Paul's description of his Thessalonian ministry in I Thess. ii has in recent years been variously interpreted. The discussion has revolved in part around the question whether vss. 1-12 are to be understood as an apology directed to a concrete situation in Thessalonica in the face of which Paul had to defend himself, or whether the language that seems to support such a view can be understood in another way. A major statement in favor of the latter option had been made by Von Dobschütz, who claimed that the "apology" reflects the mood of Paul at the time of writing rather than a strained relationship with the Thessalonians 1). Martin Dibelius represented a somewhat similar view, but saw this as a favorite theme of Paul that he could have introduced without his having been forced to do so by circumstances in Thessalonica. Dibelius pointed out that it was necessary for Paul to distinguish himself from other preachers of his day without actually having been accused of being a charlatan. To illustrate his point he brought into the discussion descriptions of wandering Cynics 2). More recently, Günther Bornkamm has lent his support to Dibelius 3). A.-M. Denis does not specifically address himself to the problem, yet sees the main thrust of vss. 1-6 to be Paul's presentation of himself as the messianic prophet to the Gentiles 4).

The most exhaustive recent treatment is that of Walter Schmithals, who argues forcefully that Paul is defending himself against specific charges that had been made against him 5). Schmithals

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1) E. Von Dobschütz, Die Thessalonicherbriefe (1909), pp. 106 f.
3) "Glaube und Vernunft bei Paulus", in Studien zu Antike und Urchristentum (1963), p. 130 n. 22.
5) "Die historische Situation der Thessalonicherbriefe", in Paulus und die Gnostiker (1965), pp. 89-157.
emphasizes that Paul's language in I Thess. ii is in many respects similar to that of his Corinthian correspondence, and he claims that the same kind of Jewish Christian Gnostics are responsible for Paul's apologies in both groups of letters. He admits that there are parallels in I Thess. ii to the descriptions of the Cynics cited by DIBELIUS, and accepts the necessity of genuine preachers having to distinguish themselves from the charlatans. However, he points out that there are no close verbal parallels to Paul in the material cited by DIBELIUS. More important to him, though, is that the form of Paul's description of his work in Thessalonica is of such a nature that it demands being viewed as an apology 1). SCHMITHALS is not explicit at this point, but what seems to make him think that Paul protests too much is Paul's antithetic statements that could be understood as denials of accusations: τὴν εἰσοδον ... οὗ κενή ..., ἀλλὰ ἐν πολλῷ ἀγώνι (v. 2), οὐκ ἐν πλάνης οὐδὲ εξ ἀκαθαρσίας οὐδὲ ἐν δόλῳ, ἀλλὰ ... (vss. 3 f.), οὐχ ὡς ἀνθρώπων ἁρέσκοντες, ἀλλὰ θεῷ ... (v. 4), οὔτε ... ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας ... οὔτε ἐν προφάσει πλεονεξίας ... οὔτε ξητούντες εξ ἀνθρώπων δόξαν, οὔτε ... δυνάμεον ἐν βάρει εἶναι ... ἀλλὰ ἐγενήθημεν ἦπιοι (vss. 5-7) 2).

This article seeks to contribute to the discussion by examining in greater depth the Cynic background posited by DIBELIUS. Attention will be directed to the diversity that existed among wandering preachers and among the Cynics themselves, and to the self-descriptions of serious-minded Cynic philosophers in this context.

I

Given the situation described by such writers as Lucian of Samosata 3), it is to be expected that the transient public speakers were viewed with suspicion 4). It is understandable that the genuine philosophic missionary would want to distinguish himself from other types without his having explicitly been accused of acting like a

2) Cf. also Willi Marxsen, "Auslegung von I Thess. 4, 13-18", ZTK, 66 (1969), p. 24, who in a preliminary statement on the problem holds that one can speak of an apology in I Thess. ii 1-12, but of the Gospel, not of the apostle. He does, however, leave the matter open, and does not accept SCHMITHALS'S hypothesis.
4) Cf. L. Friedlaender, Darstellungen aus der Sittengeschichte Roms (1910), IV pp. 301 ff. for the reactions of different classes of people to philosophers.