The Community of Qumran

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IT MUST be the infinite humor of God that at times disarms our sense of symmetry. Though He is beyond all question the Lord of order, He must have smiled at our desire to see cause and effect always neatly proportionate when He let a fifteen-year-old Bedouin boy make history. Muhammad adh-Dhib, Muhammad-the-Wolf, with one or more companions, may have been carrying contraband through the Desert of Judaea or searching for a lost goat; he may have been seeking refuge from a thunderstorm or, while throwing stones, been startled by the sound of crashing pottery—as the various stories since grown up would have it. However it was, early in 1947 he stumbled, in a matter of moments, on one of the greatest discoveries of our time, a discovery for which scholars, had they suspected it, would have toiled day and night. The young Moslem knew nothing of the intimate bond between the old Israel and the Church, but in finding by chance a hidden cave, the shelter of ancient scrolls, he was privileged to unearth a never expected confirmation of that unity.

From the moment the Scrolls were found, drama surrounded them; and no sooner had news of them reached scholars outside the Holy Land than there was interest and enthusiasm, and then controversy over their possession, their authorship, their authenticity, their age. But thus far the battle was confined to the scholarly world. The world at large knew nothing of the Scrolls, and the few who did know cared little. It was left to a few men—each of them at odds, for some reason or other, with the gospel or the Church—to arouse the public’s curiosity and to start another battle, whose issues were of more general, indeed of ultimate, concern. When, in 1950, in his first book on the Scrolls, André Dupont-Sommer of the Sorbonne implied that Renan was right in calling Christianity "an Essenisim which has largely succeeded"; when, in 1955, the author and critic Edmund Wilson an-
nounced through *The New Yorker* that at last the time had come to do away with “antiquated prejudices” and to regard the rise of Christianity “as simply an episode of human history”; when, early in 1956, John M. Allegro of Manchester University, speaking on the BBC, gave the impression that the Scrolls showed Christ to be merely a representative of a recurring pattern (a position he seems to have since modified); when, in the summer of 1956, the Unitarian minister A. Powell Davies let the cover of his *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* state that they are “the greatest challenge to Christian dogma since Darwin’s theory of evolution”—millions listened and took sides. These statements have no support in the Scrolls themselves, resting entirely on the bias of those who made them.¹ Yet, by having drawn attention to the Scrolls, they will in the end serve the truth and thus afford another instance of the mirth of God, who enlists in His service even the “critics” of His work.

CAVES, SCROLLS, AND RUINS

Full of cliffs and crevices, the Judaean wilderness runs for miles along the Dead Sea. Across its northern part cuts the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, which Jesus chose as the obvious setting for the parable of the Good Samaritan and the traveler ambushed by robbers. There, in this bleak and desolate region, a little more than a mile from the west shore of the Dead Sea and a little less than a mile north of a ruin, Khirbet Qumran, which is flanked on its south by a rugged ravine, usually dry, but during the rainy season carrying torrents of water, the Wady Qumran—there, in this stony desert, is the cave where the Bedouins made their first find: earthen jars about two feet

¹ Monsignor John J. Dougherty has called Wilson’s presentation “mischief” (*America*, Feb. 4, 1956, p. 500), and Professor Harold H. Rowley has spoken of Allegro’s claims as “unscholarly” and “immature” (*Time*, April 2, 1956, p. 71). When I charge those who use the Scrolls to empty Christ’s gospel of its unique significance with “bias” as well, I must beg the reader’s patience, for only as I try to unroll the Scrolls little by little will proof of it appear. I am well aware, too, that Wilson, in his *The Scrolls from the Dead Sea*, repeatedly suggests that it is the religious scholars, Christian or Jewish, who are biased, that it is they who cannot be objective about the meaning of the Scrolls because they are religiously committed. Only a man without religious affiliation can grasp their true significance, he holds—which is like saying that only a man whose taste buds have been destroyed can be a judge of wine, or that only a man whose affections are not engaged can understand love. Besides, is it not really an illusion to suppose that the unaffiliated are in no way committed?
high and ten inches in diameter, some intact, most broken, all but one empty. In it were three mysterious cylinders wrapped in rotted linen, linen of which it was said months later that its odor was "like that of an ancient Egyptian tomb." The cylinders were scrolls of leather, that is, of a coarse kind of parchment, on which the Bedouins could see a strange writing. When they and others to whom they had told their secret revisited the cave, they found yet more scrolls, altogether eleven, representing six "books." After various misadventures, some came into the hands of Mar Samuel, the Syrian Orthodox Metropolitan, at the Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem, and others into the hands of the late Professor Eleazar L. Sukenik of the Hebrew University; all are now owned by the University. Professor Sukenik and scholars from the American Schools of Oriental Research were the first to study them.

Because of war conditions, it was not until February 1949 that Père Roland de Vaux, O.P., of the Ecole Biblique et Archéologique Française and Mr. Lankester Harding of the Jordan Department of Antiquities were able to explore the Qumran region scientifically. Thus far, whether by scientists or by Bedouin shepherds, in the Qumran region alone ten more caves have been uncovered yielding jars, broken pottery, phylacteries, and tens of thousands of manuscript fragments. Approximately one-third of these manuscripts are biblical, representing all the books of the Old Testament with the possible exception of Esther. In addition there are fragments from the Septuagint; scriptural commentaries; apocryphal works like Enoch, the Testament of Levi, or the Book of Jubilees; a page of "Testimonies," that is, of messianic passages from the Old Testament; liturgical texts; and others, above all, duplicates of the so-called Damascus Document and of books found in what has since come to be known as Qumran Cave One.

The original find in Cave One was two scrolls of Isaiah, only one


3. There are also the finds from an underground chamber at Khirbet al-Mird, on a hilltop a few miles west of the Dead Sea, and those from the caverns of the Wady Muraba'at in the heart of the desert. Valued though these discoveries are, they are outside the scope of this essay.

4. Late in the nineteenth century, there were found in a Cairo genizah (a synagogue storeroom for religious writings too worn for further use, too sacred to be
complete; an Aramaic paraphrase of Genesis interwoven with legends; a strange commentary on the book of Habakkuk, which relates its prophecies to a mysterious figure called the Teacher of Justice, to the men of his community, and to his enemies; a document named by Professor Sukenik Serak ha-Yahad, the Rule of the Community, by which the followers of the Teacher of Justice lived, commonly referred to as the Manual of Discipline; a collection of hymns modeled after the psalms and beginning, most of them, “I thank thee, O Lord,” whence the name given to them, Megillat ha-Hodayot, the Thanksgiving Scroll; and, finally, directions, hardly to be taken literally, for fighting what seems to be the impending battle at the end of days, though its military background may be the Maccabean struggle or may perhaps reflect Roman army organization: the War of the Sons of Light with the Sons of Darkness, in which the Sons of Light will be victorious by the power of the great hand of God.5

While exploring Cave One, Père de Vaux and Mr. Harding were led to investigate Khirbet Qumran, which for decades had been as-
discarded) two incomplete copies of an unknown work. Published by the late Solomon Schechter in 1910 under the title Fragments of a Zadokite Work, it speaks of the sons of Zadok “who went out from the land of Judah and sojourned in the land of Damascus” (vi 5), and hence is also known as the Damascus Document. Whether “Damascus” here is symbolic (see Am 5:27) or literal; whether the migration took place at the Community’s founding or later, under Herod the Great; and whether the Document thus represents an early or late stage of the Community’s history—questions impossible to answer definitively in the present state of our knowledge—it is obvious that the Damascus Document is intimately connected with the Community of Qumran.

