

QUMRAN AND CHRISTIANITY

By the exceptive phrase about *porneia* Christ did not impose the Levitical norms for legitimate marriage, but only declared that where the norms in actual force were violated, there was reason for dissolution of the marriage. Among the Jews those norms were in fact Levitical, and consequently Matthew, writing primarily for Jews, had more reason to mention the matter of *porneia* than had Mark and Luke, who wrote rather for gentiles. It is clear from Acts 15 that there was, early in Christian history, considerable discussion about the matter among Hebrew converts, and the Council of Jerusalem may well have legislated before Matthew's Gospel was written, with full knowledge that Christ had spoken in this sense.

In so complex a matter, where Scripture scholars differ, one must speak cautiously. Father Vaccari's conclusion, however, seems acceptable: the view which holds that the *porneia* of Matt. 5:32 and 19:9 means an illegitimate marriage is supported by sound reasons and avoids difficulties inherent in other explanations. On this view it is manifest that real divorce, involving a breaking of the marriage bond, is utterly excluded. The texts of Mark, Luke, and of Paul fit happily into this explanation and, indeed, are themselves explained and confirmed by it. 'Whosoever putteth away his wife—unless his union with her is illegitimate—and marries another, committeth adultery.'

BERNARD LEEMING, S.J. AND R. A. DYSON, S.J.

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When documents can fetch as much as three pounds sterling per square inch it may be supposed that they are not uninteresting. These we speak of are associated with Khirbet Qumran, the ruined remains of the headquarters of that semi-monastic, semi-eremical body of priestly penitents known as the Community of the Alliance. For our purpose it is precise enough to say that they occupied the site and the caves in its neighbourhood from the end of the second century B.C. to the first A.D., finally deserting it when the Tenth Legion marched on Jericho on its way to the siege of Jerusalem (A.D. 67).

All the world knows of the 1947 discovery (Cave 1). The hunt was up, and the Arabs are still scouring the rock-face west of the Dead Sea. Their most rewarding find was that of Cave 4 in September 1952. This mass of new material has forced the recruitment of a small team of scholars who are carrying on with their work conscious of the popular impatience but fortunately not disturbed by it. More than once Père de Vaux, director of the investigation,

has had to protect his team by protesting that it is not yet the time for syntheses—still less for popularisations.¹ The greater part of the texts remains to be published and the explorations themselves are not entirely completed. Only the manuscripts of Cave 1 are as yet available to the public²; it is calculated however that while the finds of Caves 2, 3, 5 and 6 can be published in one volume, Cave 4 will demand three or more.³

In these circumstances it is premature to offer appraisals that claim to be complete and final. It is true that even angels have not feared to tread this insufficiently charted ground, but the venture has not been entirely without damage. The brilliant intuitions even of a Dupont-Sommer were set down side by side with too bold a portrait of the Teacher of Righteousness, founder of the sect, in terms of the Christian belief and hope.⁴ The author later admitted that this was 'a parallel hastily drawn to prick the curiosity of his readers.'⁵ In our own country, and more recently, an excellent series of talks was somewhat marred by similar suggestions which, though offered as such, were likely to mislead an uncritical public.⁶ Granted that the niceties of scholarly debate are not for the uninstructed ear, it still remains our duty to indicate the dissent of other scholars when it exists. Thus the reading of the Habacuc commentary which is said to refer to the violent death of the Teacher is very much disputed. In the same way it might be wise to await the publication of other editions of the Community's famous *Manual of Discipline*, now being studied, before we draw firm conclusions from the one edition available. And as for the ready intervention of the unqualified one can only apply to this the severe but just verdict—or epitaph—earned by the French popular journals: 'The Press is no longer interested and it would be better if it never had been.'⁷

¹ *Revue Biblique*, 1953, p. 625; 1955, p. 632

² J. T. Milik, *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, vol. i, 1955

³ *Revue Biblique*, 1956, p. 51

⁴ *Aperçus préliminaires sur les manuscrits de la Mer Morte*, Paris, 1950. The Teacher was said to have been regarded as a divine being incarnate; he was a redeemer put to death and his second coming was expected.

⁵ *Nouveaux aperçus...*, Paris, 1953, p. 207

⁶ Mr John M. Allegro in the Northern Home Service Radio programme, 16, 23 and 30 January at 7.15 p.m. Mr Allegro is assistant lecturer in Comparative Semitic Philology at Manchester University. He became a member of the team of scholars working at the Rockefeller Museum, Jordan, in October 1953. Other members of the team dissociated themselves at least from certain impressions produced by the talks in a letter to *The Times*, 16 March 1956. In his reply in the same newspaper a few days later the speaker called attention to the tentative nature of his reconstruction. He had said that in all probability the Teacher had been handed over to the gentiles to be crucified, and carefully taken down from his cross; the body was lovingly watched over by his disciples in the expectation of its resurrection. The speaker's terms had been chosen to match those of the Gospels.

