines. He felt that the “Philosopher of Verney” was on the prowl in recent commentaries.³⁶ For McCaul, it was ignorance of “Jewish habits of

32 Alexander McCaul, *An Examination of Bp. Colenso’s Difficulties with Regard to the Pentateuch: and Reasons for Believing in its Authenticity and Divine Origin* (London: Rivingtons, 1863).

33 Joseph McCaul, *Bishop Colenso’s Criticism Criticised: in a Series of Ten Letters Addressed to the Editor of “The Record” Newspaper with Notes and a Postscript* (3rd edn, London, 1863), viii, v, 3. See Thomas Kselman, “The Bautain Circle and Catholic–Jewish Relations in Modern France”, *Catholic Historical Review*, 92 (2006): 187 for continued links between philosemitism and opposition to Voltaire among French Catholics.

34 McCaul, *Bishop Colenso’s Criticism*, letter III.

35 *Ibid.*, 24.

36 McCaul, *Hebrews*, vi.

thought and expression” that led a liberal evangelical scholar such as Henry Alford (1810–1871) to adopt in his *Greek Testament* (1862) the offensive assumption that Hebrews must have been written not by Paul but a Hellenistic Jew who used the Greek Septuagint rather than the Hebrew Scriptures. McCaul had little truck with the attempt to bracket off typological and allegorical modes of reading Scripture as the baroque form of “Hellenization”, whose presence in the Epistle to the Hebrews argued against Paul’s authorship. Alford only thought this because his ignorance of “Jewish habit of thought and expression” in Paul’s time led him into distinctions between different forms of Judaism that “advocates of the ancient and orthodox systems of interpretation” would never have made. Hebrews only looked Hellenized when subjected to a “starched modern Greek philology”, a procedure as “childish” as setting a “converted Jew to annotate Euripides.”³⁷ Throughout McCaul’s scholarship coursed a passion to demonstrate that both domestic and foreign higher critics – practitioners of a “hybrid Anglo-German neology” – were not innovators but dwarfs who had fallen from the shoulders of giants, abandoning the efforts that early modern English scholars had made to learn from Jewish interlocutors how Jews actually spoke and wrote.³⁸ McCaul could invoke contemporary German “rationalistic writers” when it served his turn. He gratefully cited the Göttingen Hebraist Heinrich Ewald (1803–1875) in his attack on Colenso and in his commentary on Hebrews.³⁹ Ewald was a natural ally given that he was an opponent of radical New Testament criticism who had also produced a teleological and Christological history of Israel.⁴⁰ Yet he struggled to absorb a feature of Ewald’s historical criticism that made it attractive to many liberal Protestant writers, namely the assumption that ancient Hebrews had lived largely like their ancient neighbours. The suggestion by Ewald’s epigone Arthur Penrhyn Stanley (1815–1881), for instance, that Abraham’s attempted sacrifice of Isaac (Hebrews 11:16–18) might have been a vestige of Moloch worship rather than “the cardinal type of the voluntary sacrifice of Christ’s death” was not for him a useful foray into historical comparison, but the resuscitation “of

37 *Ibid.*, ix, 168.

38 *Ibid.*, xiii.

39 McCaul, *Bishop Colenso’s Criticism*, v; McCaul, *Hebrews*, x–xiii.

40 See Simon Goldhill, “What has Alexandria to do with Jerusalem? Writing the History of the Jews in the Nineteenth Century” (*Historical Journal*, forthcoming/2016) for interesting reflections on Ewald’s appeal.

a very ancient blasphemy".⁴¹ He was happier with early modern Hebraists whose works had allegedly been overlooked by Alford: "Usshers, Waltons, Warburtons, Kidders, Lightfoots, Lowths, Kennicotts, Blayneys, Hodys &c not to mention a layman like Selden, the wonderful erudition of whose writings is unsurpassed by the writers of any country or any age."⁴² These scholars were duly cited throughout his commentary, along with Continental Hebraists such as Buxtorf and Schöttgen. Their erudition scotched the "diffident" school, providing unmistakable proofs that Paul had thought and spoken as a rabbi who identified Christ as the object of Jewish prophecy and as the high priest shadowed forth by the Levitical priesthood.⁴³

