

The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Doctrine

Matthew Black
D.D., F.B.A.

*Principal of St. Mary's College and
Professor of Biblical Criticism
in the University of St Andrews*

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The Dead Sea scrolls 'are documents of prime importance for the understanding of the New Testament and present a challenge which Christian scholars will neglect at their peril'.¹ The relevance and importance of the scrolls for the study of Christian beginnings, doctrinal as well as historical, is now widely recognized. The 'battle' of the scrolls, moreover, seems largely to have moved away from questions of date and history—though these are still fundamental and few of them yet resolved—to doctrinal or theological issues where there is every indication that these will be as hotly contested as the fundamental problems of history and dates. At the moment, however, the most urgent need is not for controversy, but for clarification; and my main purpose in this lecture is to seek to clarify some of the debated theological issues as well as to report several of my own conclusions. The scrolls are important for Christian doctrine: but there is a very real danger that this importance may be exaggerated, and a distorted, even false, picture given of their doctrines as well as their dates. I may add that I am also acutely aware of the difficulties and complexities of the subject; and these I do not think can be exaggerated.

I have two preliminary remarks to make. Firstly, I assume that the scrolls are to be dated not later than the end of the first Christian century, or, at the latest, the early decades of the second. Some of the scrolls, at any rate, must therefore

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be contemporary with New Testament writings, others are undoubtedly earlier. Secondly, the favourite identification of the sect is with the Essenes, a large body of whom is located by ancient historians near the Dead Sea. The theory has been challenged, most recently by Professor Driver,² and can no longer, it seems to me, be maintained without qualification. The modification I would accept is that the Essene group who held the fort at Qumran at the outbreak of the First Revolt (and thus the last custodians of the scrolls) had ceased, at least in

¹ G. R. Driver, *The Judaean Scrolls* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1965), p. 6.

² *op. cit.*

their leadership and dominant elements, to be the pacific ascetics idealized by Josephus and Philo; they had by then thrown in their lot with Zealot and Pharisaic groups.³

I propose to deal with three main aspects of Qumran doctrine and the New Testament, the doctrine of the priestly Messiah—the ‘sacerdotal messianism’ of the sect—the doctrine of the Atonement, and the doctrine of the Last Things.

Sacerdotal Messianism

It is now common knowledge that the Qumran sect believed in two Messiahs, a priestly Messiah and a secular leader or royal Messiah, more in line with the orthodox conception of traditional Judaism. In addition, a third individual has figured prominently in the discussion of the scrolls, the so-called Teacher of Righteousness. Apart from the fact that he was the founder of the sect and some kind of teacher of the

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Law (the term, which is ambiguous, really means ‘the Rightful Teacher [of the Law]’) his identity has baffled scholars, and there is still no general agreement as to who he was or when he flourished: the most recent solution of the problem is still *sub judice*.⁴ One school of interpreters claims that he too was a Messiah, or rather, it is claimed that the sect believed that he would arise or ‘return’ ‘at the end of the days’ as the priestly Messiah of the sect. Where so much is still obscure it is not surprising to find even more extravagant claims being made: indeed, a whole mythology has now grown up around the Teacher of Righteousness, based on the slenderest of evidence, such as that he was crucified, appeared in a theophany to his followers, rose again from the dead, and so on; and the portrait of Christ in the Gospels is then made out to be a second-hand copy of a Qumran original.

One of the best and most reliable accounts of Qumran messianism is a study by Pere Starcky⁵ of the École Biblique (Starcky is a well-known Dominican Hebrew scholar and one of the palaeographers working on the scrolls in Jerusalem). He detects four historical stages in the development of the doctrine: (1) An eclipse of messianism in the hellenistic era (c. 200-150 B.C.) to which he assigns the rise of the sect under its founder the Rightful Teacher; (2) its reawakening in the time of the Hasmonaean kings (c. 150-60 B.C.) with a duplication in terms of a sacerdotal and secular Messiah;⁶ (3) the absorption of the messianic prerogatives by the future priestly Messiah at the beginning of the Roman period, the pure ‘sacerdotal’ doctrine; and (4) the renewal, possibly due to Pharisaic influences, of the traditional

³ This is substantially the view taken by the École Biblique in Jerusalem, certainly by Milik and Starcky, and I think also the archaeologist de Vaux. Milik, who supports the Essene hypothesis, has drawn attention to a number of things which point to a final militant phase at Qumran (in *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judaea*, pp. 94 ff.): there appears to have been something like a ‘take-over bid’ for the sect in the first century A.D. by Zealot and Pharisaic groups; and these may well have been Dr. Driver’s *Saddoukim* (Josephus’s Fourth Philosophy).

⁴ G. R. Driver, *op. cit.*

⁵ ‘Les Quatre Étapes du Messianisme à Qumran’, *Revue Biblique*, tom. 70 (1963), pp. 481 ff.