5. Unless the context makes clear which work is intended, the Scrolls will be referred to by the symbols now generally accepted: 1QS = Rule of the Community; 1QH = Thanksgiving Hymns; 1QM = War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness; 1QpHab = Commentary on Habakkuk; and 1Q = Damascus Document. (1Q indicates a scroll found in Qumran Cave One and C one from the Cairo genizah, while the remaining letters are derived from the Hebrew titles of the works.) A number of minor problems about the Scrolls will be barely touched on in this essay, and others not mentioned at all; space also forbids the listing of the vast literature on them. A masterfully balanced discussion of many such questions is The Dead Sea Scrolls by Millar Burrows (New York: Viking, 1955), a work not only of sound scholarship but of literary quality. A pioneer study of particular value is Les Manuscrits du Désert de Judée by Géza Vermès (Tournai: Desclée, 1953), for, more than other works on the Scrolls, it relates them to their general Jewish background. Both works contain excellent bibliographies. Père Vermès’s book, with some supplementary material, will be published in English in the fall of 1956 by Desclée Co., Inc., New York, under the title Discovery in the Judean Desert: The Dead Sea Scrolls and Their Meaning. I am indebted also to Father John F. McConnell, M.M., for making available to me an unpublished manuscript of his, and to Father Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm., for many valued suggestions.
sumed to be nothing but the ruins of a military outpost of Roman times. Several seasons of excavation have shown, however, that caves and ruins belong together, for a monastic establishment has been brought to light which can have served only such a community as the Scrolls bespeak. While in all likelihood the "monks" slept in caves, huts, or tents near by, the unearthed monastery was the center of their common life. The main building of two stories has a fortified tower, a basement for storage, workshops, rooms for study, a large room which seems an assembly hall, another which is most likely a refectory with a reading stand, and by it a pantry containing over a thousand neatly stacked bowls. Interesting is a scriptorium with a plaster writing table more than five yards long, a companion bench, inkwells, one even having some dried ink in it, and shallow basins probably for the ritual washing of the hands required of those who copied sacred texts. No doubt, most of the manuscripts of the caves, if not all, were written here. Interesting, also, are the remains of a potter's shop, certainly the place where the jars for the Scrolls were made, for one just like them was found there. Uncovered too were kitchens, a mill, and a vast and elaborate water supply system with huge cisterns and an aqueduct from high in the Wady Qumran—a system necessary, of course, to sustain the physical life of the Community in the desert, though it may have served its spiritual life as well, so marked by various sacred cleansings. Then there is a large cemetery, with over a thousand austere and uniform tombs, suggesting the stern communal life of those buried there: "Here lie these warriors, these wrestlers of God, after the fierce struggle of their lives on earth!" 6

In the ruins, coins were found at three different levels, representing three distinct eras: first, from the start of the Hasmonean dynasty to the first years of the reign of Herod the Great (135–31 B.C.), then from the reign of Herod Archelaus to the first Jewish Revolt against the Romans (4 B.C.–A.D. 68), and finally from after the fall of Jerusalem till the second Jewish Revolt (A.D. 70–135). Hence it can safely be concluded that the men of Qumran built their monastery in the desert not long after 135 B.C., and that they remained there either till Herod the Great drove them out or till the earthquake of 31 B.C.

6. This is one of Dupont-Sommer’s inimitable phrases from The Jewish Sect of Qumran and the Essenes, trans. R. D. Barnett (London: Vallentine, Mitchell & Co., 1954), p. 7. No matter how strongly one may disagree at times with his interpretations, one cannot but pay tribute to his eloquence.
severely damaged this their center. In any case, around the year A.D. 1, the Community returned to the site, restored its monastery, and resumed its life there, which flourished till A.D. 69, when both monastery and community were brought, most likely by the Tenth Roman Legion, to a violent end. Charred palm timbers, which had borne the roof of reed and marl, a layer of ashes, and some iron arrowheads tell silently of the destruction wrought, while the jars in the caves near by show that the end did not come on the men of Qumran unawares. Before they fled or were slain by the Romans, they took that which was most sacred to them, their library, hiding it with reverence and care to save it from desecration. Afterwards—during the third period represented by the coins found in the ruins—Qumran was no longer a monastic house. It quartered first a small Roman military post; abandoned by the Romans, it was briefly occupied by the men of the second Revolt; after the Revolt failed, it remained desolate.

The evidence of the coins, and that of the pottery and potsherds found in the ruins—to ceramic experts, earthenware speaks almost as clearly as if the period of its making were stamped on it in numbers—are supported by what can be learned from the Scrolls themselves about their age: from, for instance, the way the letters are shaped and occasionally connected, from spelling and grammar; also from the cloth wrappings, the fiber used, and how it was spun and woven; and from the jars, their material and style. All these indicate that it was between 100 B.C. and A.D. 50 that those Scrolls which speak of the Community of Qumran were written, or at least copied. But their composition must be dated somewhat earlier, for their historical allusions, cryptic though they are, seem to point to a period from 175 to 40 B.C.

As the Scrolls disclose their age, they open, Professor Sukenik said, "a new door to knowledge of the spiritual life of [the Jewish] people in the last few centuries before the destruction of the Second Temple." They tell of a spirituality that had been largely forgotten or suppressed by rabbinical Judaism, and so reveal Jewish life to have been much richer, more varied, more complex, than has been realized by most. Here was a people at a turning point, a land full of tensions, astir with emotions and passions roused to such a peak that one almost hears the cry for a new outpouring of the Spirit. Thus the Scrolls

shed not a little light on "Christian beginnings, in making better known the religious milieu in which the word of Christ sounded and in which the Church grew." In shedding such light, they are a fresh witness to the oneness of the Judaic-Christian tradition: no abrupt departure but a fulfillment leads from the Israel of old to the Church. Christian monasticism, for example, has been thought by some to be an instance of the Church's frequent adoption of what is good outside her walls, while others have deprecated it as a "pagan accretion"; now that the Bedouin shepherds have broken the two thousand years' silence of the Community of Qumran, it is clear that Christian monasticism is deeply rooted in the Israel of old.

CROSSCURRENTS IN JUDEA

It is true: monasticism in general is a response to one of the deepest natural religious impulses, and can therefore be found in various religious traditions. Yet it was not imported into the Judea of old from outside; on the contrary, the least glance at postexilic history bears out that it arose as a protest against the pagan influences of Hellenism. For a long time after the return of the first captives from Babylon in 538 B.C., the fervent little nation, gathered around the restored Temple, enjoyed relative tranquillity. Nor was the peace disturbed when Alexander the Great made his mighty conquests, or when, shortly afterwards, in 320 B.C., the Ptolemies turned Judea into part of their Egyptian empire. Since they did not interfere with the Jewish way of life, there was no movement toward independence, no rancor that the chosen people should inhabit but a small portion of the promised land and be under the yoke of the nations. In 198 B.C., the domination of Judea shifted from the Ptolemies to the Seleucids, the most outspokenly hellenistic dynasty of the Near East, with their capital in Antioch. At first there was little apprehension among the Jews, for their own high priest remained their head and spokesman, indeed for all practical purposes their ruler, and the Law of Moses remained law.

