THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

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WHEN the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls—more precisely, those from Qumran—was first announced, it appeared that their relevance for biblical studies lay chiefly in the Old Testament field. And naturally so: here were manuscripts of books of the Hebrew Bible a thousand years older than any previously known to be extant. Their value for the textual study of the Old Testament indeed remains very great; thanks to them we can now see, as we could not before 1947, the three main types of Hebrew Old Testament text current at the turn of the pre-Christian and Christian eras.

But, as time went on and more manuscripts were discovered and deciphered, it became clear that their relevance for New Testament studies and for the history of Christian origins held even more surprising implications, though in a less direct form. And in the past fifteen years New Testament students throughout the world have evinced as great interest in the Scrolls as have Old Testament students—even greater interest, if my impression is correct.

When, however, we ask students of the Qumran texts what affinities exist between these texts and the New Testament we are given the most varied answers. We are told that there are no affinities whatsoever; we are told on the other hand that the story of Jesus represents an "astonishing reincarnation" of the activity, death and vindication of the Teacher of Righteousness. We are told that Jesus himself was the Teacher of Righteousness; we are told on the other hand that the Qumran discoveries prove conclusively that Jesus never existed at all.

1 A lecture delivered in the Library on Thursday, the 10th of March 1966 during the Exhibition of Dead Sea Scrolls.
All these answers cannot be true. But the intelligent layman need not stand in bewilderment before them, wondering which (if any) he is to believe. Much of the material on which these divergent accounts is based is accessible to him in translation—for example, in the Pelican Book by Geza Vermes, entitled *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (1962)—and if he compares this material with the New Testament, he can form his own conclusions, tentative though these may be. While by no means all the Qumran literature has been published as yet, either in text or in translation, we may be sure that what is yet to be published will not essentially change the picture given by what has been published already, though it will amplify it and fill in details.

In comparing the Qumran texts with the New Testament, we shall bear in mind that these two bodies of literature are in some respects not on the same footing. In dealing with the New Testament, and especially with the Gospels, we are in the fortunate position of dealing with documents which during the past two centuries, to go no farther back, have been subjected to closer scrutiny and analysis than any other ancient texts. With the Qumran texts, on the other hand, we are dealing with documents which were discovered only the other day; and for all the volume of literature which their study has already brought forth, it will require many further years of study before anything like an agreed account of their origin and significance can be expected.

Here is one important example of this disparity between the two bodies of literature. The period of Jesus’ life can be dated fairly precisely, for we know—from extra-biblical as well as from biblical sources—that he was executed while Pontius Pilate was Roman governor of Judaea: that is to say, between A.D. 26 and the end of 36 or beginning of 37. Within that interval of ten or eleven years there is evidence enabling us to fix the date more precisely still, but we need not look at that; if it

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2 The great mass of documents from Cave 4 and much of the material from Cave 11 still awaits publication.
were possible to date the death of the Teacher of Righteousness, the effective founder of the Qumran community, within a dozen years, we should count ourselves fortunate indeed. As it is, the Teacher has been identified with the high priest Onias III, who was assassinated in 171 B.C., and with the Zealot leader Menahem, son of Judas the Galilaean, who was killed in September, A.D. 66, as well as with a number of other individuals who flourished at various times between these two terminal points. These widely divergent identifications have been propounded by scholars of the highest eminence—that with Onias III, for example, by H. H. Rowley, and that with Menahem by G. R. Driver, in his recent major work on the subject, *The Judaean Scrolls* (1965). Although only a minority of scholars who have worked on the Scrolls accept Professor Driver's dating, any view which commends itself to his mind is worthy of respectful attention. If he is right, then the main events in the history of the Qumran community are later than the events of the ministry of Jesus and the greater part of the apostolic age; even so, in Professor Driver's opinion, "the Scrolls...are...more or less contemporaneous with the New Testament. Consequently they are documents of prime importance for the understanding of the New Testament and present a challenge which Christian scholars will neglect at their peril."  

It is clear that, to some extent at least, these chronological

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1 I call him the "effective founder" because the godly remnant out of which the community developed wandered aimlessly for twenty years before he was raised up (CD i. 8-12). But it does not appear that he had any predecessor who could be called absolutely the "founder" of the community, although A. R. C. Leaney envisages a "founder" who was followed twenty years later by the Teacher of Righteousness, "who was not the founder but a re-founder" (*The Rule of Qumran and its Meaning*, 1966, p. 115). Similarly E. F. Sutcliffe describes the Teacher as "the second founder and organizer of the sect" (*The Monks of Qumran*, p. 97).

2 Maccabees iv. 34.


6 *The Judaean Scrolls*, p. 6.
problems of Qumran history and literature must affect the relevance of the Scrolls to New Testament studies. My own preference, if I may state it briefly, would be not to attempt to identify the Teacher of Righteousness with any known figure in Jewish history, but to date his rise to a position of supreme influence over the Qumran community during the high-priesthood of Jonathan, brother of Judas Maccabaeus (152-143 B.C.). Jonathan might in that case qualify for identification with the Wicked Priest, the Teacher’s bitter enemy and persecutor; in any case, it is probably more than a coincidence that it is during Jonathan’s period of power that the Essenes first make their appearance in history.