McCaul's commentary on Hebrews was thus, like his defence of the Old Testament, wilfully old-fashioned. Judging by reviews in scholarly periodicals, his blunderbuss generally missed its target. Reception of *Hebrews* in conservative evangelical Protestant circles was polite yet intimidated by its antiquarian bulk. Charles Haddon Spurgeon told his Baptist students that while McCaul had "attacked the gentlemen of the higher criticism with great plainness and some asperity", there were too many hard words in dead languages for the work to "attain a great circulation".⁴⁴ Meanwhile, even the evangelical, high-Tory *Christian Remembrancer* took fright at the coarse raillery he aimed at Colenso: "Hebrew is, but humour is not, his strong point."⁴⁵ Theological opponents were not even sure about the Hebrew. A writer in the liberal Protestant *National Review* sniffed that his onslaught on Colenso's understanding of language was "more foolish and ill-mannered than any thing which we ever remember to have seen as proceeding from one who claims to be considered a learned divine". A close examination of the disputed verb in Leviticus led to the conclusion that "his knowledge of the Hebrew language must be far smaller than his name would have led us to expect." McCaul had failed to put down Colenso's heresy, which prompted Christians to treat the Pentateuch not as a faultless text but a set of religious documents to be appraised like any other.⁴⁶ Those readers

41 McCaul, *Hebrews*, 201.

42 *Ibid.*, ix.

43 *Ibid.*, xii.

44 Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Commenting and Commentaries: Two Lectures Addressed to the Students of the Pastors College, Metropolitan Tabernacle* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1876), 188.

45 *Christian Remembrancer*, Jan. 1863, 256.

46 "Bishop Colenso on the Pentateuch", *National Review*, 16 (1863), 11–12, 18–19.

who were already disposed to posit an essentially critical, questioning relationship between Christianity and the Old Testament were never likely to soldier through McCaul's dense expositions of its abiding authority.

Yet, if such contempt explains why McCaul's learning was powerless to arrest the growing attraction towards higher critical approaches, he remained a name to conjure with among missionaries to the Jews, particularly among those who regarded their converts as "Hebrew Christians" rather than as simply ripe for assimilation into the church. *The Scattered Nation* for instance grouped McCaul with Franz Delitzsch as one who had isolated "The Hebrew Blood in Christianity" by using the "innumerable Talmudicisms" in Paul to show that Christian truth had flowed "through linguistic forms" that were "purely Hebraic". They had established the "consanguinity" of Christianity "with the oldest Scriptures".⁴⁷ It was an appropriate pairing, for Delitzsch honoured Joseph's father as a shining exception to the neglect of Hebrew learning since the early modern period, which had had disastrous consequences both for the Jews and for Christianity's missionary zeal.⁴⁸ Delitzsch's commentaries on Pauline epistles were driven by the conviction that reading them in conjunction with Talmudic texts reinstated Paul as a faithful Jew who had won fellow Jews for Christ. Delitzsch's commentary on Hebrews (1857–9) – gratefully cited by McCaul – may have denied its Pauline authorship but argued that it was full of Pauline thoughts on the Messianic significance of the Old Testament. For Delitzsch, it had no rival among New Testament writings but, like Isaiah 40–66, carried the "Easter-morning breath from another world".⁴⁹ Delitzsch like McCaul made intensive use of early modern commentators whose significance he thought overlooked, as well as the "rabbinical" commentary (1857) of the Jewish convert scholar Biesenthal, which pointed to the theological significance of Paul's *Mischnahsprache*.⁵⁰ Delitzsch's translation of Paul's Epistle to the Romans into Hebrew (1870), accompanied with explanatory notes from the Talmud and the Midrash, continued this enterprise, its "great practical end" being to expose "the rabbinical and Hellenistic

47 "The Hebrew Blood in Christianity", *Scattered Nation*, 1871, 200–02.

48 Franz Delitzsch, *Redet mit Jerusalem freundlich! Nachrichten über das Seminar des Institutum Judaicum zu Leipzig* (Leipzig: Dörffling und Franke, 1887), 15, 18.