But stirring times were ahead: foreign rule and trade soon brought in Greek ways. Many rich families and young people were drawn by the theater and the gymnasium, by the plays, the contests, and the races which enlivened Alexandria and Antioch. They would have been

happy to see Jerusalem become like those two gay cities and to see sport go hand in hand with worship. Jewish life was reserved and centered in the home; to have it yield to the Greek way, free and social, lived in street and market place, was the desire of many. Indeed, not a few cultured priests thought the time had come for Israel to fall in line with the fashion of the day. Let us make terms with the heathens, let us throw in our lot with them, was the slogan of the Hellenists (1 Mac 1:12, 16). To strengthen their influence in the land, they intrigued against the devout high priest Onias III till, in 174 B.C., his own brother Jeshua purchased the pontificate from the foreign king by stealth and corruption. Though he went so far as to change his name to Jason, his efforts to hellenize the people seem to have lacked vigor. In any case, three years later, King Antiochus IV, known as Epiphanes, the "Illustrious," transferred the pontificate to a higher bidder. Menelaus, who was not of the Zadokite family and perhaps not even of the priestly tribe, was in every way the king's creature, all unworthy, with, as Scripture describes it, "the mind of a cruel tyrant and the rage of a savage beast" (2 Mac 4:25). He stole from the Temple treasure; later he made himself the king's guide in the pillaging of the Holy Place and his accomplice in the massacre of Jerusalem. Again at the instigation of Menelaus, the king struck at the heart of the people: circumcision, the Sabbath, the dietary laws were banned under the severest penalties; worship in the Temple was abolished; the sacred scrolls of the Torah were burned. To climax all this, in 167 B.C. there was placed on the great altar of the Temple another altar, dedicated to Zeus Olympios —"the abominable idol of desolation" (1 Mac 1:57).

Years before these frightful events, there had been the beginning of a religious revival, a new awareness of the unique call of the chosen people. Jesus ben Sirach, for instance, who wrote his wise counsels between 200 and 170 B.C., had not acquired, despite all his wide travels, a taste for the new ways. Alive not only to the past grandeur of Israel, he saw the hidden splendor of Jerusalem. To him Zion was the earthly habitation of Wisdom, and the Law its wondrous embodiment (Ecclus 24:10; 19:17). There were others, like him in love with the Covenant and the Law, and thus opposed to the manners of Greece. But some must have felt that opposition was not enough and therefore banded together in companies, haburot. These brotherhoods may have sprung
up more or less spontaneously, as like-minded men—without, however, leading a common life—sought to encourage one another in the rigorous observance of their religious duties, especially that of legal purity. Food, clothing, the very walls of a house, indeed much of daily life, were subject to the demands of the Law. Thus it was almost impossible to obey it perfectly unless social contacts were severely restricted. How natural, then, to draw closer to those whose companionship was permitted and even helpful. While the haburot met a concrete religious need, they were at the same time an expression of the lasting communal character of Jewish piety.⁹

How soon did the religious impetus which led some to form such companies lead others to a more complete withdrawal and the establishment of the common life outside the Holy City? We do not know. However, at the time of the great crisis under Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 B.C., there were "many that sought after judgment and justice [and, with their families,] went down into the desert" (1 Mac 2:29). When the aged Mattathias, the father of the Maccabees, cried out that although all nations obeyed the edict of the king, he and his sons and his brethren would not obey but would walk in the Covenant of their fathers (1 Mac 2:19–22), there were the Hasidim, the "Pious," who emerged from their caves in the wilderness and rallied to the Maccabean resistance.

But one would misunderstand the Maccabean resistance were one to think of it as only the valiant struggle of the chosen people against a pagan oppressor bent on stamping out the true faith. The Maccabean resistance was no less a civil war, for the efforts of many leading Jews to plunge little Judaea into the "main stream of civilization" had a large part in bringing things to a head. It was these who urged Antiochus IV to repeal ordinances which permitted the Jewish people to live by the Mosaic Law. It was these who proposed building a gymnasium at Jerusalem, and then built it right beside the Temple, lest the priestly novices lose time in answering the call of the discus. Was it their doing too that incense was burned in honor of Zeus Olympios all over Judaea, that the pig was offered in sacrifice, and that the faithful were required to partake of its abominable flesh? Probably not. It is hard to say how far the hellenistic party was prepared to go; but they had started a current, and perhaps it became stronger than they had

⁹ See Vermès, op. cit., pp. 53–57.
expected. In any case, once the Maccabees rose against Antiochus, they were also at war with the Hellenists. It is to these or to somewhat later sympathizers with Greek ways that one of the Qumran psalms may refer:

They seek thee with a double heart  
and they have not remained faithful to thy truth;  
a root bearing gall and wormwood is in their thoughts.  
In the stubbornness of their hearts they explore  
and seek thee among the idols. . . .  
With barbarous lips and a foreign tongue,  
{they} speak to thy people  
that by deceit they may make vain all their works.  

(iv 10-13) 10

THE TEACHER OF JUSTICE

UNITY among those who were faithful to, and fought for, the heritage of the fathers did not last long. Even during the course of the resistance, the Maccabees and their supporters did not always see eye to eye; relations were often strained between the worldly and power-seeking heirs of Mattathias and the priests among the Hasidim. A rift was sure to come. When it came, there stood on one side first Jonathan the Maccabee, who, in 152 B.C., took the high-priesthood, indeed took it at the hands of Alexander Balas, a heathen adventurer plotting for the Syrian throne and thus eager for allies; and then Jonathan’s brother Simon, who, a decade later, showed not the least scruple about letting the people confer the great priestly office not only on himself but

10. All quotations from the first Hymns to be published are in the translation of George S. Glanzman, S.J., “Sectarian Psalms from the Dead Sea,” Theological Studies, XIII, 4 (December 1952). For ease of identification, I am preserving his numeration. Virtually all quotations from the other Scrolls follow the excellent translation of Dr. Burrows. Again for ease of identification, I am adopting, wherever possible, particularly in the case of the Damascus Document, the numeration of Père Vermès. The most complete English translation of the Scrolls is Theodor H. Gaster’s The Dead Sea Scriptures (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1956). It is in many ways unique, impressive, and always worth consulting. Even when one disagrees with his interpretation—as, for instance, when he thinks “Teacher of Justice” to be the title not of the Community’s one founder but of a number of “correct expositors” of the Law; or when he sees the spirituality of Qumran in terms of the mystical tradition of a Tauler or a St. Teresa; or, again, when he connects the men of Qumran with a nature-mysticism which is hardly Jewish; most of all, when he thinks that the Epistle of St. James “bespeaks the standpoint of men who were neither normative Jews nor normative Christians” (pp. 5, 8, 6, 15)—even when one disagrees with him, one respects him and his true learning.
on his family, the Hasmoneans, with whom it was to remain for more than a century. On the other side of the rift, there may have stood a handful of priests led by that impressive figure who, though without name, dominates the Scrolls of the Desert. It may be that this little group of priests, by calling themselves "sons of Zadok, keepers of the Covenant" (IQS v 2), wished to protest against the Hasmonaean usurpation of the high-priesthood, which, since the days of David and Solomon, had come down from Zadok in an uninterrupted line. Such is the intriguing thesis of Père Vermès. Professor Rowley, however, and others with him, identify the Teacher of Justice with Onias III, the high priest deposed by Jason and slain in 171 B.C. by an accomplice of Menelaus. An even greater number of scholars today prefer to see the foe of the Teacher of Justice in the Hasmonaean priest and king, Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 B.C.), whose abundance of vices may well have earned him the title of "Wicked Priest," given by the Scrolls to the Teacher's chief opponent.