Professor Driver thinks of the men of Qumran as Zealots rather than Essenes. The line of demarcation between Essenes and Zealots was probably not so sharply drawn as is frequently thought; but to me the men of Qumran seem to have more in common with the Essenes described to us by Philo, Pliny, Josephus and Hippolytus than they have with the Zealots.

II

The men of Qumran went out to their wilderness retreat, north-west of the Dead Sea, in order to organize themselves


2 Josephus, *Ant.*, xiii. 171 (along with the Pharisees and Sadducees).

3 Hippolytus (*Ref. Omn. Haer.*, ix. 21) can speak of Zealots and *sicarii* as a variety of Essenes.
there as a new Israel, rather after the fashion of the tribes under
the leadership of Moses in another wilderness. The nation as a
whole had broken the covenant with the God of the fathers, but
these men regarded themselves as the heirs of the new covenant,
the righteous remnant, the hope of the future, a miniature Israel,
whose faithfulness would be accepted by God as an atonement
for the unfaithfulness of the nation at large. Their movement
was predominantly under priestly control, in its earliest days at
least; they maintained the sole right of the house of Zadok to
exercise the high-priesthood at Jerusalem, and one of their designa-
tions was "the sons of Zadok". They abstained from participation in
the sacrificial services of the Jerusalem temple while it was controlled by an illegitimate priesthood, but they preserved in
their community the priestly and levitical orders so that, when
the new age dawned, a pure sacrificial worship might be restored
without delay in a reconsecrated temple, administered by men who had not gone astray as the majority of the priests had done.
The Teacher of Righteousness was himself a priest\(^1\)—whether
of the house of Zadok or not is uncertain—and the nucleus of
the community consisted of twelve laymen and three priests.\(^2\)
Later, each of the groups of ten men into which the community
was divided for various purposes must include one priest.\(^3\)

The believing community of New Testament times similarly
regarded itself as a new Israel, "a remnant chosen by grace"
(Rom. xi. 5), "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,
God's own people" (1 Peter ii. 9). The kingdom of God had
been taken away from those who had shown themselves unworthy
of their trust, and given to "a nation producing the fruits of it"
(Matt. xxi. 44). They were the "little flock" to whom their
Father had been well pleased to give the kingdom (Luke xii. 32). In
the early days of their fellowship they tried to practise community

\(^1\) He is apparently "the priest" of 1 Qp Hab., ii. 8 f., "into [whose
heart] God has put [wisdom] to interpret all the words of his servants the
prophets".

\(^2\) 1 QS viii. 1. For this interpretation, cf. E. F. Sutcliffe, The Monks of
The parallel with the twelve apostles of the New Testament is imperfect; they
were a group of twelve including an inner circle of three, and they were all laymen.

\(^3\) 1 QS vi. 3 ff.
of goods,¹ as the men of Qumran did as a matter of course, but in a much less systematic fashion than obtained at Qumran. They, too, held themselves to be the people of the new covenant, although they understood the new covenant differently from the men of Qumran; for the New Testament community the new covenant was a new relationship with God which had been sealed in messianic blood. Instead of maintaining distinct priestly and levitical classes, as the men of Qumran did, the Christian community was taught to consider itself corporately as "a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter ii. 5).

The Qumran community, moreover, lived in the conviction that the end of the current age, the "epoch of wickedness", was at hand. Its thought and life were dominated by this eschatological conviction. Its members believed that in the very near future all that the Old Testament prophets had foretold would come to pass; indeed, they believed that those predictions had already begun to be fulfilled in the emergence of their community and the activity of the Teacher of Righteousness. Similarly, the early Christians looked on themselves as those on whom "the ends of the ages" had come (1 Cor. x. 11); for them, in fact, the new age had already dawned, although the old age had not completely passed away; they were living in the overlapping period of the two ages, the "last hour" (1 John ii. 18), between the passion of Jesus and his manifestation in glory.

III

In both communities this eschatological emphasis appears very clearly in their interpretation of the Old Testament. The commentaries discovered among the Qumran manuscripts show us well enough how the Old Testament was interpreted by the followers of the Teacher of Righteousness; the New Testament writings indicate plainly how it was interpreted in the primitive Church.