49 Franz Delitzsch, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1874), 1: 3.

50 J. H. Biesenthal, *Brief Pauli an die Hebräer, mit rabbinischem Commentar* (Berlin: Löw, 1858); quotation from Biesenthal, *Das Trostsendschreiben des Apostels Paulus* (Leipzig, 1878),

47.

components of primitive Christian thought and representation” and to convey to Jewish readers that they could accept Paul’s gospel without severing their religious roots. Like McCaul, he regarded contemporary higher criticism as weakened by ignorance of early modern studies of Paul’s rabbinical context: David Friedrich Strauss may have discovered that the life of Christ was a Jewish myth, but he was surprisingly ignorant of Jewish sources for the period, while Renan’s interest in them was undone by his naiveté.⁵¹

McCaul’s study belongs then with Delitzsch’s to a resilient strand of nineteenth-century scholarly philosemitism, which argued that New Testament Christianity was only explicable as the fulfilment of the Old – though fulfilment still meant supercession.⁵² The prospect that the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* might establish that Judaism in the time of Christ had been a worthy, autonomous religion horrified Delitzsch. He was brutal in his attacks on Renan and the Jewish scholar Abraham Geiger (1810–1874) for their suggestion that Jesus had not added to the moral code already elaborated by Hillel.⁵³ Similarly, the LSPCJ rejected the proposition that “Christian Jews” should develop an autonomous spirituality. Converts belonged in churches such as the Episcopal Jews Chapel at Palestine Place where the Hebrew that filled the air during the services was a translation of the Book of Common Prayer.⁵⁴ If McCaul laboriously argued that the worship of the ancient Hebrews was the shadow of Christ’s priesthood, then that was all the more reason not to lament the Temple’s final destruction. Christ invited his people to look “beyond the form and sign”, to embrace a spiritual worship which was almost perfectly exemplified by the liturgy of the Church of England.⁵⁵

If McCaul’s writings on Paul were informed by paranoia about the biblical foundations of his church’s social authority and missionary zeal, then Adolph Saphir’s expressed his identification with the apostle as a figure in whom the boundaries between Jew and Gentile met and dissolved. He was one of the hundreds of Protestant ministers in nineteenth-century

51 Franz Delitzsch, *Paulus des Apostels Brief an die Römer in das Hebräische Ubersetzt und aus Talmud und Midrasch Erläutert* (Leipzig: Dörffling und Franke, 1870), 7–8.

52 See Levenson, “Missionary Protestants”; Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism*.

53 Franz Delitzsch, *Jesus und Hillel: mit Rücksicht auf Renan und Geiger verglichen* (Erlangen: Deichert, 1866), 15, 28.

54 Darby, *Emergence of the Hebrew Christian Movement*, 92–6.

55 Joseph McCaul, *Spiritual not Ceremonial Worship the True Glory of God’s House* (London: James Nisbet, 1875), 12–13.

Britain, mostly from Continental Europe, who were converts from Judaism. Although many began as protégés of the Church of England, the LSPCJ, or the Presbyterian churches of Scotland, they often grew tired of their condescension and founded chapels or organizations, such as Schwartz's short-lived Hebrew Christian Alliance, which allowed Hebrew Christians a measure of dignity, even autonomy.⁵⁶ Saphir had been converted to Christianity in Pest by Schwartz's preaching and followed members of the Church of Scotland's mission to Britain. He studied in Edinburgh and Berlin, worked briefly as a missionary among the Jews of Hamburg and Houndsditch, then took up pastorates in the Presbyterian Church of England at South Shields, Greenwich, Notting Hill, Belgravia, and finally in Bournemouth. A renowned preacher, his *Expository Lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (1874–75) were founded on his sermons and written in a flowing, emotive mode. One cause for which he often preached were missions to the Jews, which he thought should be conducted in a spirit of fraternity. Protestantism embarked on a tragic course when it followed Luther in cultivating suspicion, even hatred of the Jews or when Protestants conceitedly assumed that the "Israel" of Scripture now meant them.⁵⁷ Any outreach to the Jews must begin with recognition of the spiritual equality between Jew and Gentile. After his early efforts at mission, Saphir became a secretary to the Nonconformist-dominated British Society for Propagating Christianity among the Jews. As Schwartz's brother-in-law, he joined in his Hebrew-Christian Alliance, while he also maintained extensive contacts among Continental missionaries. The *Institutum Judaicum* published translations of his tracts, Delitzsch pointedly comparing him with Paul, while they cooperated in drumming up financial support for Joseph Rabinowitz (1837–1899), the Russian Jew whose success in persuading his synagogue to accept Jesus Christ as Messiah suggested that the conversion of the Jews might even be compatible with the retention of Jewish ceremonial forms.⁵⁸ Saphir's vision for "Hebrew Christianity" thus went further than support for the conversion and assimilation of Jews: it took him as