These are three of the most prominent theories on the Teacher of Justice, and there are others. Will we ever know with certainty who he was and exactly when he began his work? It would seem that the beginning of the Damascus Document offers us a clue:

And now listen, all you who know righteousness and understand the works of God. For He has a controversy with all flesh, and will execute judgment upon all who despise Him. For when those who forsook Him trespassed, He hid His face from Israel and from His sanctuary, and gave them up to the sword; but when He remembered the covenant of the ancients, He left a remnant to Israel and did not give them up to destruction. And in the period of the wrath—three hundred and ninety years, when He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon—He visited them and caused to sprout from Israel and Aaron a root of planting to inherit His land and to grow fat in the goodness of His soil. Then they perceived their iniquity and knew that they were guilty men; yet they were like men blind and groping for the way for twenty years. And God observed their works, that they sought Him with a perfect heart; and He raised up for them a Teacher of Righteousness to lead them in the way of His heart.

(11–11)

This is how Dr. Burrows renders this eloquent text. Most others translate: "In the period of wrath, three hundred and ninety years after He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar." Even so, it may be
doubted that the numbers 390 and 20 are to be read literally. It might well be that the first, obviously taken from Ez 4:5, is symbolic, and that the other is a round or approximate figure, thus leaving us with no more definite answer than before.

Perhaps this is as it ought to be. For what, among other things, distinguishes the Community of Qumran from the Church is that it is almost all expectation: its eyes are on the judgment to come, when God will punish the wicked and comfort His own. Such looking to the future is, of course, very much part of the New Testament too, but there prayer for the kingdom to come is neighbor to prayer for bread for the day. There the yearning for the end of time is side by side with an infinite patience, with a wholehearted attention to little children, even to a lost coin, with a tenderness toward the present moment. Again, one of the characteristic features of the Scrolls is their deliberately enigmatic air, their veiling of persons and dates, while the way of the Gospels is exactly the opposite. The evangelists took delight in being specific, in tying events of sacred history to those of profane history: Jesus was born at the time of a census that Caesar Augustus’ passion for statistics had ordered for his empire and vassal states; He was crucified when Pontius Pilate was governor of Palestine, by then a province of the empire. It was not for the sake of embellishment that Luke told who was emperor, who governor, who the trearchs, who the high priests, when “the word of God came to John” (3:1–2), nor was it love of ornament, rather a clear vision of sacred history, that made Luke and John give the long line of the ancestors of the Christ.

No such genealogy is given for him who bears the exalted title of moreh ha-zodek, “Teacher of Justice.” We know neither his origin nor his name.11 Indeed, we know little for certain beyond that he was a

11. It is but untrammeled lyricism when Dupont-Sommer writes: “Never is he called by his own name. If he is thus anonymous, it is because of the intense veneration of which the person of the Master had become the object; his name was unpronounceable, like the name of Yahweh” (The Dead Sea Scrolls, trans. E. M. Rowley, Oxford: Blackwell, 1952, p. 33). Not only is Dupont-Sommer here carried away by his imagination; he is in outright opposition to the text of the Scrolls, which, in their every column, declare the unique majesty of God. On the other hand, Allegro, writing with the flair of a historical novelist, not the soberness of a scholar, tells us that the Teacher’s “actual name, real or assumed, seems to have been Zadok.” Allegro does not stop with this. He knows too that by his men the Teacher was “regarded as the true High Priest of Israel,” and that, in the eyes of his enemies, he merited “a particularly dreadful punishment. . . .” This was execu-
priest and that his followers believed God had made known to him "all the mysteries of the words of His servants, the prophets" (1QpHab vii 5). Thus they looked upon him as their master, the true interpreter of the Law (CD vi 7; vii 18). The Psalms of Qumran, most likely, reflect his spirituality, while some, perhaps many, of his teachings are embodied in the Damascus Document and in the Rule, and his passionate partisan exegesis in the Habakkuk Commentary. When Habakkuk is told that if what God wishes to show him tarries, he should wait for it, because it would surely come (2:3), the Teacher of Justice and his disciples took it to mean that since the end is delayed and the last days are stretching out—stretching out even longer than the prophets thought—, they must be "doers of the Law, whose hands do not grow slack from the service of the truth" (1QpHab vii 11–12). Not the least significance the Teacher of Justice attached to the "service of the truth" was the most rigorous practice of all the ordinances of ritual purity, "to make a separation between the unclean and the clean, and to make men know the difference between the holy and the common . . ." (CD vi 17–18). To separate clean and unclean included withdrawal into the wilderness, away from all those who would not heed his words and preferred wickedness to justice, away from the strife-torn Holy City in order to lean "upon God during the period when Israel transgressed and polluted the sanctuary" (CD xx 23). So revered, then, was the Teacher and his teaching by his followers that they thought of all who were outside his Community as unclean, rebellious, and lost, and were convinced that they themselves would be rescued from judgment because of their fidelity to, and their trust in, him. 

12. Too much has been made of "God will deliver all the doers of the Law in the house of Judah from the house of judgment for the sake of their labor [or: their sufferings] and their faith in the Teacher of Justice" (1QpHab viii 1–3). Some, following Dupont-Sommer, have interpreted this sentence as if the Teacher of Justice had been regarded by his men in very much the same way that Christ is believed in by His Church. Only recently Charles T. Fritsch wrote: "Salvation for the members of the Qumran community came through faith in the person of the Teacher of Righteousness. Therefore, the Teacher of Righteousness, as the object of saving faith, must have been regarded as more than human" (The Qumran Community: Its History and Scrolls, New York: Macmillan, 1956, p. 82). This, I regret to say, is reading into the text, not out of it, for all the text seems to imply is that the men of Qumran felt sure of their salvation because they trusted the Teacher of Justice and obeyed his interpretation of the Law as the only true one.
A man sent by God, the “star out of Jacob” who has come to read and teach the law aright (CD vii 18–19)—such was the Teacher to his “partisans” (1QpHab ix 10); but not to his enemies. And enemies he had many: the Scrolls thunder at the House of Absalom, the “Man of Scorn, who led Israel astray,” the Man of the Lie, the “Preacher of the Lie, who enticed many to build a city of delusion in blood and to establish a congregation of falsehood,” above all at the Wicked Priest, full of abominations and impurity, who “forsook God and betrayed the statutes because of wealth” 13—all names concealing, rather than revealing, identities. One of the great issues between these enemies and the Teacher was the liturgical calendar; this indeed was the issue which accounted for so much of Qumran’s unbending opposition to the official priesthood and to the rest of the Jewish people, and which therefore gave the Community what is often referred to as its “sectarian” character. God’s holy Sabbaths and His glorious feasts were among the hidden things “in which all Israel [had] gone astray,” the Damascus Document accused (iii 14). There is a high probability that for centuries, at least since the return from the Babylonian Captivity, the priests of the Temple had used a solar calendar, which so fixed the feasts and sacred seasons that they always fell in the same parts of the year and on the same days of the week. In any case, one of the outrages of Antiochus Epiphanes was his attempt “to change times and laws” (Dan 7:25); yet, in spite of the Maccabean resistance, the Hellenists seem to have had their way, so that the Temple came to follow a lunar calendar, which disturbed the fixed circle of seasons and feasts. 14 This defection from the ancient priestly usage was a crime