⁷ J. Delorme in *L'Ami du Clergé*, 1955, p. 656

These things said in dispraise of temerity, a word of warning is necessary against its more dangerous opposite which is indifference or inertia. It is not for the Catholic mind, that takes so naturally to the idea of living tradition, to ignore the voice of the Jewish tradition before Christ.¹ The Spirit assuredly did not cease to guide the nation that produced Zachary, Elizabeth, Mary herself—the ‘poor of God,’ outstanding surely but not isolated. The hiatus between the Biblical economies is therefore literary and canonical only; between the economies themselves there is no rupture. But if there are traces of this continuity it behoves us to study them. We are speaking of the light the new discoveries throw not on the Biblical text² but on the religious mind, or one corner of it, with which our Lord with his precursor and his followers had to do. They are a thin shaft of brightness falling on some part of the cradle of the Word made flesh. We welcome it, for the dichotomy is false that is implied in a recent popular book on our subject, namely that ‘the rise of Christianity should at last be generally understood as an episode in human history rather than propagated as dogma and divine revelation.’³ The supernatural and the historical are not two incompatibles, though they be incommensurables; even Incarnation, assumption of a finite nature by the Infinite, cannot exhaust the Word of God to man, but the Catholic at least holds it to be a divine intervention in history. The Word was made flesh: history is revelation.

Infant Christianity and Qumran had this first thing in common, that they were two spiritual communities, existing together in time and not far distant in place, each of which was cut off from the body of official Judaism. It is indeed a symptom of their deep difference that while this official Judaism had resisted advances from Christianity it had been itself deserted by Qumran; nevertheless, each would understand the other when it addressed Pharisees and Sadducees as a ‘brood of vipers.’ But Christianity’s confrontation was Qumran’s withdrawal. For lack of more offensive weapons the ‘sons of Sadoq’—the leaders claimed physical descent—chose this form of protest against a usurped high-priesthood. For them the Maccabean movement had gone wrong: the holy war against Syrian Hellenism had not restored the legitimate Sadoqite priesthood. From the time of Jonathan (161–143 B.C.), brother of Judas Maccabeus, the high office had remained in the Maccabean family. What remained for the sons of Sadoq? Retirement in hope that God would reassert the ancient right. So they withdrew, taking as their interim charter—as

¹ And after too, no doubt. But this is another and more difficult question.

² Though indeed they begin to make a history of the Old Testament text appear at last possible.

³ E. Wilson, *The Scrolls from the Dead Sea*, New York, 1955, p. 108

Christianity was later to do—the words of the Book of Consolation (Is. 40:3) : ‘Prepare in the wilderness the way of our God.’

In what did the preparation consist? Not in warlike exercise. It seems true to say that the Qumran sect was not pacifist as the Jehovah’s Witness are not pacifist,¹ though when we read its ‘War’ scroll (or ‘Fighter’s Manual’) we must bear in mind Dodd’s warning on the interpretation of the eschatological combats in Ezechiel and Daniel.² The military dispositions are minute and, it is said, modelled on the Roman technique; but on the other hand there is a ritual character attaching to them³ which suggests unreality. But this at least should be said, that the ‘War’ scroll is a most bitter expression of hatred for all that is not Jewish and a blueprint for vengeance. We are very far from Christianity. ‘Jesus could, no doubt, have launched a holy war, and would have found many enthusiastic followers had he done so. But it is as certain as anything can be that he rejected the whole conception of such a warfare—whether in the immediate Zealot form or in the deferred Qumran form—in favour of the way of the Suffering Servant.’⁴ The war of our Apocalypse (e.g. 20:7 ff) is not against flesh and blood; nor is there even in the known Jewish literature anything to match the fierce attacks upon individuals, unnamed but recognisable, that we find in Qumran’s commentary on Habacuc.⁵

This for our sense of proportion. But let us see the reverse of the coin. Abstention from the official cult, though only a temporary measure, promoted a detached and more thoughtful spirituality. The first line of the *Manual of Discipline* firmly lays down St Benedict’s rule: ‘To seek God.’ Needless to say, whoever enters the Community takes oath ‘to devote himself to the Law of Moses . . . as it has been revealed to the sons of Sadoq’ and ‘as revealed from time to time and as the Prophets have revealed it through the holy spirit,’ but these qualifications in themselves and in their historical situation prepare us for a more generous interpretation than that of the Pharisees and for a different emphasis.⁶ In fact they made way for the ‘mercy and

¹ Bruce, *New Testament Studies*, 2, 1956, p. 188, quotes the reported statement of the international leader of the Witnesses at Twickenham in August of 1955; ‘they were conscientious objectors in relation to wars of the present order, they were not absolute pacifists; they believed in a war—the eschatological warfare of Armageddon.’