¹ Not only in the primitive Jerusalem church but in the earlier days of the apostles' itinerant association with Jesus, when Judas Iscariot had charge of the common purse (John xii. 6; xiii. 29).
The Qumran community, like the early Christians, but unlike the traditional rabbinical schools, interpreted the prophetic oracles of the Old Testament in their own right and not simply as supplements to the Law. According to the Qumran commentaries, God revealed his secret purpose to his servants the prophets, but that revelation (especially with regard to the time when his purpose would be fulfilled) could not be understood until the key to its understanding was placed in the hands of the Teacher of Righteousness. To him the mysteries were made plain by divine illumination, and he made known to the last generations what God was going to do in the last generation of all. ¹ He taught his followers that all that the prophets had spoken referred to the time of the end, the time which had now set in; and he so interpreted all that the prophets had spoken as to teach his followers their duty in this critical situation.²

The parallel with the New Testament is striking. Mark sums up Jesus' early Galilaean preaching in the words: "The appointed time is fully come and the kingdom of God has drawn near; repent and believe in the good news" (Mark i. 15). The age of fulfilment has dawned. The prophets who foresaw the gospel blessing, we are told, "searched and inquired about this salvation; they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ [i.e. the Spirit of messianic prophecy] within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories" (1 Peter i. 10 f.). Much had been revealed to those prophets, but not everything. But first-century Christians had no need to search and inquire in order to ascertain what person or time was indicated by the prophecies; they knew. The person was Jesus; the time was now. Their whole attitude to the Old Testament and its fulfilment is summed up in Peter's words in Jerusalem on the first Christian Pentecost: "This is that which was spoken by the prophet" (Acts ii. 16).

If it was the Teacher of Righteousness who taught the Qumran commentators and other members of the community their biblical exegesis, we need not search and inquire long to

¹ CD i. 11 f.
² Cf. O. Betz, Offenbarung und Schriftforschung in der Qumransekte (1960); also my Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts (1950).
discover who taught the apostles theirs. This note of fulfilment runs throughout Jesus’ public proclamation: “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke iv. 21). “Blessed are the eyes which see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it” (Luke x. 23 f.). The Old Testament exegesis which pervades the apostles’ preaching is based on that which they learned from Jesus on every occasion when he “opened their minds to understand the scriptures” (Luke xxiv. 45).¹

Here is one of the most important points of resemblance between the Teacher of Righteousness and Jesus, in that each imparted to the community which he founded its distinctive features of biblical interpretation. The resemblance does not amount to identity: there is an important contrast. To the early Christians Jesus was the central theme of the Old Testament revelation, which indeed reached its fulfilment in him as the Messiah. With his triumph over death and exaltation by God, the days of the Messiah had dawned; he was now exercising his kingly power, not on earth but at God’s right hand. To the men of Qumran the Teacher of Righteousness, while he was certainly a subject of Old Testament prophecy, was not its central subject; Old Testament prophecy reached out beyond him for its fulfilment. After his death, his followers continued to look forward to the advent of the messianic age. In what circumstances the Teacher died—was “gathered in”, to use his followers’ language of him²—we are not clearly informed. It is conceivable, but not certain, that some of his followers expected him to rise from the dead in advance of the general resurrection of the just,³ and believed that in resurrection he would function as the priestly Messiah of the new age.⁴ Even if they did, it is

² CD xx. 1, 14.
³ Cf. CD vi. 10 f., “until there stands up one who will teach righteousness in the end of days”.
⁴ If he is the “expounder of the law” who is to stand up with the Davidic Messiah in the end-time, according to the document provisionally called 4 Q Florilegium, i. 11 (J. M. Allegro, “Fragments of a Qumran Scroll of Eschatological Midrashim”, JBL, lxxvii (1958), pp. 350 ff.).
nowhere suggested in the Qumran literature that he did so rise, or that anyone thought he had done so.

IV

The form which messianic expectation took in the Qumran community is known to us from a number of documents, and it is reasonable to suppose that the community learned its messianic doctrine, as it learned so much else, from the Teacher of Righteousness. Messianic expectation at Qumran was directed towards two distinct personages who would appear at the end-time and inaugurate the new age: a great priest and a great military leader. The great priest, the “Messiah of Aaron” (or “priestly Messiah”), would be head of state in the new age. The military leader, the “Messiah of Israel” (or “lay Messiah”), was the promised prince of the house of David, probably identical with the mighty man who would lead the people of God, the “sons of light”, to victory over the hostile “sons of darkness” in the eschatological warfare which the prophets had foretold. In the new age he would rank beneath the Messiah of Aaron, just as the Davidic prince in Ezekiel’s blueprint of the new commonwealth of Israel would be subordinate to the priesthood. (Where the title “the Messiah” appears without qualification in the Qumran texts, it is the Messiah of David’s line that is meant.) With these two Messiahs is associated a third eschatological personage, who does not, however, receive the messianic title; this is the prophet like Moses, promised in Deuteronomy xviii. 15 ff.