13. 1QpHab v 9–12; CD i 14–15; 1QpHab ii 1–2; x 9–13; viii 8–13.
14. The Teacher’s dispute with the Temple, like other historical disputes over liturgical calendars, may seem to many an argument over trifles—only because nowadays we are so little aware of time as a token and bearer of grace. Yet the “Qumran calendar” is of the greatest importance, for it has prompted scholars to look once more at Enoch and the Book of Jubilees, which present the solar calendar as the ancient calendar of Israel and which were, incidentally, among the manuscripts in the Qumran library. This research has suggested a new solution to the problem of the chronology of the Passion, a problem which has always posed considerable difficulty and on which exegetes have long labored. According to the synoptic Gospels, Christ celebrated His Supper, which He had so desired to eat with His disciples before His suffering was to begin, as a paschal meal on the eve of the Passover, “on the first day of the Unleavened Bread” (Mt 26:17; Mk 14:12; cf. Lk 22:7). According to St. John’s Gospel, it was on the eve of the Passover, on “the Preparation Day for the Passover” (19:14), that Christ was crucified, so that His Last Supper could not have been a paschal meal. At first sight these two
in the eyes of the Teacher, and he made his Community adhere to the solar pattern, with its round of "appointed seasons." "Not to transgress in any one of all the words of God in their periods; not to advance their times or postpone any of their appointed festivals; not to turn accounts seem irreconcilable, for in the one Christ appears to have held His parting meal on the 14th of Nisan and to have been crucified on the 15th, while in the other He appears to have been crucified on the 14th. Again, the liturgical usage of the Church places Christ's Last Supper on Thursday, the day before He died, but nowhere is the New Testament this explicit. St. Paul, for instance, places the institution of the Eucharist "on the night in which He was betrayed" (1 Cor 11:23). If the Last Supper really took place on Thursday evening, it is hard, though by no means impossible, to picture how the few hours remaining till noon on Friday permitted all the events that intervened: the agony in the garden, the arrest, the interrogation by Annas, the session of the Sanhedrin under Caiphas, the accusation before Pilate, the appearance before Herod, the second arraignment before Pilate, the scourging and crowning with thorns, the carrying of the cross, and the crucifixion. Both difficulties have been pointed to repeatedly by those who would cast doubt on the authenticity of the Passion narrative; both, however, can be solved by the priestly calendar of Jubilees. While the official lunar calendar of the Temple let the 15th of Nisan fall on any day of the week, the priestly calendar, Père Barthélemy has shown, began each year on a Wednesday and hence had the 15th of Nisan (that is, the first month of the year) also always on a Wednesday, and the 14th of Nisan, the day of the Passover meal, always on a Tuesday. With this as her point of departure, and also with the help of what seems to be the oldest tradition in the Church on the events of Holy Week, in the Didascalia of the late second or early third century, Mlle. Jaubert has proposed a chronology of the Passion. In one of the reviews published by the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Father Vogt has found it "supported by the Gospels" and hence "worthy of every consideration." This is the chronology Mlle. Jaubert suggests: Christ ate the Last Supper on Tuesday evening, then went to the Garden of Olives, was arrested that night, and questioned by Annas, at cockcrow being led to the house of Caiphas. On Wednesday the Sanhedrin convened to judge the evidence against Him, and He was kept as a prisoner of the high priest. Early on Thursday morning the Sanhedrin met again to pass sentence; immediately afterwards, Christ was taken before Pilate and then sent to Herod. On His return, He remained a prisoner of the Roman governor and on Friday morning was arraigned again before him. That same morning Pilate had Him scourged; the high priest and the crowd demanded His death; Pilate yielded and condemned Him; He was led to Golgotha and nailed to the cross. Mlle. Jaubert's reconstruction leaves ample time for all the events of the Passion, makes them, indeed, even more vivid. Again, it not only reconciles the Synoptics and St. John but shows what appears to be a discrepancy to be instead full of meaning: Christ ate the Last Supper on the eve of Passover, the 14th of Nisan according to the ancient priestly calendar, and it was thus a true paschal meal. He was crucified on the eve of Passover, the 14th of Nisan according to the official calendar, and was thus Himself sacrificed as the true Pasch. Mlle. Jaubert's suggestion is one more sign that the discoveries of the Judaean desert, far from casting doubts on the Gospels, bear witness to their authenticity. See D. Barthélemy, O.P., "Notes en marge de publications récentes sur les manuscrits de Qumran," Revue Biblique, LIX, 2 (1952), pp. 200-201; A. Jaubert, "La Date de la dernière Cène," Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, CXVI (1954), pp. 140-173; E. Vogt, S.J., "Antiquum kalendarium sacerdotale," Biblica, XXXVI, 3, (1955), pp. 403-408; "Dies ultimae coenae Domini," ibid., pp. 408-413.
aside from His true statutes, going to the right or to the left," was an essential part of the Rule of Qumran (i 13–15).

This nonconformism of the Righteous Teacher and his men must have been felt as a constant reproach by Jerusalem. Thus the Habakkuk Commentary tells in its cryptic way of one Yom Kippur—Yom Kippur according to the Community's calendar but not according to the Temple's—when the Wicked Priest, in his furious pursuit of the Teacher, insulted him and his followers, trying to make them profane this Day of Awe:

The Wicked Priest . . . persecuted the Teacher of Righteousness in order to confound him in the indignation of his wrath, wishing to banish him; and at the time of their festival of rest, the Day of Atonement, he appeared to them to confound them and to make them stumble on the day of fasting, their Sabbath of rest.

(xi 4–8)

For the wrong done to the Teacher of Righteousness and the men of his party, God delivered [the Wicked Priest] into the hand of his enemies, afflicting him with a destroying scourge, in bitterness of soul, because he acted wickedly against His elect.