² C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, London, 1952, p. 73: ‘We shall be wise to treat the entire scheme of imagery as language appropriate to describe that which lies upon the frontier of normal experience, which therefore cannot be directly communicated by plain speech.’

³ *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 1955, pp. 372–99

⁴ *New Testament Studies*, 1.c.

⁵ *Biblica*, 1954, p. 343

⁶ Owing, doubtless, to its withdrawal from the Temple, Qumran seems at times to pass beyond the salutary emphasis of the Prophets almost to a condemnation of sacrifice.

not sacrifice' theme of the Prophets¹ and enabled a metaphorical interpretation of the Mosaic sacrificial system. In place of that system stood the careful observance of the Community's rules which, under the good pleasure of God, would expiate sin. For consciousness of guilt is not the least admirable nor the least Christian quality of Qumran which regarded itself as a home of penitents. Such a reaction from the *insouciance* of the Sadducees and self-sufficiency of Pharisaism inevitably brought with it a total personal committal to the divine mercy, a higher perception of what we call 'grace.' In these circumstances it seems to us unjust to accuse the sect of a Calvinistic predestination doctrine: the emphasis on God's *dominium* has provoked the same accusation at more advanced stages of theology, and still unjustly; in a time and milieu where speculation was not acceptable and formulas unmade, the accusation is an anachronism. As in the New Testament itself the two data of divine choice and human effort appear side by side without a reconciling philosophy; may it be that human experience in prayer as in effort can do without one? And so, if we may resume, in place of the sacrificial vocabulary we find recurring at Qumran the words 'truth, humility, justice, love of goodness, mercy.' We can guess at our Lord's approval who once said to the Pharisees: 'You have left the weightier things of the Law: justice and mercy and faith' (Matt. 23:23).

The concluding Blessing of the *Discipline Manual*, reminiscent of the *Benedictus* of Zachary the Sadoquite, father of the Baptist,² well expresses the substantial piety of Qumran: 'Blessed be Thou, my God, who throwest wide the heart of Thy servant to receive knowledge. . . .³ Grant to the son of Thy handmaid to stand before Thee for ever. For without Thee no way is perfect: without Thy good pleasure nothing can be done.'

Here at Qumran we have a notable preparation of heart for a worship in spirit and in truth, centred not on this mountain nor on that; for a religion Jewish in its origins which could yet survive, even thrive upon, the destruction of the Holy City itself. Such a revelation was Qumran to the few. Theirs was the lesson the Babylonian exile had read to the many. And yet the Community maintained a shadow hierarchy ready to take over in the great day of the Visit, of the divine rescue and renewal of Jerusalem, whenever it should come. The

¹ Amos 5:24; Os. 6:6; Is. 1:11-17; Mich. 6:6-8

² *Revue Biblique*, 1955, pp. 41-2

³ 'When *da'at*, "knowledge," and related terms appear in the *Manual of Discipline*, it is seldom a question of knowledge in the modern, intellectual, sense of the word. And the underlying idea is scarcely ever to be identified with the more abstract "gnosis" of Gnosticism' (Bo Reicke in *New Testament Studies*, I, 1954, p. 138). Here it is acknowledgment and performance of God's will.

true perspective of the Temple was not permanently achieved. Christianity on the other hand seems to have grasped it firmly from its earliest days and so stood braced for universality. Already in the thirties of the first century Stephen puts the Temple in its due place (Acts 7:44-50); his confidence was surely based upon deduction from the words of Jesus (e.g. Mark 14:58; cf. John 2:19-21). Temple, priesthood and sacrifice were all and already gathered into one in the person of Christ. On this point as on others it is the intervention of that person in history which reveals the gulf (though it offers the bridge, too), between Christianity and Qumran.