⁶ Starcky claims to have found a text from this period, still unpublished, which depicts the priestly Messiah as the Servant of the Lord.

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conception of a secular Messiah, now the Scion of David, in the first century A.D.

The classic form of the messianism of the sect is its dual messiahship, but with the priestly Messiah the dominant partner; the peculiar and distinctive form of Qumran doctrine is its expectation of the single priestly Messiah, the Messiah of Aaron and Israel, in the Roman period, a sacerdotal messianism.

The Rightful Teacher does not figure at all, according to Starcky, in the messianism of the sect; he was not the Messiah nor did he even expect the coming of a Messiah. Nevertheless, he is accorded a more than temporal rôle; he was expected to return 'at the end of the days' at the side of the priestly Messiah (a variant version of the more popular view that he was the Messiah and would return as the priestly Messiah of the sect).

The least satisfactory part of Starcky's valuable *exposé* is his handling of the enigmatic Rightful Teacher. He does not attempt to identify him with any historical person, though he regards him as the author of the *Hodayoth* or *Hymns of Thanksgiving* and the *Manual of Discipline*. I do not propose to risk even approaching this morass of mysteries: we may never know who the individual was, called the Rightful Teacher, who founded the sect. But I am going to argue (a) that we can find out more about his historic rôle in the sect's history; and (b) that this supplies the key to the distinctive messianic doctrine of the sect, namely, its expectation of a priestly Messiah, its sacerdotal messianism; and (c) that this doctrine is closely tied up with the sect's ideas of atonement and eschatology, and has a considerable interest and relevance for the history or prehistory of Christian doctrine.

It is generally assumed that the term 'Rightful Teacher' was the description of a single individual, the founder of the sect who figures in different episodes in different scrolls. In fact, the evidence points to the use of the term 'Rightful

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Teacher' as the title of an office which could be held by different individuals, and not the name for any single historical person. The fullest description of the Teacher in the scrolls is 'the priest, the Rightful Teacher';⁷ shorter forms are simply 'the Teacher'⁸ or 'the Priest'⁹ (another longer designation is 'the Teacher of the Community'¹⁰). The short title 'the priest' is also employed to designate the Teacher's arch-enemy,¹¹ more frequently referred to as 'the Wicked Priest'. The simple title 'the priest' recalls in both cases the common designation in the Old Testament of the High Priest, namely, the Priest, i.e. the Priest *par excellence*. Now if, as is very widely held, the Wicked Priest (alias *the Priest*) was a

⁷ 4Qp.Ps. xxxvii.III.15.

⁸ CD xx.27-29.

⁹ p.Hab.II.6-8.

¹⁰ CD xix.35-xx.1; xx.13-15.

¹¹ p.Hab. viii.16, xi.12.

Jerusalem High Priest,¹² it seems a reasonable inference that the Qumran priest—whoever he was—was at least a rival for the high-priestly office, i.e. a presumptive High Priest or a high-priestly pretender. It seems very unlikely that the Wicked Priest, if he was a Jerusalem High Priest, would have hunted down and probably put to death the Qumran priest (the famous episode in the *Habakkuk Commentary*) if the latter had not been a dangerous rival. (The incident was, I believe, a case of judicial proceedings or judicial persecution—whether it was also one of judicial murder is another question—the Qumran chief priest was celebrating an illegal Day of Atonement.) Other evidence points to the same conclusion: the full title ‘the Priest, the Rightful Teacher (of the Law)’ is a longer form of the description of the chief priest at II Chronicles xv.3 ff., namely, ‘teaching Priest’, i.e. the priest whose prerogative was to teach or expound the Law: the full title in the scroll means

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‘the Rightful or legitimate Teaching (Chief) Priest’. The designation ‘Teacher’ or ‘Instructor’ in this connection (along with such synonymous terms in the scrolls as ‘law-giver’, ‘expounder of the Law’, etc.) describes the chief function of the high-priestly office before the invasion of hellenism and the encroachment of lay interpreters of the Law, namely, the expounding of the Law: the High Priest was the head of the legislature, as well as the chief cultic officer in the Temple.¹³ The evidence seems conclusive that, where the Teacher of Righteousness, ‘the legitimate Teacher’ is mentioned in the scrolls, he is a presumptive High Priest, that is, an Anointed One, or potentially an ‘Anointed One’, and, in this sense, a ‘Messiah’. (The High Priest is designated in Leviticus ‘the Anointed Priest’ and there are two references in the Old Testament to an ‘Anointed One’, i.e. Messiah (Ps. lxxxiv.10; Dan. ix.26), where a High Priest is probably meant.)