While the Qumran community, to judge by the literature thus far published, never seems to have reached the point at which it believed the Messiah (or Messiahs) to have appeared, the New Testament is dominated by the announcement that the Messiah has come. And while the Qumran community distinguished the prophet, the prince and the priest of the end-time as three separate individuals, the New Testament presents Jesus as

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2 *CD* xx. 1; xii. 23 f.
3 1 QSa ii. 11 ff.
4 4 Q Testimonia; 1 QS ix. 11.
combining the three roles: he was “anointed” in his baptism as the prophet of whom Moses spoke, as the heir to David’s throne, and as the perpetual priest of Melchizedek’s order acclaimed in Psalm cx. 4. The traditional doctrine of the threefold office (triplex munus) of Christ goes back to primitive times. His prophetic office speaks for itself, but his kingship was manifested in quite another way than that of military conquest, while his priesthood could have nothing to do with the line of Aaron, since he belonged to the tribe of Judah, not Levi: the one New Testament document which enlarges on the priestly aspect of his messianic ministry finds in Psalm cx. 4 authority for ascribing to him a greater priesthood than Aaron’s.

But the prophetic portrayals of the prophet, the priest, and the Davidic prince do not exhaust the New Testament presentation of Jesus’ Messiahship. He himself did not often voice a messianic claim; had he done so, it would certainly have been misunderstood. On one notable occasion, however, when he did make such a claim he identified himself not only with the Messiah who is called in Psalm cx. 1 to take his seat at God’s right hand but with the “one like a son of man” who in Daniel vii. 13 f. is brought to God on the clouds of heaven to receive everlasting dominion (Mark xiv. 62). Jesus’ commonest self-designation, indeed, was “the Son of man”; but in his mind the figure of the Son of man is fused with that of the obedient Servant of Yahweh in Isaiah xlii-liii, and it is this conception of the Servant-Messiah that controls Jesus’ acceptance and fulfilment of his mission.

The Qumran community, for its part, appears to have attached importance to the Old Testament figures of the Servant of

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1 Luke iv. 18; Acts x. 38.
2 Acts iii. 22 f.; vii. 37.
3 Rom. i. 3, etc.
4 Heb. v. 6, etc.
5 In fact, the Qumran conception of the character and function of the Davidic Messiah must be included among those which Jesus decisively and repeatedly repudiated (cf. e.g. John vi. 15).
6 There is a historical foundation for the application of Ps. cx. 4 to Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in that the acclamation as a perpetual priest of Melchizedek’s order is addressed to the Davidic king of Ps. cx. 1, although the writer to the Hebrews may not have been greatly interested in such a foundation.
Yahweh and the Son of man, without using these explicit terms, but it does not seem to have interpreted them messianically. Instead, the community itself felt called upon corporately to fulfil what was written concerning the Servant of Yahweh and the Son of man. As the Teacher and his followers devoted themselves to the study and practice of the holy law, as they endured persecution at the hands of the Wicked Priest and other ungodly oppressors, they believed that they were accumulating a store of merit which would avail not only to procure their own justification before God but also to make propitiation for the polluted land of Israel, just as the Servant by his suffering was to bear the sin of many and cause them to be accepted as righteous (Isaiah liii. 11 f.). But the men of Qumran also believed that when the epoch of wickedness came to an end, it would be their duty and privilege to be God's instruments in the execution of judgement on the ungodly, in fulfilment of what was said in Daniel vii. 22 about the "saints of the Most High" who are the counterpart of the visionary figure "like a son of man".

This corporate interpretation of the Servant and the Son of man is not absent from the New Testament. The apostles share in the mission of the Servant, carrying God's salvation "to the end of the earth" (Acts xiii. 47), and the Corinthian Christians have to be reminded that "the saints will judge the world" (1 Cor. vi. 2); but this twofold activity is viewed as a participation in work which belongs primarily to Jesus, and only then to his people as associated with him. (Where, on the other hand, the language of the Servant is used in the Qumran Hymns of Thanksgiving in the first person singular, we may recognize the community expressing itself through an individual spokesman.)

V

The Qumran community, in addition to its prophetic exegesis, had its own interpretation of the Law, and a rigorous interpretation it was, one which "exceeded the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees". Readers of the New Testament think of the Pharisees as being inordinately strict in their application of the

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1 1 QS viii. 6, 10; 1 QSa i. 3.  
2 1 Qp Hab. v. 3-6.
Law, but in Qumran eyes the Pharisees were looked upon as compromisers, "seekers after smooth things" or (as the phrase should perhaps be rendered) "givers of smooth interpretations". The Qumran marriage law was stricter than that of the Pharisees; so was the Qumran sabbath law. When Jesus said that anyone whose ox or ass had fallen into a pit on the sabbath would certainly rescue it, for all the sacredness of the day, he plainly knew that the Pharisees would agree with him. But precisely such a humane action to an animal in distress is forbidden in the sabbath regulations of Qumran.

Again, the men of Qumran out-Phariseed the Pharisees in their separatism, even if the Pharisees received their name as being "separatists" par excellence. The men of Qumran were volunteers for holiness, but they understood holiness in a different way from Jesus. They tried to preserve their holiness by keeping themselves to themselves as far as possible, whereas Jesus deliberately sought the company of people who were no better than they should be, because, as he pointed out, it was sick people, not healthy people, who needed the doctor's care. For this Jesus was criticized by the Pharisees of his day, but the Pharisees themselves were criticized by the Qumran community for not being half thorough-going enough in their separation from defiling associations.