By the very force of their origins, therefore, the sectaries were sharply aware of an unfaithful Israel that had compromised with paganism. From this Israel they had seceded and their secession had drawn a clear line between two camps. To use their own expression: 'the sons of light' had withdrawn from 'the sons of darkness.' These two were not yet at grips, nor would be until the eschatological combat was engaged. Rather, the present duty of the sons of light was to refuse all contaminating contact: not one of them would have sat down to eat with Simon the Pharisee. Nevertheless, the 'spirit of lies' which¹ directed the camp of darkness could and did pass into the camp of light, contending for mastery in the heart of each member whose destiny turned upon the issue. In this struggle, despite expressions suggesting a fatality in the distribution of the opposing spirit to each man, it seems clear that human free-will is truly in action.

The 'sons of light or darkness' terminology is not without parallel even in the Synoptic gospels (Luke 16:8) and of itself is perhaps a natural enough Hebraism² though not found in the Old Testament. But the persistence and pervasion of the light-dark motif is noticeable in both the Scrolls and the Johannine literature, and this emphasis is impressive. There is at least a common background of thought and of expression. In many cases of likeness between the Qumran literature and the New Testament appeal may legitimately be made to the Old Testament as a common source. This is scarcely possible here. The dualism³ implied in the light-dark opposition and expressed by the doctrine of the two spirits is foreign to the Old Testament and indeed to indigenous Hebrew thought. Infiltration from the uncompromising dualism of Zoroastrianism is not unlikely⁴; through the further filter of the

¹ Or 'who.' It appears so far impossible to decide whether the 'spirits' are persons or motive-powers.

² This view is argued by G. Graystone in *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 1956, p. 33.

³ The dualism of Qumran is of course modified: the two 'spirits' are created and controlled by the one God.

⁴ cf. *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 1955, pp. 405 ff

Qumran school of thought it may have passed to St John's gospel and first epistle. In this, as in many other respects, the fourth gospel may begin to display evidence of more Jewish contacts than many critics have been willing to concede.

But it is the style of the edifice rather than the choice of quarry that distinguishes an author's thought. We have said that Qumran was a withdrawal, Christianity a confrontation; because while the one lived on expectation the other was confident it had received. For our Essene sect¹ light and darkness pursued their parallel courses and the combat was reserved for the future. For St John—and this is the nerve of the matter—light and dark had already engaged decisively: and the light shone in the darkness and the darkness did not master it. The prince of this world (the *Mastema* of Qumran, the equivalent *Satan* of John) was already cast out, already judged. In such terms Jesus saluted the hour of his crucifixion, the hour of his triumph. Qumran could say 'the hour cometh,' but John could add 'and now is.'

With their hope for a happy future this 'Community of the Alliance' connected the manifestation of a messianic figure. In this they are in line with the Prophets. But in the days of the monarchy the hope had naturally been associated with the dynasty; after the Exile when a high priest replaced the Davidic king the same hope, equally naturally, attached to the priesthood also. Thus in Zacharias (4:1-14; 519 B.C.) Josue the Sadoquite priest and Zorobabel the Davidic prince stand together as portents of the messianic age. Subsequently the emphasis changes: royal messianism recedes, though does not disappear; sacerdotal messianism comes to the fore. Thus Ecclesiasticus (45:6-24; c. 190 B.C.) stresses the priestly hope, and an apparently contemporary hand has substituted Josue the priest for Zorobabel in Zacharias 6:11. But the Davidic and the Sadoquite Messiahs both appear (the Davidic first) in the psalm the Hebrew text of Ecclesiasticus inserts between Ecclus. 51:12 and 51:13.²

Against this background we must read the hope of Qumran. For it seems established³ that there also two Messiahs were expected to manifest themselves in the latter days: 'the Priest' and 'the Messiah of Israel.' In that priestly community it is not surprising that the Sadoquite 'Priest' takes precedence over the 'Messiah of Israel,' a layman. He is to preside at the banquet at the end of times and sing

¹ That Qumran was an Essene foundation is an opinion gaining in favour.

² cf. *Bible de Jérusalem*, note ad loc.