(ix 9–12)

Falling into the hands of his enemies was the fate of the Wicked Priest, so the Scrolls tell; but the Teacher's death, like his name and birth, they leave entirely obscure. Some scholars have suggested that he met a violent end as martyr for his cause. No question but that this is possible, even probable when one remembers those turbulent times; yet it remains pure conjecture, and to assert it as if it were sure is to wrench the Qumran texts. They speak of no such martyrdom; on the contrary, twice they speak of the "gathering in of the Teacher of the Community" (CD xix 35—xx 1; xx 14), implying thus a natural death. For when the peaceful deaths of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are related, the patriarchs are said to have been "gathered" to their kin (Gen 25:8; 35:29; 49:33). While Jesus' death and resurrection are told in the New Testament not once but a hundred times, while Peter and John "cannot but speak of what [they] have seen and heard" (Ac 4:20), while Paul must "preach a crucified Christ" (1 Cor 1:23; cf. 2:2), the men of Qumran chose to be silent about their Master's end.
THE COMMUNITY

Whenever and however the Teacher of Justice came to die, he left behind "witnesses for justice," men who, by their austere lives, wished to "make atonement for the land and render to the wicked their recompense" (IQS viii 6-7). The firm purpose of the "monks of Qumran" cannot but have been his legacy, and their marvelously knit organization, even if it should not be fully his work, is a sign of his genius.15

The Community, yahad, was composed of "Aaron," priests and Levites, and "Israel," laymen: the Rule speaks of it as "set apart, a house of holiness for Aaron . . . a house of community for Israel" (ix 5-6). Further, the lay members were divided and subdivided into "thousands and hundreds and fifties and tens" (ii 21-22), names which could hardly all have represented actual numbers but which recalled how Moses divided the people on its wanderings through the desert (Ex 18:21).16 The smallest group, that of ten, was, of course, the traditional minyan required to this day for corporate Jewish worship. While all members had a voice in the assembly, or "chapter" (to use the vocabulary of Catholic monastic life), there was a definite order of precedence among them. When they assembled, each had his assigned station: the priests were seated first, the elders second, and then the rest each in his order. No member permitted to speak ahead of the one enrolled before him or until his brother had finished speaking (vi 8-11). It is not entirely clear whether ranks were assigned once for all, or whether, at the great annual assembly, they

15. A number of writers refer to the men of Qumran as the "Essene Community" or the "Essene Order," thus giving the impression that the partisans of the Teacher of Justice, known to us through the Scrolls of the Judaean desert, and the Essenes, described by Pliny, Philo, and Josephus, are identical. No doubt the similarities are abundant, but there are also definite differences. Hence, if "Essenes" is a generic name embracing a variety of related groups devoted to the ascetic life, the Qumranites may be said to be among them. But it will not do to use "Essene" as a synonym for "Qumranite."

16. The safest estimate seems to be that the men of Qumran never numbered more than some two hundred at a time. It is interesting that both Philo and Josephus put the number of the Essenes at about four thousand. Furthermore, while Philo describes them as inhabiting many cities, villages, and settlements, and Josephus speaks of them as dwelling in no one city but rather in every city, concerning the Community we know only of the establishment at Qumran and of a possible sojourn in Damascus. But it is quite likely that it had what could be called outposts, for the Rule speaks of "all their dwellings" (vi 2) and the Damascus Document of "camps" and of "the cities of Israel" (xii 23, 19).
were assigned with regard to conduct during the year past. In any case, the men of Qumran were convinced that without order there could be no true union, no lasting fellowship:

Let every man of Israel know his appointed position in the community of God for the eternal council. And none shall be abased below his appointed position or exalted above his allotted place; for they shall all be in true community and good humility and loyal love and righteous thought, each for his fellow in the holy council, and they shall be sons of the eternal assembly.

(ii 22–25)

It belonged to the priests, who ranked above all other members, to stand guard over the covenant and to seek God’s will for the Community (v 9). Only they, the sons of Aaron, had authority to administer matters of law and property; their judgment shaped the Community’s every regulation (ix 7–8). Doubtless, too, it was from the priests that the “Overseer,” mebakker, was taken, who was probably the superior over all. (Some authors think there were several overseers, with various duties.) In the council of twelve (or possibly fifteen), whose function seems to have been doctrinal rather than administrative or judicial, three were priests. Of them the Rule demanded that they be perfect in all that had been revealed of the whole Torah, and this was the standard they were to set:

To practice truth and righteousness and justice and loyal love and walking humbly each with his neighbor, to preserve faithfulness in the land with sustained purpose and a broken spirit, and to make amends for iniquity by the practice of justice and the distress of tribulation, and to walk with all by the standard of truth and by the regulation of the time.

(viii 1–4)

All the professed members, rabbim, “the many” (which Dr. Burrows translates as “the masters” and Père Vermès as “the great ones”), had a share in the government of the Community, especially when it came to the admittance of recruits or the punishment of members. Offenses over which the professed sat in judgment were, for instance, lying about one’s wealth; speaking in anger against one of the priests; answering one’s neighbor with a stiff neck, that is, with arrogance, so as to belittle the dignity of his rank; denouncing him without cause; speaking bitterly against him; or bearing a grudge without reason.
Respect for one's confrere was cardinal to the life of Qumran, as it is
to that of any monastic community, and so was obedience to its laws.
Hence any act of disobedience called for some punishment, but the
man who murmured against the authority of the Community, thus
rebelling against its very foundation, was dismissed once for all (vi
24—vii 25).

To become "a community in Torah and in property" (v 2), all pro-
fessed members received the same teaching, followed the same prac-
tices, shared their goods in common, and took their food at a common
table. "Together they shall eat, and together they shall worship, and
together they shall counsel" (vi 2—3). About their common meal,
which bound them together and which they held sacred, the Rule has
this to say: "When they set the table to eat, or the wine to drink, the
priest shall stretch out his hand first to pronounce a blessing with the
first portion of the bread and the wine" (vi 4—5). As men of wisdom,
the members of the Community were told to pray at the sun's rising,
at its height, and at its setting; or, in the language of the Rule, "at the
beginning of the dominion of light, through its circuit, and at its in-
gathering to its decreed dwelling." They were to bless their Maker
also at the beginning of months, seasons, and years, at their middle,
and at their end; at the time of sowing, ripening, and reaping; and
on all the holy days and in all the holy years "in their fixed order"
(ix 26—x 8). There is no mention in the Rule of sacrificial worship,
probably because the Community had broken off all relations with the
Temple, profaned, as they held, by a corrupt priesthood. But till the
time came when the Temple would be clean again, life at Qumran
was not without offerings:

As long as I exist a decree engraved shall be on my tongue
for fruit of praise and for a gift of my lips,
I will sing with knowledge,

17. The Hebrew word here rendered as "wine" is _tiross_. Père Vermès points out
that while in biblical Hebrew _tiross_ does mean "wine" or, possibly, "new wine,"
later Hebrew used it rather of unfermented grape juice, "must." He wonders
whether this may not mean that the Qumranites, like the Essenes of Josephus's
description, abstained from wine (op. cit., pp. 60—61).
18. The Rule's silence on the sacrifices the Torah enjoined on Israel by no
means implies contempt. On the contrary, the War Scroll prepared the Community
for the restoration of the Temple worship, with its burnt offerings, its sacrifices,
the pleasant odor of incense, and the sons of Zadok ministering in the sanctuary
again (ii 1—6).
and all my music shall be for the glory of God;
my lyre and harp shall be for His holy fixed order,
and the flute of my lips I will raise in His just circle.

(x 8–9)

Such was the desire of the men of Qumran. Another outstanding feature of their life was the Community vigil, keeping "watch together a third of all the nights of the year"; it was probably in three shifts that they read aloud from Scripture, searched for the right interpretation of the Law, and recited the blessings in common. In each "ten," one was required by the Rule to devote himself entirely, day and night, to the study of the Torah, but not for himself alone, rather that all might be aided in perfection (vi 6–8). Probably this searcher was expected to discover hidden meanings and reveal them to his fellows.