VI

Let me now go through the New Testament quickly, mentioning certain documents or groups of documents in which affinities with Qumran literature have been noted, but not staying to assess the cogency of all these suggested affinities.

First, the Synoptic Gospels. Resemblances between the Qumran community and the milieu in which the Gospel of Matthew took shape have been traced by Krister Stendahl in The School of St. Matthew (1954). W. D. Davies, in The Setting of the Sermon

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1 Heb. dōrēšē (ha)ḥālāqōth (1 QH ii. 15, 32; 4 Qp Nahum i. 7; cf. CD i. 18).
2 Cf. CD iv. 20 ff.
3 Luke xiv. 5; cf. Matt. xii. 11 (where a sheep is mentioned instead).
4 CD xi. 13 f.
5 Mark ii. 17
on the Mount (1964), has suggested that some of the polemic in
the Sermon may have been directed originally against Essene
sectarians, although its final formulation was determined by the
encounter, later in the first century, between Palestinian Christ-
ians and Pharisees. It may well be that some of the special
material in Luke's Gospel, especially his nativity narratives,
came from circles which shared in certain respects the outlook
of Qumran. The humble and pious society into which both John
the Baptist and Jesus were born, according to these narratives,
could have included "associate members" of Qumran or a
similar community, "men who are the objects of God's good
pleasure", to use a Lukan term (Luke ii. 14) not unfamiliar at
Qumran.

It is with the Gospel of John, however, that the most striking
and abundant affinities of thought and language have been
detected, to the point where a common reservoir of terminology
has been spoken of. It would be wise to remember that practically
every new discovery in the field of Near Eastern religion of the
closing years B.C. and early years A.D. has been hailed in its time
as the solution to "the problem of the Fourth Gospel". Even
so, the affinities with Qumran certainly provide additional evi-
dence for the Hebraic foundation of the Fourth Gospel. Some of
the affinities are adequately accounted for by the fact that the
Old Testament is the fundamental source-book both of the Fourth
Gospel and of the Qumran texts—in the former case, the Old
Testament as interpreted and fulfilled by Jesus; in the latter, the
Old Testament as it had passed through the mind of the Teacher
of Righteousness and his disciples. The antithesis between light
and darkness, to take one example of the dualistic phraseology
common to Qumran literature and the Fourth Gospel, goes back
ultimately to the opening verses of Genesis, where God at creation
separates the light from the darkness; yet the way in which light

1 The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, pp. 235 ff., 256 ff.
2 Cf. the phrase benē rāšôn, lit. "sons of (God's) good pleasure" (1 QH iv.
32 f., xi. 9).
3 Cf. W. F. Albright, "Recent Discoveries in Palestine and the Gospel of
W. D. Davies and D. Daube (1964), pp. 153 ff.; G. Baumbach, Qumran und
das Johannes-evangelium (1958).
and darkness, truth and falsehood, good and evil are set in opposition in the Rule of the Community is specially reminiscent of the language of the Johannine Gospels and Epistles.¹

How can this be explained? The early chapters of the Gospel of John deal with a phase of Jesus' ministry in Judaea, Samaria and the Jordan valley which was concurrent with the closing months of John the Baptist's ministry. The dispute about purification mentioned in John iii. 25, which led John's disciples to question Jesus' activity, is the kind of dispute which must have been very common at a time when so many competing "baptist" groups were active in those parts. The disciples of John and the disciples of Jesus were not the only people engaged in baptizing there at that time. The men of Qumran had their distinctive ceremonial washings, and so had other communities.²

The unnamed disciple of the Baptist who, according to John i. 35-40, began to follow Jesus along with his companion Andrew, may well be identical with the beloved disciple on whose testimony the Fourth Gospel is based (John xxi. 24). If the beloved disciple was indeed at one time a follower of John the Baptist, then some fascinating possibilities are presented. For, among all the theories which have been propounded to establish a connection between Qumran and primitive Christianity, the least improbable are those which find such a connection in John the Baptist.³

That John was brought up by the men of Qumran or a similar community is not a necessary inference from the statement in Luke i. 80 that "he was in the wilderness till the day of his manifestation to Israel"; but it is a guess which does not conflict with that statement. But if there is any substance in the guess, then we must conclude that, when the word of God came to John in the wilderness and sent him forth to preach his baptism

¹ The light-darkness antithesis appears also in the Pauline corpus; cf. Eph. v. 7 ff.
of repentance in view of the approach of the Coming One, he must have realized that the way of Qumran, noble as its ideals were, was not the way in which preparation should be made for the divine visitation.\(^1\)

With regard to the First Epistle of John, which bears such a close relation to the Gospel, mention should be made of Wolfgang Nauck's study, *Die Tradition und der Charakter des ersten Johannesbriefes* (1957). Here a primitive order of Christian initiation is discerned which presents similarities to the procedure for admission to the covenant-community at Qumran.