³ This interpretation, originally proposed by Fr. J. T. Milik in *Verbum Domini*, 1951, p. 152, and cf. *Revue Biblique*, 1953, pp. 290-2, is gaining acceptance; cf. Kuhn in *New Testament Studies*, 1, 1955, pp. 168-79.

the praises of the victories won by the Messiah of Israel over the camp of darkness. The Sadoqite and Davidic hopes, therefore, coexist though the Davidic is subordinate.¹

While the messianism of Qumran remained in suspense Christianity, though it too looked forward, was convinced that it had already reached the end-time. In the New Testament, moreover, the variegated strands of the messianic hope are found woven into one tapestry. The Son of David, Son of Man, Suffering Servant expiating sin² are all identified in one person, gathered into a powerful synthesis initiated by an embracing and creative mind.³ But one problem still remained: the priesthood of a Davidic Messiah. For its own part Qumran could not suggest that Priest and King might be united in one figure—Levitical and Judan origin were clearly irreconcilable. It is to this question that the inspired author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* addresses himself. He dissolves the duality of Qumran's messianic hope by claiming for our Lord a priesthood 'after the fashion of Melchisedech.' By a method of argument calculated to appeal to those familiar with the verbal ingenuity of *midrash* interpretation he demonstrates the superiority of that pre-Mosaic priesthood over the priesthood of Levi and so of Sadoq (Heb. 7:1-19). There is no dilemma therefore; Jesus of Juda cannot be a Levitical priest, but he enjoys an office that is not tribal; it is universal and not less but more from God, for indeed 'the Law could not achieve what is perfect.'⁴

That the New Testament must be appraised as controversy before it is assessed as history is no doubt a statement to be greeted with caution, but it must at least be recalled that the inspired authors wrote for a public which had its own interests and difficulties. In this matter of the priestly Messiah we have an example which, maybe, is close to our subject. It is worthy of notice that *Hebrews* by insisting upon the Aaronic priesthood is, equally with the Qumran sect, hostile to the non-Aaronic Sadducees who were in possession: 'No-one,' says the Epistle, 'must take this dignity to himself: he must be called by God, precisely as Aaron was' (5:4). But this very principle would seem to oppose Qumran to the priesthood of Jesus of Juda. Hence the manifest anxiety of the author to deal with the difficulty. Is it too bold to suppose that he had the sectaries in mind? It is in the

¹ It is unfortunate that the third Isaiah commentary, apropos Is. 10:22-11:4, expressly mentioning a Davidic Messiah, is torn. The MS is one of Mr Allegro's group. He mentions that the tear is new and that there is hope of recovering the remainder; cf. *Revue Biblique*, 1956, p. 62.

² The notion of expiation by the few on behalf of the many is found in the *Manual of Discipline* (cf. 8:6-10; 9:4).

³ cf. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, p. 109; the creative mind is our Lord's.

⁴ cf. *Revue Biblique*, 1955, pp. 35-7

first place inconceivable that the early Christian preachers should ignore the truly spiritual aspirations and difficulties of this *élite* of Israel, provided they were in touch with it. That they did meet is surely probable. It is known that there were pockets of Essene members or sympathisers in every town of Palestine; ancestors of Qumran itself had migrated as far afield as Damascus forty years after the death of the Teacher of Righteousness¹; in Ephesus supporters of the Baptist, and therefore presumably acquainted with Qumran, were installed (Acts 19:1-4). Christian contact with such groups would go far towards explaining not only the background of the Epistle to the Hebrews, but also the indications of relationship between Qumran and the Johannine literature, possibly even the less certain affinity of phrases in the Pauline epistles.²

Relative to this question of messianism is the use the New Testament makes of the Old Testament. Rendel Harris's theory of a pre-New Testament volume of 'Testimonies' may appear extravagant,³ but the evidence of the New Testament texts at least demands lesser florilegia⁴ with which Christianity could illustrate its continuity with Israel and the unity of the divine plan. Qumran now offers support. One of the documents of Mr Allegro's group⁵ is an anthology of messianic passages from Exodus, 2 Samuel, Isaiah, Amos, Psalms, Daniel. A leaf from Cave 4 lists Deut. 18:18-19 ('I will raise them up a prophet,' etc.) with Num. 24:15-17 ('A star shall rise out of Jacob,' etc.) and Deut. 33:8-11 ('Thy perfection and Thy doctrine—shall be—with thy holy one'). Of these three texts the first is used in the earliest days of Christianity (Acts 3:22 f). The second, though not found in the New Testament, is used by Justin Martyr in the second century and doubtless lies behind the Star incident in St Matthew's account of the Infancy. The well known 'Stone' cycle of applications deriving from the 'precious cornerstone' of Isaiah 28:16⁶ is also represented in Qumran. There the trusty stone is identified with the council of the Community.⁷ For the early Christians the

¹ If the Teacher is to be identified with the high priest Onias III, he died in 171 B.C. But perhaps more probably he was a personality of Alexander Jannaeus's reign (103-76 B.C.), or possibly even of the Pompeyan period (c. 67 B.C.). The identification of the sect with the Ebionites and of the Teacher with Our Lord himself is no longer possible: the evidence that the Community was in existence several decades before Christ is now conclusive. Nor was the Teacher regarded as Messiah in the strict sense.