56 See Darby, *Emergence of the Hebrew Christian Movement*, 139–40 and passim.

57 Adolph Saphir, "All Israel Shall be Saved", in *Christ and Israel: Lectures and Addresses on the Jews*, ed. David Baron (London: Morgan and Scott, 1911), 43–6; Saphir, "Why the Church of Christ Must now Take up the Work of Evangelizing the Jews", in *ibid.*, 87.

58 Franz Delitzsch, "Vorwort", in "Ganz Israel wird selig werden", ein Geheimnis: nach dem Englischen des D. Adolph Saphir, trans. William Hochbaum (Leipzig: Institutum Judaicum, 1884); Adolph Saphir, *Rabinowich and his Mission to Israel: a Statement Drawn up at the Request of the Rabinowich Council in London* (London: John F. Shaw, 1888).

far as sympathizing with Messianic Judaism.⁵⁹ His reading of the Epistle to the Romans led him to believe the Jews would be restored to the Holy Land and rebuild the Temple before as a nation they accepted Christ at the Second Coming. He defended this belief as compatible with the efforts of missionary societies by arguing that conversions such as his own sprinkled seed that could germinate “when God’s providential dealings with them shall break up the hard ground.”⁶⁰

Explaining Saphir’s vision of Paul and how it fitted with these commitments begins with the romantic Calvinism of the Presbyterians who were his first Christian interlocutors. They had understood their mission to Pest as a providential event which resurrected the arguments of the early apostolic Churches. One of the missionaries remembered the remark of a Jew in the town that “he would not be taken aback, or think it strange, should a letter from Paul or Peter be handed in by next morning’s post! These were days of heaven on earth.”⁶¹ Their Calvinism was not just apostolic but Pauline: they emphasized the connections between the Old Testament and the New and followed Paul in being most interested in the death of Christ, which they regarded as fulfilling and thus ending the Jewish law. The Epistles rather than the Gospels were the “favourite intellectual food” of Saphir’s scholarly mentor John Duncan (1796–1870) – “Rabbi Duncan”, who moved from the mission field to a professorship of Hebrew at the Free Church New College in Edinburgh.⁶² They established Paul as a “man of law” who would have had no truck with the “sentimental system” in which law was defined as “ethics”. He knew that Christ had come to fulfil the divine law given to Moses.⁶³ Duncan also followed Paul in loving the nation of Israel and blessing its providential survival. He proudly confessed the “Judaemia” that dictated his interest in missions, once remarking that “Christ was a Jew first, a Cosmopolitan afterward”. If Jesus had abolished the ceremonial, then he had fulfilled the moral and positive law. “Observe [therefore] that we must all become

59 Darby, *Emergence of the Hebrew Christian Movement*, 215–16.

60 Adolph Saphir, “The Restoration of the Jews” (1864), in Baron, *Christ and Israel*, 184.

61 Andrew Bonar, *Memoir and Remains of the Rev. Robert Murray McCheyne: New Edition with Appendices, Facsimiles of Writings etc* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1892), 190.

62 David Brown, *Life of the Late John Duncan, Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages, New College, Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872), 384.

63 John Duncan, *Colloquia Peripatetica: Deep-sea Soundings: Being Notes of Conversations by John Duncan* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1870), 45.