A well-known passage in the scrolls which receives a rightful explanation in the light of this conclusion is the pesher or interpretation in the *Habakkuk Commentary* of Habakkuk 11.4, ‘The just shall live by faith’, St Paul’s famous proof-text for his doctrine of justification by faith. The *Commentary in the Scroll* reads: ‘The explanation of this refers to all who practise the Law in the House of Judah whom God will deliver from the House of Judgement because of their works and their faith in the Teacher of Righteousness.’ The ‘essential doctrine’ of this passage has been summed up by one theologian: ‘The Faith which saves is faith in the Teacher of Righteousness, divine founder of the New Covenant.’¹⁴ The ‘illuminational exegesis’ of the scrolls, as it has been described, cannot hold a candle to this absurd

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modern pesher. The passage means quite simply that what will count for the Qumran covenant on his Day of Judgement will be his obedience to the Law, no doubt as

¹² The suggestion that ‘the Wicked Priest’ (הַכּוֹהֵן הַרָשָׁע) is a word-play on ‘the Chief Priest’ (כּוֹהֵן הַרָאשִׁי) has been made by several scholars. Cf. K. Elliger, ‘Studien zum Habakkuk-Kommentar vom Toten Meer’, *Beitrdge zur Historischen Theologie*, 15 (Tübingen, 1953), p. 198.

¹³ If I may so put it, he combined the offices of the Lord Chancellor (or the Lord Chief justice) with that of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

¹⁴ Dupont-Somner in *Revue de l’Histoire des Religions*, tom. 137 (1950), p. 162.

expounded by the Rightful Teacher, i.e. his 'legal works'¹⁵ and his loyalty to the true or rightful High Priest, the persecuted Teacher of Righteousness.

I am tempted away for a moment from my main argument at this point to take at least a cautious step into the treacherous bog of dates and history.

There are two main rival theories—there are countless others—about the date of the individual bearing this title in the scrolls. One theory places him in the hellenistic period (Seleucid or Hasmonaean) on the basis of historical allusions to this period: the other, on the basis of equally convincing evidence, anchors him in the Roman period, explaining references to the Seleucids as cryptic allusions to the Roman period. Both theories assume that the same individual is meant, and on this assumption neither can be right. If, however, the title was transferable from one individual to a successor, then both could be right. My suggestion is that the founder of the sect called the Rightful Teacher, i.e. the rightful High Priest, who seems to have passed away peacefully (*CD* xix.3 f), possibly in exile, flourished in the Seleucid or hellenistic period. If I may be allowed a parallel from Scottish history he was the Old Pretender. The Rightful Teacher in the Habakkuk and other scrolls was the Young Pretender, though more than one generation may separate him from his predecessor, and he seems to have been less fortunate than the latter (or Bonnie Prince Charlie) in getting off with his life.

A similar suggestion is made more than once of a succession of teachers and messianic pretenders by Driver (e.g. op. cit., p. 474): it is part of his theory that the Rightful Teacher was Menahem who perished in the First Jewish

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Revolt. Driver recognizes the possibility of rightful teachers before Menahem, but in consequence of his late dating of the central events and the rise of the sect his succession tends to be confined to the century after Menahem. If we are prepared to trace the origins of the sect to an earlier period, the perspective widens: there may have been more than one presumptive High Priest whose presumption cost him his life.

I have no desire, however, to add yet another theory to the endless speculations about the Teacher of Righteousness, and turn therefore to my second point in my main argument. The fact that the Rightful Teacher was a messianic pretender for high-priestly office furnishes the clue to the sect's sacerdotal messianism. Founded by a high-priestly pretender (possibly reorganized in the Roman period by a second), the sect, which regarded itself as the true Israel, never ceased to look for the coming from its midst of a High Priest who would rule in Jerusalem: its 'messianic' aspirations, that is to say, came to be focused on the 'arising' 'at the end of the days', i.e. in God's good time, of a rightful High Priest, an Anointed One or Messiah (in this restricted sense) who would cease to be a presumptive and become an anointed High Priest installed in Jerusalem (or, in the last phase of Qumran apocalyptic belief, if not in the earthly shrine on Mount Moriah in a heavenly sanctuary). The passage in the scrolls which puts this beyond doubt is the verse in the *Damascus Document* which has been the *fons et origo* of the modern mythology of the 'resurrection' of the Teacher of

¹⁵ It may also mean his 'travail', i.e. his sufferings.