The community of goods in the Qumran community and the early Church (Acts ii. 44 f.; iv. 32 ff.) has been mentioned already; we may note in passing the difference between the penalty imposed on the member of the community who "lied deliberately in matters of property"\(^2\) (one year's excommunication and deprivation of one-fourth of his food-ration) and the sad fate of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts v. 1 ff. when they committed the same offence. More important, probably, in the narrative of Acts is the statement that, at an early stage in the life of the church, "a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts vi. 7). Nothing more is said expressly about these priests, but it may be significant that they are mentioned immediately before the account of the activity of Stephen and the inauguration of the Gentile mission. It has been suggested that they had Essene affinities, that they would have been among the first targets of attack in the persecution which followed the death of Stephen, and so migrated to the regions north of Judaea, to Samaria and then Damascus and other parts of Syria.\(^3\) That they or their successors were the people to whom the Epistle to the Hebrews...

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1. It is noteworthy that the language of Isa. xl. 3, used in the New Testament as a *testimonium* for John the Baptist (Mark i. 3; Matt. iii. 3; Luke iii. 4-6; John i. 23), is quoted in 1 QS viii. 14 with reference to the Qumran community's withdrawal to the wilderness.

2. 1 QS vi. 24 f.

was addressed has been held by more than one scholar, although this is pure speculation.¹

However, we have just referred to Damascus. Damascus, as we know, plays a part in the Qumran literature. If the "Damascus" of the Zadokite document is the literal Damascus,² then at an early stage of the Qumran community's existence the community, or part of it, migrated to Damascus. As we also know, Damascus plays a part in the New Testament; it was in its vicinity that Paul became a Christian, and the first Christians with whom he was associated in community fellowship were those of Damascus.³ Is there any link between the part that Damascus plays in Qumran literature and the part that it plays in the New Testament? Here is one possible link: the designation "the way", which Luke uses six times in Acts for the Christian religion, is used twice in his accounts of Paul's conversion (Acts ix. 2; xxii. 4), in contexts which make it likely that it belongs to the source on which he draws. Outside Acts, some of the most striking instances of "the way" used as a term for true religion come in the Zadokite document and other Qumran literature.⁴

More impressive than this possible link between Qumran and Paul is the two-fold sense given in his writings and in Qumran literature to the term "righteousness"—in the sense both of God's personal righteousness and of that righteous status which he imparts to believers.⁵

In the Pauline corpus it is the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians that display closest resemblances to the terminology of Qumran.⁶ A possible explanation of this is that in these two epistles Paul employs for purposes of Christian teaching termin-

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² There is thus far no means of certainty on this question.
³ Gal. i. 17; Acts ix. 10 ff.
⁴ E.g. CD i. 13; ii. 6; 1 QS ix. 17 f., 19, 21; x. 21; xi. 11. Cf. E. Repo, Der "Weg" als Selbstbezeichnung des Urchristentums (1964).
⁵ Especially in the "Hymn of the Initiants" at the end of 1 QS (e.g. x. 12 f.; xi. 3-15); cf. 1 QH iv. 30-38.
⁶ Close resemblances to Qumran thought and language have been recognized also in 2 Cor. vi. 14-vii. 1; cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, "Qumrân and the interpolated Paragraph in 2 Cor. 6, 14-7, 1", Catholic Biblical Quarterly, xxiii (1961), 271 ff.
ology which was current in the "Colossian heresy"—employing it, it has been said, in a "disinfected" sense.1 Over ninety years ago Bishop Lightfoot of Durham, in his great commentary on Colossians, traced the distinctive features of the "Colossian heresy" back to Essene influence.2 Perhaps he used the term "Essene" in rather a wide sense, but if we take "Essene influence" to mean the influence of Jewish nonconformity he was assuredly right; and his argument chimes in remarkably well with the affinities which K. G. Kuhn and others have recognized between the phraseology of Qumran and that of Colossians and its sister-epistle to the Ephesians.3

One feature of these two epistles which is not paralleled at Qumran is their presentation of the church as the body of which Christ is the head. At Qumran we have no lack of parallels to the picture of the church as the household of God or the temple of God—the whole Qumran community is a temple for God, and its inner nucleus is the holy of holies—but the conception of the church as the body of Christ, a particular application of the Hebrew idea of corporate personality, is probably original to Paul.