² On this last cf. W. Grossouw, *Studia Catholica*, 1952, pp. 1-5; S. E. Johnson, *Harvard Theological Review*, 1955, pp. 157-65

³ Dodd, l.c., pp. 23-7

⁴ Cerfaux, *Recueil Lucien Cerfaux*, 1954, vol. 2, p. 226

⁵ *Revue Biblique*, 1956, p. 63. In the letter we have referred to Mr Allegro writes: 'An article now in the course of preparation will lay most of the new messianic material before scholars in the next few months.'

⁶ cf. V. Taylor, *The Names of Jesus*, 1954, pp. 93-9

⁷ cf. *Zeitschrift f.d. A. T. Wissenschaft*, 1954, p. 113

stone is our Lord himself (1 Pet. 2:6; cf. Rom. 9:33) and Peter the Rock shares his quality (Matt. 16:18); but Qumran's collective interpretation is found also: those united with Christ are themselves living stones built into a mystical temple (Eph. 2:20 ff; 1 Pet. 2:5).¹

The remains of an elaborate water system with its great stepped cisterns are tangible witnesses to the references to purification in the *Manual of Discipline*. It appears that these baths were not a ceremony of initiation but rather a privilege of tried members: moral purity had first to be proved before admission to the purifications was conceded. It is therefore difficult to decide the part these played in the process of sanctification, but unlike the usual Jewish purifications they seem to have enjoyed a certain efficacy in relation to sin. The stain of guilt affected even the body; it must be progressively removed day by day until the final messianic purification by the spirit of holiness—the definitive messianic baptism.²

As Josephus describes it the baptism of John is scarcely distinguishable from any purification at Qumran: John's baptism was administered 'with the purification of the body in view once the soul had been purified by justness.' But Josephus had not the whole story; the gospels are more fully informed and the high light of their portrait is the prophetic and urgent nature of John's mission. While at Qumran the devout community of pious scribes laboured to prepare for the time of the Visit, applying to themselves the Isaian text: 'In the desert prepare the way of the Lord,' and adding, 'this "way" is the study of the Law,' a few miles away the Baptist was crying: 'The axe is even now laid to the root.' For that reason his baptism was not a series of purifications but an urgent, final, unique ceremony. For him there was no preparatory term of probation; there was no time to waste; humble acceptance of his baptism was part of the act of conversion itself. John was no patient scribe, he was a resolute prophet with a sure sense that his vocation pressed, conscious that his own 'manifestation' was a sign of the imminence of Judgment. Nor was his baptism for a tried *élite*: even the Sadducees, who would have

¹ There is similarity, too, in the method of O.T. exegesis which is neither Rabbinic nor allegorical. The reason is that both the sectaries and the Christians considered that they lived at the end of times: for Christianity the time had come, for Qumran it was imminent. Consequently the O.T. is taken up and applied in each to the present time. Nevertheless, exaggeration in this matter must be avoided. Thus both Qumran and N.T. (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:37 f) take up Hab. 2:4 which speaks of *fidelity* to God's will. Qumran applies the text to the Teacher, N.T. to our Lord. But the perspectives differ: the Teacher is not an object of faith for Qumran as Christ is for Christianity. We should therefore understand, against Dupont-Sommer, 'loyalty to the teaching of the Teacher' rather than faith in him as redeemer. cf. S. E. Johnson, *l.c.*, p. 165.

² On all this cf. *Lumière et Vie*, March, 1956, pp. 254

had short shrift from Qumran, were welcome if in truth they feared the coming wrath. And it would have shocked the sectaries to hear John ordering his baptised soldiers and publicans back to their work with all its pagan contaminations. Moreover the Baptist aimed at the purification of a whole people for the Messiah's coming, a national appeal perhaps, but not confined to the sons of Abraham, for God could raise such from the stones. If we speak of 'baptism' in relation to Qumran and to St John the Baptist, we should do well to recall the distance between the self-performed, recurrent, leisurely nature of the one and the unique, urgent character of the other that John himself administered in the full consciousness of his individual, personal mission. The rite remains, its significance has changed.¹