Righteousness 'at the end of the days'. The verse (*CD* vi. 11) lays down that the sectarians are not to be instructed in any other legal doctrines or rules than those taught or enacted by its founder 'until there arise the Rightful Teacher at the end of the days'. It is bad theology based on superficial semantics which interprets this to mean the return to life or 'resurrection' of the founder of the sect, i.e. its first Rightful Teacher or messianic pretender to high-priestly office. It is

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thoroughly bad philology to translate 'arise' by 'resurrection': if the word here means anything more than 'arise' it means 'until the *appointment* of the rightful High Priest at the end of the days, the latter-day Rightful Teacher'. It is precisely the same formula as is used several times for the coming (or appointment) of the Messiah of Aaron and Israel, the same individual, the latter-day Rightful Teacher or High Priest of the sect who will exercise the same priestly functions as lawgiver as the priestly founder of the Community.¹⁶

This seems to me to be the core and substance of the sacerdotal messianism of the sect, except for one final highly significant feature. The more the sect's hopes of actual restoration receded, the more other-worldly they became. I do not share the view that the Messiahs of the scrolls are always and everywhere conceived as purely human figures.¹⁷ The scroll which gives fullest expression to the priestly messianism of Qumran is the *War scroll*. It is usually said that there is no Messiah or Messiahs in that scroll. On the contrary, the central figure in that scroll is the Anointed High Priest, and the Battle he solemnly inaugurates is to be waged on a higher than human plane.¹⁸ In the scroll of *Blessings on the Priests*, the High Priest is given a status equal to that of the angels of the Presence; and if he had not acquired that status before the Battle, he is to enjoy it in the new Jerusalem of the sect's other-worldly expectations. But here I encroach on the eschatology of the scrolls.

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The Doctrine of the Atonement

The idea that the Qumran sect believed in some form of messianic atonement is one of the most fiercely contested in scroll interpretation. That the scrolls do attest some kind of atonement 'for the nation', that is, for Israel, through human suffering, in this case the persecutions of the sect, is not in dispute and I take the *homologoumena* first before turning to the *antilegomena*.

One must begin by recognizing that the concept of atonement is a large one, capable of embracing a variety of not necessarily related ideas. In the *Manual of Discipline*, for instance, the individual makes atonement for his own sins by renewed obedience to the Law; elsewhere it is God who makes atonement (*CD* v.5). One disputed passage speaks of the

¹⁶ Cf. G. Jeremias, *Der Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit* (Göttingen, 1963), pp. 284 ff. The original expectation was probably for the 'rise' of the Teacher at the end of a forty-year period of exile in the wilderness, corresponding to the Sinai wanderings (*CD* xx.15).

¹⁷ Cf. Driver, *op. cit.*, p. 470.

¹⁸ Cf. A. S. Van der Woude, *Die messianischen Vorstellungen van der Gemeinde van Qumran* (Groningen, 1957), p. 185.

Messiah as making atonement (*CD* xviii.8-9), and I shall return to this passage shortly. The idea is also closely connected with the doctrine of grace; and in the *Hymns of Thanksgiving* we encounter again and again a deep spiritual insight in this connection found elsewhere only in the great prophets, or the Psalms, and the New Testament; it is a spirit of almost evangelical piety—man has no righteousness of his own except what God confers on him.¹⁹

Evidence for the atoning efficacy of the sufferings of the spiritual leaders of the sect is incontrovertible and specially noteworthy use is made of Second Isaiah. At fol: viii in the *Manual of Discipline* special mention is made of fifteen men, twelve laymen and three priests, who are said to be ‘perfect in all that is revealed from the whole Torah’.

In the council of the community there shall be twelve men and three priests perfect in all that is revealed from the whole Torah, to act truly, rightly and justly and with a love of mercy; and to walk humbly each with his neighbour; to maintain loyalty in the land, with

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integrity of purpose and a broken spirit; to expiate wrongdoing as men who uphold the righteous cause [or who act justly] and who endure the afflictions of the refiner’s furnace...

For an eternal planting, a Temple for Israel,
A conclave which is an holy of holies for Aaron;
True witnesses to judgement, and the chosen of grace to atone for
the land,
And to render to the wicked their desert.
This is the tested wall, the precious corner-stone;
Its foundations will not be shaken, nor be removed from their place.

‘True witnesses to judgment’: these Qumran saints are to fulfil the mission of the Servant of the Lord (Isaiah xliii.10, 12: ‘Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen’), while the ‘tested wall’ and ‘precious corner-stone’ recall Isaiah xxviii. 16 and I Peter ii.4 ff. The most significant words, however, are the description of these Qumran saints as ‘*true witnesses to judgement, and the chosen of grace to atone for the land*’. Taken in conjunction with the earlier description of the fifteen saints as men who expiate wrongdoing by enduring the afflictions of the refiner’s furnace (cf. Daniel xii. 10), we have in these verses the developed theological conception of a community or group within a community identifying itself with the Isaianic Remnant and attributing to its sacrificial sufferings a redemptive function. They are to constitute a living inner sanctuary (a ‘holy of holies’ for Aaron) in the Community, pictured, like the church in the New Testament, as a living Temple. (No less important is their work in judgement, for this corner-stone of the new Israel is not only to atone for the land but to render the wicked their deserts. As F. F. Bruce has remarked, the Servant who justifies many is also the Son of Man—in the Danielic sense—to whom has been given authority to execute judgement.²⁰)

¹⁹ See appendix.