When a candidate "offered himself from Israel to be added" to the Community of Qumran, it was the prerogative and duty of the "Supervisor," pākid, to examine him "as to his understanding and his works" (vi 13–14). If he was ready to bear the yoke of communal discipline and "not to turn away from following [God] because of any dread or terror or trial" no matter how long the dominion of Belial lasted (i 17–18), he was admitted to the covenant, that is, to the Community, in a solemn ceremony. First priests and Levites praised the God of deliverance, hailing the great deeds of His fidelity, and all those who were passing into the covenant said: "Amen! Amen!" Then the priests recounted God's mighty works and His steadfast love and mercy toward His people, while the Levites told the iniquities of the sons of Israel, their transgressions, their sins. Whereupon those entering made their confession:

We have committed iniquity, we have transgressed, we have sinned, we have done evil, we and our fathers before us, in walking contrary to the statutes of truth; but righteous is God, and true is His judgment on us and on our fathers; and the mercy of His steadfast love He has bestowed upon us from everlasting to everlasting.19

19. This confession is reminiscent of one of the confessions used to this day on Yom Kippur. The liturgical formula "from everlasting to everlasting" is prescribed in the Mishnah, as Père Vermès (op. cit., p. 137) has noted. "At the conclusion of the Benedictions said in the Temple," the Mishnah states, "they used at first to say simply 'forever' [in Hebrew 'olam, which can also mean 'for the world']. When the Sadducees perverted their ways and asserted that there was only one world, it was ordained that the response should be 'from everlasting to ever-
At the end the candidates were blessed, but if there was anyone among them who entered while keeping "the idols of his heart," shamming conversion, he was cursed with a terrible curse (i 18—ii 18).

Everyone thus accepted was a postulant until the professed, if satisfied with his progress and promise, voted to admit him to the novitiate. During its first year, he was instructed in the Community practices, without being allowed, however, to take part in the common purificatory rites. Nor could he hand over his property, for both he and it were still profane. At the end of this first year, the professed decided whether the novice should draw near or draw away. If they again voted in his favor, he was advanced to the second year, during which the ritual washings were open to him but not the common table. Now he handed over his possessions to the treasurer, but they were kept apart from the Community's property, to be given back to him if he failed to be admitted to full membership. With the expiration of the second year, the novice became a "professed monk"; he was given his assigned position among his brethren for the study of the Torah, for his part in their judgments, their sacred cleansings, and their meals (vi 15–23). Without restriction he shared in the common life, which embodied the perennial monastic ideal of Ora et labora. Beside prayers and sacred studies, there was manual work: some would have been assigned to the scriptorium, others to domestic tasks, again others to farming or to herding sheep and goats near by, yet others to the repair of roofs and cisterns.

At first sight this common life would seem to have excluded marriage entirely, for in the Rule as we know it there is no mention of women, and the hope of the Qumranites, as "sons of truth," was to "bring forth seed with all eternal blessings and everlasting joy" (iv 6–7). The Damascus Document, however, speaks of members who "according to the order of the earth . . . take wives and beget sons" (vii 6–7). Again, in the Qumran cemetery a few skeletons of women have been found, and a fragment from Qumran Cave One refers to the Congregation of Israel, to its families, and to the rearing of young people in harmony with the precepts of the covenant. Probably, then,

lasting [(or 'from world to world')]." Thus the liturgical formula proclaims the existence of two worlds, this and the next. (Ber. 54a; see The Babylonian Talmud, ed. I. Epstein, London: Soncino, 1948, Berakoth, p. 328.)

20. 1Q5a i 4–16. On the relation of the "Congregation of Israel" to the Community, see Barthélémy and Milik, op. cit., p. 108.
there were, in addition to an assembly of celibates, settlements of families; or there may have been married groups attached in some way to the Community much as, in Catholic religious life, friars have a Third Order Secular affiliated with the First Order.  

Beyond doubt, chastity was held in high honor at Qumran; more, it was deemed a singular mark of the men of God's lot. It was with this virtue in view that modesty was rigidly enforced by the Rule. The man who brought out his left hand from under his robe in order to gesticulate was punished with a fine of ten days. The man who laughed a loud and foolish laugh was punished for thirty days; in like manner the man who spit in the midst of his confreres or who uncovered his nakedness. He who indulged in idle chatter was punished with a fine of three months. Even more severe, six months, was the punishment of the man who walked naked before his fellows (vii 9, 12–15). The fine of so-and-so-many days or months was probably a limited fast, the offender being deprived of one-fourth of his food allowance (vi 25).

There were other infractions of the Rule which caused a member to lose his rights, for a time or for all time. In addition to the forfeiting of one-quarter of the food allotment, there was the temporary barring from the purificatory rites, from the meal, and probably from

21. One wonders whether some light is not cast on celibacy among the Qumranites by the injunction of the War Scroll that "no youth or woman shall enter the camps [of the sons of light] when they go forth from Jerusalem to go to battle until they return" (vii 3–4). They thought of themselves as God's vanguard in the eschatological war against the forces of darkness; as having Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael for helpers and all the holy angels at their side. Might it not be, then, that they felt obliged to what ascetic theology calls the "angelic life"? It is impossible to answer, but it is well worth noting that in the appendix to the English edition of his book (see also Cahiers Sioniens, IX, 1, March 1955, pp. 43–44), Père Vermès recalls the example of Moses, so revered by the men of Qumran as teacher and guide. The fifth chapter of Deuteronomy records that after God had made His Covenant and given the decalogue at Sinai, the people were commanded to return to their tents, but Moses was bid to stay by Him. In this the rabbis saw God's invitation to Moses to live a life of continence (Ex. R. 19:3; 46:3; cf. Midrash Rabbah, ed. H. Freedman and M. Simon, London: Soncino, 1939, III, 231, 529). Time and again Jewish tradition tells that he cut all earthly bonds and separated himself from his wife as a sacrifice to his sacred calling. For God had chosen him to be the singular recipient of His revelations and His messenger to the people; He had set him higher than the angels, showing him what is above and what is below, what was and what is to come; He had willed that he unite himself with His presence. See Louis Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews, trans. H. Szold (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1940), II, 316; III, 256, 258, 394; and the respective notes.
common prayers. Forever banished, never to return, was the man who pronounced the all-glorious, ineffable name of God; also he who, in the open or in secret, deliberately transgressed a commandment of the Law of Moses (vi 27—vii 2; viii 21–23). This penalty of permanent excommunication was a fearful thing, for it carried with it no release from obligations impossible to fulfill outside: since the excommunicated were not allowed to eat “unclean” food, and since most food other than the Community’s was thought unclean, they could well die of starvation. Apart from this threat, the life of those at Qumran—a life separated from the wickedness they saw about them; a life minutely governed by statutes and the word of superiors; a life detached from worldly goods and human pleasures; a life foreshadowing the evangelical counsels of obedience, poverty, and chastity—was not easy. Père Vermès is right, then, when he says that “to share the lot of the ‘sons of light,’ courage was needed, sanctity, and perseverance.”