Jews. That nation retains its hold of the world. There is an Israelitic naturalisation for us all. Salvation is of the Jews.” “Why Christ preferred the humanity of the seed of Abraham no man dare say; but since he has done so, in this channel flow his gifts to the whole world.”⁶⁴ Duncan and his Presbyterian collaborators in mission had believed that this preserved nation would imminently embrace the Messiah. They professed a pre-millennial, Adventist eschatology in which Christ would personally bring Israel to repent.

Saphir did not simply reproduce these Presbyterian attitudes. During his training for the Free Church ministry, he had studied philosophy at Berlin, a time of “sharp conflicts and dark and gloomy experiences” which instilled doubts about the dogmatic system of Scriptural exegesis favoured by Duncan and embodied in the Westminster Confession.⁶⁵ Saphir returned to Britain decidedly “‘unsound’ in the Scottish acceptance of the term” and determined to prefer Bible above the “School theology system and Calvinism of the Presbyterian Church.”⁶⁶ Particularly at Greenwich, Notting Hill, and Bournemouth, Saphir assembled congregations which he regarded as gathered apostolic communities rather than links in Presbyterianism’s elaborate ecclesiastical mechanism. This reflected his flirtation with the Plymouth Brethren’s pursuit of a purely biblical – and thus non-ecclesiastical – faith as well as his charisma: in seeking to create a purely scriptural church, Saphir could capitalize on his standing as a Hebrew Christian “mighty in the Scriptures” who boasted an ethnic rather than doctrinal key to their meaning.⁶⁷ As his correspondent Charles Kingsley (1819–1875) urged him, he should try “neither to Germanize nor to Scotticize, but try to see all Heaven and all earth with the eyes of Abraham, David, and St Paul.”⁶⁸

Jewish missions depended for Saphir as for McCaul on labouring the continuity between the Old and the New Testament, a point he made tirelessly in missionary addresses. At an anniversary celebration of the Budapest mission that had converted him, Saphir – introduced as a latter-day Paul – proclaimed that “no mission to the Jews can have any vitality or permanence unless it is based on full and simple faith in the whole Word

64 *Ibid.*, 125; Brown, *Life of Duncan*, 422.

65 Gavin Carlyle, “Mighty in the Scriptures”: A Memoir of Adolph Saphir, D.D. (London: John F. Shaw, 1893), 60.

66 *Ibid.*, 106.

67 *Ibid.*, 284–5.

68 Kingsley, letter of 1 Nov. 1852, quoted in *ibid.*, 103.

of God, from the first chapter of Genesis to the last of Revelation".⁶⁹ At the Special Conference convened at Mildmay in 1889 to discuss tactics for conversion, he reminded his hearers that the Jewish mission could only be sustained if it were "grounded on the word of God."⁷⁰ He even regretted the use of the term "Old Testament" as if it was something antiquated that could be passed over in favour of the New Testament, preferring to speak of the Books of the Kingdom and the Books of the Church.⁷¹ While McCaul defended the integrity of the two Testaments with philological trench warfare, defending every line of Leviticus against Colenso, every phrase of Paul against Alford, Saphir preferred an organic defence of Scripture's unity. He "loved the literalities of Scripture" but defended them not by laying down a grammatical minefield but by exploring their "truly spiritual" content. Paul had grasped the design of the Old Testament, that "Spirit-breathed book", in its every word. He handled Scripture like a "plant", in which salvation could be traced from root to flower.⁷² In an address on *The Everlasting Nation* (1885), Saphir fulsomely praised Delitzsch and explained that what he had in common with Paul was the need to bring Jews "organically" to Christ by explaining to them the continuity between Israel's past and the Christian future. Paul loved the Jews because he loved Christ. When he had laboured among Gentiles, he had never "omitted to keep up their connection with mother Jerusalem."⁷³