A variety of attempts has been made to establish some affinity between the Qumran sect and the Epistle to the Hebrews. According to F. M. Braun, "of all the New Testament writings, the Epistle to the Hebrews is the one which gives the fullest answer to the basic tendencies of the sect".4 Yigael Yadin has argued that it was addressed to Jews originally belonging to the Qumran community, who were converted to Christianity but carried with them some of their former beliefs and practices, with which the unknown author takes issue.5 Hans Kosmala prefers to regard the people addressed as Jews holding views very similar

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2 J. B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (1875), pp. 73 ff.
3 Cf. K. G. Kuhn, "Der Epheserbrief im Lichte der Qumrantexte", NTS, vii (1960-1), 334 ff.
to those of the Qumran sect and other Essenes, who had come a considerable part of the way towards Christianity, but not yet far enough.\(^1\) C. Spicq regards them as the converted priests of Acts vi. 7, who in his eyes were "Esseno-Christians" and included former members of the Qumran community.\(^2\) J. W. Bowman thinks of the recipients as a community of Hellenistic-Jewish Christians at Sychar who had come under the influence of Qumran.\(^3\) My own view is that all the evidence adduced in support of these views can be satisfied if we suppose that Hebrews was intended for a house-church of Jewish Christians at Rome. In the Roman Church there survived into the third century (as we know from the Apostolic Tradition ascribed to Hippolytus) elements derived from Jewish nonconformity.\(^4\) If the new evidence suggests that this nonconformity was akin to the way of Qumran, then we have confirmation of an impression formed independently by comparing certain allusions in the epistle (e.g. the "instruction about ablutions" of Hebrews vi. 2, which probably is not a reference to the once-for-all Christian baptism) with indications that the Jewish substratum of Roman Christianity had affinities with some of the "baptist" movements of Palestine.\(^5\)

In the Epistle of James there is an enigmatic passage which some have attempted to relate to Qumran doctrine: "Do you suppose it is in vain that the scripture says, 'He yearns earnestly over the spirit which he has made to dwell in us'?" (James iv. 5; the quotation from "scripture" might also be rendered: "the spirit which he has made to dwell in us yearns earnestly").

\(^1\) Hebraer-Essener-Christen (1959).
\(^2\) "L'Épître aux Hébreux: Apollos, Jean-Baptiste, les Hellénistes et Qumrân", Revue de Qumran, i (1958-9), 365 ff. See p. 84.
\(^3\) Hebrews, James, I and II Peter (1962), pp. 13 ff. For a critique of all such views see J. Coppens, Les affinités qumrânienres de l'Épître aux Hébreux (1962).
\(^5\) The "forty years" of Ps. xcv. 10 seem to be applied in Heb. iii. 7 ff. to the forty years following the death of Jesus, in a manner comparable to the conception of a probationary period of forty years in Qumran literature; cf. CD xx. 14 f.; 1 QM ii. 6 ff.; 4 Qp Ps. 37, frag. A, 1. 6 ff.
These words come from no known scripture. It is pointed out that the concept of "spirit" which they express—the concept of a good spirit, given to man by God at creation—corresponds to the Qumran concept of the "predestined 'spirit of truth'" which takes the pious man to itself at the time of creation, of 'his, the pious man's, spirit' which stands in battle with the 'spirit of perversion'"; but we are still left without an answer to the question about the scripture from which James quotes, for he is not quoting from the Rule of the Community.

The quotation from 1 Enoch and the allusion to the Assumption of Moses in the Epistle of Jude remind us that the former pseudepigraph was included in the Qumran library, while the latter displays features of outlook in common with that of Qumran.

Among a number of affinities between the book of the Revelation and the Qumran literature may be mentioned the vision of the New Jerusalem (Rev. xxi. 2, 10 ff.), which is paralleled in a New Jerusalem apocalypse represented by fragments from several Qumran caves (both the Johannine and Qumran visions of the New Jerusalem draw on Ezekiel xl-xlviii), and the battle of Armageddon (Rev. xvi. 16), comparable to the eschatological conflict of the Qumran Rule of War. In general, however, where the New Testament Apocalypse uses traditional military phraseology to denote the Messiah's triumph, it does so with sovereign liberty: it is not by taking the lives of others, but by giving his own life, that the Messiah wins his victory; the conquering Lion of the tribe of Judah comes on to the stage as the slaughtered Lamb (Rev. v. 5 f.). But one point of contact I find of special interest. The picture in Revelation xii. 1 ff. of the woman who gives birth to a manchild—in others words, Israel (or at least the true Israel) giving birth to the Messiah—has a remarkable parallel in one of the Qumran Hymns of Thanksgiving, where a spokesman of the community adopts the language of a woman in the pains of childbirth who bears a man-child as a "wonder of a

2 Jude 14 f., 9.
3 Caves 1, 2, 4, 5 and 11; those from Caves 1, 2 and 5 (1 Q 32, 2Q 24, 5Q 15) have been published in Discoveries in the Judaean Desert, i (1955), pp. 134 f.; iii (1962), Texte, pp. 84 ff., 184 ff.
counsellor", one of the four designations given in Isaiah ix. 6 to
the expected prince of the house of David.¹