²⁰ This doctrine of a ‘corporate’ atonement is one of the most striking points of resemblance between the Qumran sectaries and the later medieval sect of Qaraite Jews, their spiritual if not their lineal descendants. Cf. N. Wieder, *The Judean Scrolls and Karaism* (East and West Library, 1962), pp. 113 ff.

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The Messiah of the scrolls has been brought into connection with Christ as a redeeming Messiah on the strength of one passage in *CD* xviii.8-9 which speaks of the 'coming of the Messiah of Aaron and Israel, and he will make atonement for their sins'. Professor Driver has written:²¹

This passage, if it could be so used, would be of the highest value for understanding the Covenanters' doctrine of the Messiah and its relation to Christian doctrine; but unfortunately both beginning and end of the phrase are lost, only the last letter of 'Messiah' is certain, and the subject of the verb may not have been 'the Messiah'. If it is the Messiah, as it may well be, the reference is not necessarily Christian but may even be Jewish, although a redemptive Messiah in the strict sense is unknown in Judaism. The meaning may then be that, as 'God in His wonderful mysteries made atonement' or 'covered over their iniquity and forgave their transgression and built a sure house for them'... so the Messiah when he came as His agent would make atonement for all the sins of the Covenanters and teach them anew to understand the Law and to carry out its precepts....

This is hardly a satisfactory foundation on which to build. so important a conclusion. Moreover, the atonement, when the Messiah came, could well mean simply that as fully legitimate High Priest the Messiah would make ritual atonement for the sins of Israel. If Starcky's claim, however, is substantiated the application to the Messiah of the category of redeeming or atoning Servant of the Lord²² would clinch the argument in favour of the interpretation of this passage as reflecting a Jewish doctrine of a redemptive Messiah in the pre-Christian period.

Further evidence for the theory of a redemptive Messiah or a doctrine of Messianic atonement in the scrolls has been found in the *Hodayoth* or *Hymns of Thanksgiving*. Most of these hymns, like many of our Psalms, employ the first

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person singular. Who is this individual who speaks in the first person in these hymns? A large body of opinion holds that it is the Teacher of Righteousness himself, that is to say, the founder of the sect, and certainly the amount of circumstantial detail points clearly to some outstanding individual as the author of at least some of the *Hymns of Thanksgiving*. The only title anywhere given to the author is that of *Maskil*.²³ The title comes from Daniel and means literally 'sage' and undoubtedly refers to a spiritual leader of the sect. Whoever he was (and I shall return to this point later) he is represented in the *Hodayoth* as fulfilling the rôle of the Isaianic 'Servant of the Lord'. The idea that any redemptive significance or atoning value is attributed by the author to his sufferings has been hotly repudiated: thus Milik (who assumes the identity of the Teacher with the writer of some of the hymns in the *Hodayoth*) declares that 'the fact

²¹ op. cit., pp. 484 ff.

²² See above, p. 5 n. 3.

²³ Psalm xix, Col. 12.12.

and manner of the Teacher's death had for the Essenes no soteriological significance analogous to that seen by the early church in the death of Jesus of Nazareth'.²⁴ I have seen no reason to change my mind in this connection: the view which I expressed in my *Scrolls and Christian Origins* is that the author of some of the *Hodayoth*, whoever he was, does see in his sufferings and death a redemptive or atoning significance and applies to his sufferings the very language of Second Isaiah. Dr Gert Jeremias of Göttingen informs us that when the servant says in one of the hymns that 'his wounds were for healing' he means that they are for his own personal healing and that they are not to be explained as an echo of Isaiah liii.5, 'by his stripes we are healed'; he overlooks a passage earlier in the *Hodayoth* where the author declares 'I became a snare for sinners but healing for all that turn from transgression'.²⁵

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Here the benefits of the servant's sufferings are not for himself but for repentant sinners. That the author of the hymns represents himself in the rôle of the Isaianic servant seems to me to be beyond all reasonable doubt.

Moreover, while the use of Isaiah liii in this connection is rare in pre-Christian Judaism the idea of redemptive or atoning suffering is attested in this period in the well-known passages in II Maccabees vii-32 f, with its parallel at IV Maccabees xvi.22 ff.: the first passage speaks of the Maccabean martyrs' deaths taking place 'for the sins of the Hebrews', terminating all manifestations of divine anger and leading to a reconciliation with God (cf. verse 38); IV Maccabees uses expressly the language of sacrifice: the deaths of the martyrs is propitiatory and a cleansing of the nation's sin.²⁶

The main question outstanding is the identity of the author of the hymns. It seems to me that the evidence is insufficient to prove that the author was either the first Teacher of Righteousness or indeed any of his successors (on the view which I have presented in the first part of the lecture): he was, however, some outstanding spiritual leader of the sect and it seems very possible that the author was indeed one of the teachers of the sect. A high degree of probability must, therefore, attach to the hypothesis that the prophecies of Second Isaiah with their language of redemption and atonement were applied not only to the group of consecrated saints who are represented at the apex of the sect's hierarchy, but also to the historic leaders of the sect, that is to say, the messianic pretenders known as the Teachers of Righteousness. In view of this, it is no longer possible to assert that the messianic use of the servant passages in

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²⁴ *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judaea* (S.C.M., 1959), p.80.