The early Christians, like the Qumran community, looked upon themselves as the faithful remnant of the true Israel. Both movements claimed the same titles: 'the elect of God,' 'the poor ones,' 'those of the Way,' and pledged their loyalty to a 'new Alliance.'² Both met periodically for their sacred meal, a rehearsal of the great messianic banquet in the latter days. At Qumran only the fully fledged members—the *Rabbim*—partook. Seniority was carefully regulated: presiding priest, priests according to age, layfolk. Though possibly unjust to the pursuit of humility at Qumran it is difficult not to recall our Lord's 'Be not called *rabbi*' (Matt. 23:8) and the competition for precedence at the Last Supper (Luke 22:24-7) which Jesus shamed by his own startling example (John 13:4-16). The president then blessed and divided the bread and the wine and each at table proceeded to do the same in turn. Here, therefore, we have a sacred meal in which bread and wine are prominent, with rules laid down for their blessing. The analogy with the Last Supper is unmistakable though in one important respect it breaks down: not the president only but each at table takes and blesses his own food. This ritual and sacred ceremony at Qumran emphasised the common fellowship of the society, the communion of the priest with others and of others together.

With the evidence of this thoroughly Jewish community before our eyes the thesis becomes more than ever untenable that St Paul under pagan influence introduced a ritual character into our Lord's

¹ John's seemingly self-contradictory phrase foretelling Christ's baptism 'in the Holy Spirit and in fire' (sanctification as opposed to condemnation) gets some light from the *Manual* which compares the spirit not only with cleansing water but also with a purifying furnace. Hence though the 'fire' of the Baptist is indeed a fire of judgment (Matt. 3:10-12), it may also include the idea of purification.

² But here again we must set a phrase in its historical context: Qumran's application to the Law together with the nature of its hopes for the future invite us to think rather of a renewed than of a new Alliance.

last meal with his disciples which was in fact commonplace in all except that it was his last. An unritual primitive Christianity is a mirage.¹ But whereas the fathers had eaten manna in the desert, and in the desert the Community of the Alliance celebrated its rite of bread and wine, the ceremony of the Upper Room was endowed with an entirely new significance. The disciples there were united with the priestly Messiah presiding at the table, sacramentally gathered into that Body which was to die and rise. Here again it is the historical intervention of Christ's person that marks Christianity off from Qumran.² It is true that for Christian disciples, as for the Community, the Meal is a rehearsal of the great messianic banquet where many shall sit down with Abraham in the Kingdom: and it is true that though the Resurrection of Christ be achieved in fact and of the disciples in principle—by reason of union with the Body—the Christian's manifest resurrection awaits the future³: the union is maintained, sacramentally, 'until he come.' Yet in the mind of Christ and of his disciples all is already consummated.

This is not Qumran but, once granted the Christ-event, Qumran might feel its appeal. Nor would the Community be surprised by the sacrificial atmosphere of the Last Supper.⁴ Voluntary exiles from the Temple sacrifice, they seem to have regarded their ritual meals as a substitute,⁵ as an official and communal act analogously sacrificial like their whole devotional life which was 'a sacrifice of praise.' This would explain the statement Josephus makes of the Essenes: that while refusing to enter the Temple they offered their own sacrifice at home.⁶

Israel's tradition looked back upon the Exodus as upon the idyllic time of honeymoon: in the first days of their union God had taken Israel into the desert and spoken to her heart. The 'spirituality of the

¹ cf. Bouyer, *La Bible et l'Évangile*, 1953, pp.255-7

² Whether any light is thrown by Qumran on the date of the Last Supper is open to question. The Community preferred the solar calendar to the lunar reckoning of the official clergy. For them 'the sun is the measure of the world'—a statement which might have something to do with the absurd allegation of sun-worship among the Essenes. An attempt on these lines has been made to solve the famous Johannine versus Synoptic controversy: our Lord may have followed the solar calendar of Qumran, the official priesthood the lunar calculation. It has been recently suggested that the Last Supper may therefore have occurred on Tuesday, cf. A. Jaubert, *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 1954, pp. 140-73. The suggestion perhaps raises more difficulties than it solves.

³ On the paradoxical intermingling of present and future in the Christian message cf. *Revue Biblique*, 1955, pp. 9-11

⁴ cf. J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, Oxford, 1955, pp. 142-52

⁵ Thus G. Vermès, *Les Manuscrits du Désert de Juda*, 1954, p. 61

⁶ Bones of sheep, lambs, etc., have recently been discovered on the Khirbet Qumran site, carefully stored in jars. 'They are certainly the remains of sacred meals celebrated by the community. This discovery is of great importance. Its explanation is evidently to be found in religious ordinances of which no trace has yet been found in the documents.' Père de Vaux in *Revue Biblique*, 1956, p. 74.