Saphir was no less convinced than McCaul that the "great battleground at present is the Old Testament". The imagined other to his reading of Scripture was rarely the stubborn rabbi; it was liberal Protestants whose mounting aversion to the Old Testament might inch them out of Christianity altogether. Inspired by Renan, they searched for a historical Jesus whose life could be bracketed off from prophecy and miracle. Others, such as Benjamin Jowett (1819–1893) in his 1855 commentary on Paul, had suggested that even if Jesus and Paul understood their divine mission in Jewish terms as fulfilling the typical institutions of the Old Testament, then modern Christians did not need to do so.⁷⁴ Saphir lamented that Paul's Christological exegesis of the Old Testament was

69 Saphir quoted in Bonar, *Memoir and Remains of McCheyne*, 194.

70 Saphir, "Why the Church", 88.

71 Adolph Saphir, *Christ and the Scriptures* (London: Morgan and Scott, 1867), 27; Saphir, "Restoration of the Jews", 141.

72 Saphir, *Christ and the Scriptures*, 112, 77–9.

73 Adolph Saphir, *The Everlasting Nation: An Address on the Present Aspect of the Jewish Mission* (London: John F. Shaw, 1885), 19–20, 30.

74 Saphir, "Restoration of the Jews", 143; Carlyle, "Mighty in the Scriptures", 130.

now often dismissed as “Talmudical trifling, by men who little know that their vaunted intellectualism and spirituality are allied to the rationalism by which Jewish, Papal, and Philosophical Rabbins have made the divine truth of none effect.”⁷⁵ In the rush to celebrate the humanity of Jesus, it was vital not to forget that “Jewish was his humanity”.⁷⁶ His life only made sense “on the territory of revelation, or to speak more distinctly, on Jewish ground”: it had begun not at Bethlehem but with promises made to Israel.⁷⁷ Marked by experiences of tangling with Hegel in Berlin, Saphir regarded attempts to play down the truth of the Old Testament as a manifestation of philosophical arrogance, as well as a revival of ancient attempts to purge Christianity of its Jewish contents. Modern commentators sought to turn the New Testament’s words of blood and sacrifice into “Japhetic abstractions” to make them plausible. And yet “to Gentilise (Platonise) Jewish facts and ideas, is to falsify the Gospel, in order to please the Greeks who desire wisdom. Our theology (even that of believers) is far too abstract, unhistorical . . . It is . . . Roman, logical, well-arrayed, methodical, and scheduled; not Eastern according to the spirit and method of Scripture, which breathe in the atmosphere of a living God, who visits his people, and is coming again to manifest his glory”.⁷⁸

Saphir’s *Expository Lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (1874–76) show what an “eastern” attempt to find Christ in the Old Testament looked like. They were a popular success, going into several editions, with excerpts from them republished as tracts.⁷⁹ In comparison with McCaul, Saphir’s exposition is generally free from scholarly scaffolding. Saphir wrote as a preacher and did not feel the need to underpin his arguments with citations from Talmudic sources. Unlike McCaul but following Delitzsch, whose praise for Hebrews was quoted on the first page of the *Expository Lectures*, Saphir was reserved on its authorship. “Whoever is the author of this epistle, its value and authority remain the same”, he wrote, noting that it was unlikely that some of its expressions could have come from Paul and discussing alternative suggestions of its authorship.⁸⁰ Saphir’s voluminous lectures pursue one simple thought: Hebrews was designed

75 Saphir, *Christ and the Scriptures*, 91–2.

76 Saphir, “Why the Church”, 94–5.

77 Saphir, *Christ and the Scriptures*, 3–5.

78 *Ibid.*, 75.

79 See e.g. Adolph Saphir, *The Life of Faith. Its Nature and Power, as Illustrated in Hebrews xi* (London, 1877).

80 Adolph Saphir, *Expository Lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews: A New Edition* (London: John F. Shaw, n.d.), 14.

to evoke the “glory of the New Covenant” but also to persuade readers that in accepting it they would lose nothing of the Old.⁸¹ Saphir’s Paul is not so much a rabbinic reasoner as a poetic seer who has transmuted Israel’s past into a “golden history – if we may say – a Holy Ghost history” which witnessed to the coming “Christocracy”.⁸² He does so not by allegorizing away past realities but by showing how they pointed to something beyond the Mosaic dispensation, to a high priest whose sacrifice of himself would fulfil the ceremonial law and so do away with it for good. Just as the character of the priest had changed with Christ, so God’s law changed. For Saphir, Paul was the ideal reader of Israel’s history because he did not strain at minutiae. Instead he found in them intimations of the future.