²⁵ *op. cit.*, pp. 299 ff. Cf. my *Scrolls and Christian Origins* (Nelson, 1961), pp. 161-3.

²⁶ The aged martyr Eleazar is described in IV Macc. v.4 as 'a priest by birth, trained in knowledge of the Law' (τὸ γένος ἱερέως, τὴν ἐπιστήμην νομικός), and in II Macc. vi.18 as 'one of the leading scribes' (τις τῶν πρωτεύόντων γραμματέων). Cf. F. M. Abel, *Les Livres des Maccabees* (Paris, 1949) p. 366.

Second Isaiah are unknown in pre-Christian Judaism ('Messiah' is of course used in the sense in which I have defined it in the first part of the lecture, i.e. the high-priestly Anointed One). In that case, we have a *preparatio evangelica* which is of very great importance for an understanding of the origins of Christian doctrine and belief.

In my *Scrolls and Christian Origins*²⁷ I further suggested that in the light of this evidence we might be obliged to regard the author (or authors) in the *Hymns*, to whose vicarious sufferings some kind of redemptive significance was attached, as 'cult-figures' in the life of the sect. Edward Lohse's book on *Martyrer and Gottesrecht*²⁸ has reminded us that the antecedents of the veneration of the martyrs in early Christianity lies in post-Maccabaeen Judaism. Such martyr-cults sprang up in post-Maccabaeen times around the reputed site of the martyrdom or the tomb of the martyr; and one of Julius Wellhausen's brilliant insights was to infer the existence of such cults from the words of Jesus in his denunciation of the Pharisees at Matthew xxiii.29: 'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous [*dikaioi*], saying, "If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets".' The rabbinical idea of the propitiatory power of the shed blood of the heroes and saints of Israel has then possibly roots that lie deeply buried in pre-Christian Jewish antiquity. Already, as I have pointed out, in I Maccabees an atoning efficacy is attributed to the deaths of the martyrs. The possibility is a serious one: a recent study of the term 'the righteous' [*dikaioi*] in the New Testament²⁹ suggests a link with the Zadokite teachers and prophets who were known by this term, the *saddoukaia* or

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bene Sedheq, that is to say, 'the righteous ones'; there may quite possibly be an allusion in Matthew xxiii.29 to the righteous teachers of this tradition of pre-Christian Judaism.

Eschatology

It is a fairly general assumption among scroll interpreters that the Qumran doctrine of the Last Things—its eschatology—is substantially that of the New Testament writings. The Qumran Essenes shared, we are told, with the early Church the same kind of beliefs in the imminence of the Last Judgement, the coming of the Kingdom of God, the End of the world, in heaven and hell, in rewards and punishments in an after-life, etc.

In general it may certainly be said that there is a larger area of common ground here between Qumran Judaism and the New Testament than between the New Testament and any other branch of Judaism: but the situation is more complicated than can be conveyed in such general terms, for, as in the New Testament itself, there are diverse

²⁷ p. 161.

²⁸ Göttingen, 1955.

²⁹ D. Hill, 'Δίκαιοι as a Quasi-Technical Term', *New Testament Studies*, Vol. xi, pp. 296 ff.

tendencies as well as development within Qumran eschatological doctrine. What began as a political programme or goal, for instance, albeit a goal to be reached in God's own time and by His will 'at the end of the days', namely the national recognition of the claims of the sect as the body representing the true Israel, tended to find increasing expression in apocalyptic language and imagery so that the End Time became, as in the New Testament, a cosmic drama of Judgement. No sharp line of distinction, however, can be drawn between an other-worldly eschatology and the political aspirations of the sect even in their wildest dreams of world dominion. The birth-pangs of the new age, the Kingdom of God, were to be the death-throes of the old age, the overthrow of the dominion of Satan represented by the kingdoms of this world.

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This point has been well made by W. R. Farmer in his book on *Maccabees, Zealots and Josephus*:³⁰

Recognizing... that the war [of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness] ... is the final war at the end of time, some interpreters have fallen into the trap of thinking that the author conceives this eschatological war in 'purely' apocalyptic terms.... It is going to be a completely spiritual battle between the angelic hosts of the Lord and those of Belial. But such an interpretation cannot stand for the simple fact that this document makes it quite clear that though it will be the last war of this age, it will none the less be a real war... on a grand scale....