VII

There is some reason to believe that, when the Qumran
community was scattered towards A.D. 70 (as archaeological
evidence indicates), some of its members, together perhaps with
members of other Essene groups, made common cause with
another body of refugees—members of the fugitive church of
Jerusalem who left the doomed metropolis and settled east of the
Jordan. A number of the distinctive features of the Ebionites,
as they are described by Christian writers of later generations,
could be accounted for in terms of influence exercised by such a
body as the Qumran community on such a body as the first-
generation church of Jerusalem.² The presence of Essene
elements in Ebionitism has long been recognized—by J. B. Light-
foot and F. J. A. Hort,³ for example. If, indeed, some of these
elements came from the Qumran community, we may conclude
that those Qumran refugees who joined the Jewish Christians
came to acknowledge that their messianic hopes were fulfilled,
not along the lines laid down by their former instructors but in
Jesus of Nazareth, envisaged more particularly in terms of the
prophet foretold in Deuteronomy xviii. 15 ff. Other survivors
of the community appear to have migrated to Mesopotamia,
perhaps after making common cause with some of the remaining
disciples of John the Baptist; there they became the ancestors of
the gnostic community of the Mandaeans, who survive in Lower
Iraq to the present day.⁴

¹ QH iii. 9 f.
² Cf. O. Cullmann, “Die neuentdeckten Qumran-Texte und das Juden-
christentum der Pseudoklementinen” in Neutestamentliche Studien für R.
Bultmann (BZNTW), xxi (1954), 35 ff.
³ J. B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, pp. 82,
ff.; F. J. A. Hort, Judaistic Christianity (1894), pp. 201 f.
⁴ Over forty years ago R. Bultmann remarked towards the end of his important
article “Die Bedeutung der neuerschlossenen mandäischen und manichäischen
Quellen für das Verständnis des Johannesevangeliums” (ZNTW, xxiv (1925),
100, fff.) that further knowledge about the Essenes might provide the missing link.
The whole question is highly problematical and demands much critical study.
but cf. R. Macuch, “Alter und Heimat des Mandäismus nach neuerschlossenen
VIII

The Teacher of Righteousness and the Prophet of Nazareth taught their respective followers a way of life. The two ways of life did not completely coincide, and one might consider what were the factors which enabled the one to survive the catastrophe of A.D. 70 while the other disappeared then, to be rediscovered as a historical antiquity in our own day. We shall understand both better if we give due weight to the resemblances and differences between them.

The resemblances are due not only to the general fact that both movements drew upon the spiritual heritage of Israel’s faith, enshrined in the Old Testament writings; they are due more particularly to the fact that both originated in a nonconformist environment within the Jewish nation. In The Scrolls and Christian Origins (1961)—one of the best books on this subject—Matthew Black traces the Essene and Qumran movements back to an ancient ascetic strain or wilderness tradition in Israel, represented in earlier days by the Kenites, Nazirites and Rechabites. This strain, he believes, continued to flourish in the post-exilic period as a nonconformist tradition in two main groups—a northern and a southern. From the southern group came the men of Qumran; it was against the background of the northern group that, a century and more later, Jesus began to proclaim in Galilee the gospel of the kingdom of God (although the evidence of the Fourth Gospel is that he had earlier and later associations with the southern group as well).

At one point after another throughout the New Testament some interaction between Qumran and early Christianity is indicated. It is of the essence of the gospel story that it is not something insulated from the contemporary world but part and parcel of the on-going course of first-century thought and action. The Christian account of this matter would, I think, be that when God does a new thing in the earth, as he did pre-eminently in the Incarnation, the event cannot be exhaustively accounted for


1 John i. 28 ff.; x. 40; xi. 54.
in terms of what went before (although what went before constitutes a providential preparation for the event); but when once the event has taken place, it is fed into the stream of history as a real dateable occurrence, playing its part in the historical pattern of cause and effect, or challenge and response.

Even in their most sober and restrained presentation, the discoveries at Qumran, with the light they shed on biblical studies, are exciting enough. They do not constitute, as the publisher's blurb on one American book puts it, "the greatest challenge to Christian dogma since Darwin's theory of evolution"—that is as rare a gem of wishful thinking as I have come across in this connection! But they do provide us with new and most welcome background and context for the more intelligent study of the New Testament and Christian origins. When any object is viewed against a new background, the object itself takes on a fresh appearance, and against the background supplied by the Qumran discoveries many parts of the New Testament take on a new and vivid significance. Above all, those passages which express the remnant consciousness and eschatological outlook of early Christianity take on a new significance, by comparison and contrast alike, when they are viewed in the light of this contemporary movement which was also characterized by a remnant consciousness and an eschatological outlook.

We should be restrained from premature dogmatism when we consider how incomplete our knowledge of the Qumran community still is. Even when all the documents that have been discovered are published the reflection that they may represent but a fragment of what the library originally contained will continue to impose counsels of caution.

Truth is one and indivisible; and the more truth we receive, the more light is shed on the truth we already know, and the better able we are to appreciate the old and the new together. It was a Christian apostle who said, "We cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth". The men of Qumran would gladly have endorsed his words; we, too, may take their lesson to heart.

² 2 Cor. xiii. 8.