desert' is a legacy of this tradition. And so it was that the monks of Qumran sought God in the desert of Juda; in the same desert our Lord outfaced the tempter; to the same desert St John the Baptist withdrew from his home in 'a city of Juda,' preparing for his manifestation to Israel. It seems impossible that John should have known nothing of the great monastery on the bare plateau by the Dead Sea; most unlikely that he was unacquainted with its practices and its hopes. Nor is it extravagant to conjecture that he sought conversation with—even advice from—hermits older than himself.¹

But that these probabilities are confirmed by the New Testament evidence seems to us difficult to prove. John's invitation to repentance, his threat of vengeance and of lasting fire, these are echoed in the Qumran literature but we confess to finding the similarities not striking. As for his baptismal rite, the practice of baptising proselytes to Judaism existed demonstrably in the first century A.D. and probably earlier. These baptisms may have been John's model.² And even if such baptisms were not at that time tolerated as substitutes for circumcision, fully initiating the proselyte into the Jewish community, they were at least documents of separation from old pagan ways—evidence of a *metanoia*, or change of heart, such as the Baptist demanded. On this as on other points it may be prudent to beware lest the *éclat* of the new discoveries make us forget that if Qumran is a branch of Essenism, Essenism itself is part of a wider tradition upon which the Baptist may independently have drawn. In its final end, we may say, its initiatory character his baptism is nearer to proselyte baptism than it is to the practices of Qumran.

Perhaps the strongest argument for the Baptist's familiarity with the sect in its headquarters at Qumran is an indirect one. It is considered reasonably certain that St John the evangelist was the Baptist's disciple (cf. Jn. 1:35-40). Now we have remarked the affinities of the fourth gospel with the light and darkness theme which is so characteristic of the Community. It is possible, therefore, that the Baptist's young disciple, instructed in this outlook upon the spiritual world, came to see his divine master's career in those terms. It may be so. But on the other hand the explanation offered above for a similar phenomenon in the Epistle to the Hebrews may be sufficient to account for the viewpoint of the Johannine literature also. It is worthy of note, in any case, that we have here one more piece of evidence of authenti-

¹ In A.D. 54 Josephus Flavius, then aged sixteen, went to stay with an Essene hermit and remained for three years.

² cf. O. Cullmann, *Baptism in the New Testament*, London, 1954, p. 9: 'Judaism already knows of the baptism of proselytes coming over from heathenism. John the Baptist holds all Jews to be like proselytes and demands a baptism to forgiveness of sins from them all, in view of the impending appearance of the Messiah.'

cally Jewish contact in a gospel which was once thought to be so exclusively Greek.

The conditions Qumran sought ultimately to change, Christianity engaged to work with. Our Lord said: 'Render to Caesar' and, of the Pharisees, 'what they say to you observe' (Matt. 22:21; 23:3). Nor was the break with the Sadducean priesthood of his making, though when that priesthood presided over his condemnation Qumran must have felt a sympathy which might later blossom into acceptance. As for the meeting of minds, there was surely opportunity. For several years Christianity was Palestinian and the break with Judaism gradual: even in the second century Justin the Christian and Trypho the Jew could carry on a measured discussion. In the same century the *Pastor of Hermas*, written undoubtedly by a Christian, seems to show clearly the influence of Qumran's doctrine of the Two Spirits working against each other in man, and the *Pastor's* conception of the Church as a body of penitents is almost a definition of the Community of the Alliance.¹ Literary contact with writings like the moral instructions of the *Manual* are entirely probable for the first century. It has even been suggested² that our gospel of St Matthew, 'a manual for teaching and administration within the church,' is a kind of *Manual of Discipline* for the Christian movement. It is certainly true that Matthew's use of the Old Testament, not as a source of rules for life, but as prophecy shown to be fulfilled, is not at all Rabbinic but entirely in keeping with the method of Qumran.

We cannot know how in fact Qumran and its sympathisers answered to the impact of Christ. We can only say that the spiritual fervour of the monks, their fraternal love, their pursuit of the heart's purity, their conviction of the power of God's grace (unstressed by the Pharisees), all these qualities made of them ideal soil for the seed of Christianity. They were truly God's poor, the poor who are pronounced blessed in the Beatitudes. We do an injustice to Judaism if we forget them—but indeed they have recently thrust themselves on our notice.

ALEX. JONES

Upholland College
Wigan

¹ On the literary relationship of the *Duae Viae* and of the *Pastor* to the *Manual of Discipline* cf. Audet, *Revue Biblique*, 1952, pp. 219-38; 1953, pp. 41-82

² K. Stendahl, *The School of St Matthew*, 1954