It was just by such apocalyptic prophecies that the flames of the first Revolt were fanned into conflagration.

Christian doctrine in this respect is not dissimilar. The conflict between Jesus and the Roman and Jewish authorities was a real conflict; and it was also interpreted by the New Testament writers, not only in terms of the Servant passages of Second Isaiah, but also as a cosmic conquest of the forces of evil.

The last phase in the eschatology of the sect, if I have interpreted it aright, was the expectation of the Last Judgement and the coming of the Kingdom of God, envisaged as a new creation purged of all evil and to endure for ever, with a new Jerusalem and a heavenly Sanctuary, a New Temple, at its centre.

The final section of one of the most graphic of the Hymns gives us what looks like a picture of the Doomsday of the world. Whether the vivid apocalyptic imagery is to be taken literally or figuratively is disputed, but no one doubts that it is eschatological prophecy.³¹ The End will be a terrible cataclysm where torrents of fire will destroy all life on earth and the material world dissolve while the armies of heaven complete the work of judgement. The picture in the writer's

³⁰ Oxford University Press, London, 1957, pp. 194 ff.

³¹ See further my *Scrolls and Christian Origins*, pp. 137 f.

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mind seems to be that of a universal conflagration accompanying or following Armageddon. Here again we may have a point of contact with New Testament doctrine: as the New English Bible renders II Peter iii.5-7: '...by water that first world was destroyed, the water of the deluge. And the present heavens and earth, again by God's word, have been kept in store for burning; they are being reserved for the day of judgement when the godless will be destroyed.' The belief in the destruction of the world by fire is attributed to the Essenes by the Early Fathers.

The idea that the Kingdom of God (or of Heaven) would have at its centre a heavenly Sanctuary was natural for a priestly sect. As we have seen, that Sanctuary is conceived as the sect or the people of God itself. Ministering and ruling in the Sanctuary is the high-priestly Messiah. In the scroll of *Blessing* or *Benedictions*, the following blessing is to be said for the High Priest, the priestly Messiah in the Messianic Age:³²

... thou shalt be as an Angel *of* the Presence
In the heavenly Sanctuary;
The Glory of the Lord *of* Hosts shalt thou serve forever;
Serving in the Temple *of* the Kingdom [of Heaven];
Sharing in the lot of the Angels of the Presence,
And of the Council of the Community *of* the angels forever.

Milik interprets the 'heavenly Sanctuary' to mean the Sanctuary in the New Jerusalem: but it may also taken to refer to the Holy Dwelling Place of God in heaven, the heavenly Sanctuary in the heavenly Paradise of God, located by the sect somewhere in the North. It was in such apocalyptic

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visions that the foundations were laid for the classic doctrines of Hebrews and Revelation. We have come a long way from the simple 'sacerdotal messianism' of the sect's beginnings.

The nature of the after-life is given distinctive expression in the scrolls by the idea that the loyal covenanters, after the Last Judgement, will enjoy some kind of angelic existence. They are not only to live like angels and consort with angels but to become as angels. In that case, the sect's doctrine of immortality is very similar to that of Luke xx.35 ff., where, in the world to come, men and women are said by Christ to be like the angels or to live as the angels.

³² In their edition Barthelemy-Milik [*Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, I] have, in my opinion, misplaced this fragment. The priest here blessed *is* one consecrated 'for the holy of holies' (IV.28) and can therefore only be the High Priest. As in Hebrews, Melchisedek, as well as the high-priestly Messiah, appears to have had a special place in Essene belief. See A. S. Van der Woude in *Oud. Stud.*, xiv, p. 354 ff.

It is surprising that no unambiguously clear evidence has so far been produced for any belief by the Qumran sect in the Resurrection or in resurrection. Indeed a number of passages appear to imply the old Biblical idea of *she'ol* though in several cases that idea has been developed to become a doctrine of eternal punishment and the fire of the dark regions, that is to say, Gehenna, corresponding to the everlasting or eternal life of the covenanters who escape the wrath of God at the Last Judgement.³³ It would be surprising, however, if the sect had no resurrection doctrine, especially in view of the prominence of the Book of Daniel in their ideas about the Last Judgement. Perhaps some unambiguous evidence may yet be produced to settle this debated point.³⁴ It may well be, of course, that the absence of such a doctrine is to be explained by the rejection of Pharisaic doctrine. The doctrine of the resurrection was also rejected by the

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Sadducees, no doubt largely because it was identified with Pharisaic ideas.

It has only been possible, in this lecture, to draw attention to these three broad areas of scroll interpretation which seem relevant to Christian doctrine; there are many details to be added and gaps to be filled in. But the relevance and significance of the scrolls for the thought as well as the history of the early Church is beyond doubt. Professor D. E. Nineham has reminded us that one of the few approaches left to us to the complex problem of Christian beginnings is to seek 'to wring truth relevant to the history of Jesus from the increasing stock of the remains of the Judaism of his time'.³⁵ That stock has been immensely enriched by the discovery of the scrolls.