While Saphir argued that Hebrews witnessed throughout to Paul’s love for the Jews, he insisted that it was a hard love. The more Paul demonstrated the deep spiritual meaning of Hebrew religion, the less convincing Judaism now looked as a faith. The Jews were immured in a “religion of their own tradition and reasonings” which they should abandon for the New Covenant.⁸³ This was particularly true in considering worship. Paul’s sensitive commentary in Hebrews on Leviticus showed how every provision of the ceremonial law was fraught with meaning and promise. But there could be no worship without revelation. It was “the tragedy of history” that the Jews sought to continue the worship of the Temple once Christ had shown them a better way. Their nation had subsided into “self conceit, self righteousness, and formalism”.⁸⁴ Its resistance might only be broken by pre-millennial force majeure, when Christ returned to rebuild Jerusalem and the Jews would gaze repentantly on Him they had pierced. Commenting on Hebrews 6:4–20, Saphir observed that Paul himself could be regarded as a “striking and eminent type of Israel” in that it had required supernatural intervention to break his fanatical opposition to Christianity.⁸⁵ For Saphir, the destruction of the Temple was the “actual historical demonstration of the truth which the epistles set forth doctrinally”, namely that worship conducted by “sacerdotal mediators” was an “anachronism” once Christ had sacrificed himself. As with McCaul, this judgment was salted with anti-Catholicism – Romanists also failing to see that Christ the high priest did away with

81 Ibid., 2, 12.

82 Ibid., 348.

83 Ibid., 503.

84 Ibid., 535.

85 Ibid., 309.

the need for priests. Yet the judgment fell most heavily on Jews: God had destroyed their Temple expressly to remove “the earthly, elementary, and fragmentary, that Israel may turn to the heavenly, eternal, and perfect.”⁸⁶

The energy with which McCaul and Saphir defended the connection between the Old and New Covenants and insisted that Jesus was the high priest described in Hebrews, whose death fulfilled both the moral and ceremonial law, shows that later nineteenth-century attempts to loosen ties between the religion of Jesus and its Jewish origins could encounter dogged resistance in some Protestant cultures. The Scriptures, wrote Saphir, “cannot be broken; not a single link can be taken out . . . and, like the blessed Saviour, not a bone of that body shall be broken.”⁸⁷ Their sense that Paul was a Jew of his time in reading Scripture, rather than a Greek, was supported by and informed how they read Scripture. Yet, while they emphasized the duty of Christians to share Paul’s love for and knowledge of his Jewish interlocutors, it is an odd kind of love which denies autonomy or self-knowledge to the loved one. Jews might understand the language of the Hebrew Scriptures, but converted Jews understood their meaning, which was that history must end with the return of Christ to earth and his acceptance by their nation. Scholars and preachers in British missionary circles found in Hebrews abundant proof that Pauline Christianity had been Jewish. They wished moreover to frustrate freethinking and liberal Protestant attempts to question the Old Testament and to downgrade the ways in which Jews had read their own Scriptures before the coming of Christ. Yet their interest in Paul’s Jewish Christ did not mean that they permitted Judaism to be a religion with a truth or history of its own. They felt for Judaism after Christ only the “tolerant intolerance” which Thomas Kselman has found among early nineteenth-century French Catholic philosemites, who were similarly protective of the Old Testament.⁸⁸ Evangelical missionaries and their scholars were as firmly supercessionist as the liberal Protestants they loathed for dabbling in higher criticism. Neither they nor their Paul were philosemites, unless we follow the provocative definition of a philosemite as an “antisemite who loves Jews.”⁸⁹

86 *Ibid.*, 535.

87 Saphir, “Restoration of the Jews”, 186.

88 Kselman, “Bautain Circle”, 190.

89 Clark, *Politics of Conversion*, 281.