Appendix

The Qumran doctrine of salvation, along with its closely related doctrine of man—again and again we are reminded of the frailty and inherent sinfulness of man apart from God's central in Qumran belief. As in the *Psalter* and the great Prophets, man is always seen in his difference and distance from God but by God's mercy and by his sustaining and enabling power man can transcend his own weakness to become like one of the angelic beings themselves. The foundations are here for the Pauline doctrine of 'flesh' and 'spirit' and 'adoption' as 'children' or 'sons of God'. (Romans viii. 14 f.)

1QS xi.9 f. illustrates:

But as for me, I belong to an evil humanity
And to the company of wicked flesh.
My iniquities, my transgressions, my sin...
Belong to the things that move in darkness.

³³ *Scrolls*, pp. 138 ff.

³⁴ Cf. *Scrolls*, pp. 141 ff. Milik has suggested that the north-south orientation of the graves at Qumran, with the head at the south end, was dictated by the wish that at the general resurrection the pious covenanter would rise to gaze on the paradise of God which the Essenes located in the north. Cf. P. Grelot, 'La Géographie mythique d'Henoch et ses sources orientales', and J. T. Milik, 'Henoch au pays des aromates', in *Revue Biblique*, tom. 65 (1958), pp. 33 ff., 70 ff. *Scrolls*, p. 140.

³⁵ *Journal of Theological Studies*, 1960, pp. 260 ff.

For a man's way is not his own,

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A man cannot direct his steps (Jeremiah x.23)
But to God belongs rectitude
And from his hand is integrity of way...
If I stumble, God's mercy is my salvation forever
If I stumble in carnal sin, my acquittal [justification] through
God's righteousness shall stand everlastingly,...
Even from the pit he will draw up my soul, and will direct in the
way my steps ...
In his mercy he will bring in my acquittal;
In his steadfast righteousness he will acquit [justify] me...

Dr Millar Burrows of Yale has commented on this last verse: 'In this verse we seem not only to have justification but sanctification,' and he adds, 'the point of prime importance here is that while man has no righteousness of his own, there is a righteousness which God, in his own righteousness, freely confers. The meaning of the righteousness of God in Romans iii.2 1-6 is thus illustrated and shown to be rooted in pre-Christian Judaism.'³⁶

This same note of almost 'evangelical' piety is struck again and again in the *Hymns of Thanksgiving*; indeed, one might almost refer to it as a recurring theme. The condemnation of human nature left to its own devices supplies the foil or background to the Qumran doctrine of grace, the mercy and divine strength which God imparts through his enabling spirit. All that is lacking to complete the New Testament doctrine is the Christian belief in the mediation of the Spirit through the Risen and Ascended Lord. It is not too much to claim that, like the Psalmist, these Qumran seers and singers had discovered the open secret of evangelical religion, trust in the mercy of God alone and in his directing spirit to sustain life and conduct. The following from the *Hymns* illustrates perfectly:

I know that righteousness is not in man
Nor perfection of way in the son of man...

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The way of man cannot be firmly established
Except by the spirit which God has fashioned for him,
To make perfect a way for the sons of men. [1QH iv.27 f.]

... who is there that is righteous before thee,
When thou bringest him to judgement?...
But all the children of thy truth
Thou bringest with forgiveness before thee,
Cleansing them of their transgression by thy great goodness,
And by the multitude of thy mercies making them to stand before
thee forever. [1QH vii.28 f.]

³⁶ *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 334.

Matthew Black, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Doctrine*. The Ethel M. Wood Lecture delivered before the University of London on 8 February 1966. London: The Athlone Press, 1966. Pbk. pp.24.

This last verse gives expression to the Qumran belief and hope in an immortal life and destiny and this is given even fuller expression in the following lines:

... from Sheol... thou hast brought me up...
And I know that there is hope for him whom thou hast fashioned
from dust
For the communion of eternity.
The perverse spirit thou hast cleansed from great transgressions
To take its place with the host of the Holy Ones (angels)
And to enter into fellowship with the company of the sons of
heaven
For thou hast appointed for man an eternal lot (destiny) ... [1QH iii.20 f.]

Doctrine like this comes very near to that of the New Testament, in particular Pauline doctrine. Many of the sentiments, of course, not only anticipate and prepare the way for the New Testament; they are also a continuation of the piety of the Psalmist or the religion of the prophets; it is significant, for instance, that Jeremiah x.23 ('it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps') supplies the foundation for the Qumran doctrine. As we move forward, however, to the idea of man's eternal destiny we move more and more away from the Old Testament until we have practically arrived at the door of the Gospel.

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