THE SPIRITUALITY OF QUMRAN

To say that Qumran called for sanctity is to ask what kind of sanctity it was, what the Community’s idea of perfection. The very first impression is that the awe of God permeated its life, that the center of its thinking was He apart from whose will nothing is done, whose glory none can bear (IQS xi 17, 20). Eternal is His design, His the plan that shall stand, His heart’s purpose that which shall abide unto victory, unto everlasting. He is an avenger of evil, full of “power and might and great wrath with flames of fire,” yet there is with Him “longsuffering . . . and abundance of pardon to forgive those who turn from transgression” (CD ii 4–5). Stirred by the holiness of the Lord, the men of Qumran sang His praise and their gratitude:

\[
\text{Thanks be to God for His righteousness,}
\]
\[
\text{to the Most High for His majesty!}
\]

(IQS xi 15)

So unreserved did the Qumranites wish to make their devotion to the will of God as they understood it, so total their dedication of “knowledge and strength and wealth” (IQS i 11–12), that they dared

to call it the "following of God" (1QS ii 17). They thought of themselves as doers of truth, and to do the truth was to submit to the Law of Moses in its interpretation by the Teacher of Justice. "By a binding oath" they pledged themselves to return to it with wholeness of heart and of soul (1QS v 8). Theirs was therefore a legal, but by no means a legalistic, piety. It stayed within the confines of the Law, it demanded the most meticulous observance of the Law's least letter; yet it was never satisfied with a merely external compliance. No water of purification could wash the sinner unless he turned from his sin, the Rule expressly states (v 13–14). No less does the Rule's beginning show that for the men of Qumran the letter was the expression of the spirit:

\[\ldots\] to seek God \ldots\; to do what is good and upright before Him as He commanded through Moses and through all His servants the prophets; to love all that He has chosen and hate all that He has rejected; to be far from all evil and cleave to all good works; to do truth and righteousness and justice in the land; to walk no longer in the stubbornness of a guilty heart and eyes of fornication, doing all evil; to bring all those who have offered themselves to do God's statutes into a covenant of steadfast love.

(i 1–8)

A sense of obedience, a respect for order in matters spiritual and corporeal, a view of time as a "sacred trust," 23 the continuous study of Scripture the better to learn God's will—all these are part of Qumran, and so round out for us the meaning of its law-linked piety.

For those at Qumran there must have been few moments not filled with the wonder and the burden of community. Their worship was corporate, their table was an intimate bond, their daily labors and their pondering over Scripture were for one another. Not only their worship and their table but their whole life was liturgical, for they knew that, both physically and spiritually, man lives not alone but as part of a body. Indicative, then, of their spirituality is their confidence that they, as a body, knew and walked the right path, that the Community was the "remnant" spared by God for the last days, that it alone was the bearer of God's Covenant with His people, that in fact with it the Sinaitic Covenant had been renewed. Hence the Community spoke of itself as the "New Covenant" (CD vi 19 et al.), and it was axiomatic with the Covenanters that there was no salvation

23. Fritsch, op. cit., p. 68.
outside their ranks. To be born a Jew was not enough; a man had to be given the grace of a call to the Community, and to respond. Adherence to it "was thus a free act, an offering of oneself. It was no birthright: though the brethren were all Jews, not all Jews were brethren." 24 The brethren thought of themselves as an Israel within Israel, as sons of grace, whom God had called by their names; whom He had chosen and to whom He had given wisdom, justice, and glory as their eternal possession; and at the same time as volunteers, as freely dedicated men, communally offering themselves to the walking in His good pleasure (CD iv 4; 1QS xi 7; i 7; v 10).

Freedom and predestination were no contradiction to the men of Qumran, notwithstanding a few of their sayings which, at first glance, seem to exclude free will. Startling and severe some of the Scrolls' passages are; yet it was not pride but humble reliance on grace that made the Qumranites call themselves "the men of God's lot" (1QS ii 2 et al.). Conscious of being chosen not for any merit of their own but by divine favor, they prayed:

I belong . . . to the company of erring flesh;
my iniquities, my transgression, my sin,
with the iniquity of my heart
belong to the company of worms and those who walk in
darkness. . . .

[But] in His mercy He has brought me near,
and in His righteousness He will cleanse me.

(1QS xi 9-10, 13-14)

All the Hymns of the Covenanters make clear their distrust of human virtue. They were painfully aware of their weakness, and they were not encouraged to boast about their works, rather trustingly to throw themselves on the mercy of God. Of man's frailty, one Hymn exclaims:

I am dry clay and ashes.
What can I purpose, unless thou desire it;
what plans can I lay, without thy good pleasure?
What strength can I gather, if thou dost not support me;
how can I be wise, unless thou dost fashion [wisdom] for me?

How can I speak, if thou dost not open my mouth;
how can I reply, unless thou dost instruct me? . . .
Thou, the Lord of every spirit, and the Master of every work!

(v 4–7)

Another of these Psalms of Thanksgiving sings:

Trembling and terror have seized me,
and all my bones break. . . .
For I remember my guilt
and the treachery of my fathers.

(iv 29–30)

From trembling, the Hymn mounts to trust:

But when I remembered the might of thy hand
and the abundance of thy mercy,
I bestirred myself to rise . . .
for I was supported by thy kindness
and the abundance of thy mercy.

(iv 31–33)

It was on God that the Covenanters depended; it was He who had raised up for them the Teacher who was "to lead them in the way of His heart" (CD i 11), He who permitted the spirit of darkness to rule the wicked and to strive to entrap even the just, but He too who came with His spirit of truth to the help of His chosen ones (1QS iii 18–25). However extreme and at times naïve some of their expressions on the two opposing spirits, the Qumran dualism is by no means altogether new in Jewish tradition. Long before the Community was established, the Book of Moses' Farewell Discourses told of his setting be-

25. A great deal has been written on the Covenanters' dualism of the two spirits. It has been likened to Gnosticism, but for the Gnostic the war is always between spirit and matter while in Qumran the battle was between holiness and sin. Its origin has been sought in early Zoroastrianism, which saw the world rent between the two warring forces of light and darkness, truth and deceit. That this view made its way to Qumran is quite plausible when one remembers that even after the Babylonian Captivity many Jews continued to live in Mesopotamia and were thus in contact with Iranian thought. But the genetic approach to ideas, useful as it is, cannot explain the why and whither of their adoption. In the realm of ideas as in that of life, only a healthy body has the power of selective assimilation. Hence, if Qumran adopted the purest of Iranian thought and purified it still more (Zoroastrianism's independent and uncreated forces of light and darkness become, in Qumran, servants of the one Master, God), it is a sign that truth was alive there.
fore his people "life and death, the blessing and the curse" (Deut 30:19), and the Psalter opened with the two ways that are man's choice, "the way of sinners" and "the way of the just"—a vision at its loftiest in Christ's preaching on the narrow road which leads to life and the broad road which leads to destruction (Mt 7:13, 14). There is nothing out of keeping with this inspired tradition when, in the Rule of the Community, the two ways become the lives men live under the influences of the two spirits. The Prince of Light, the Rule tells, enlightens the heart and makes it tremble before the judgments of God; he prompts humility, longsuffering, great compassion, eternal goodness, understanding, insight, and mighty wisdom, a wisdom which puts its trust in nought but God's works and leans upon His abundant mercy. Zeal, a holy purpose, a love for those who obey the Law, a glorious purity loathing all impure idols, are among the counsels of the spirit of truth. But the way of those who follow Belial, angel of darkness, spirit of iniquity, is greediness, slackening in the service of justice, wickedness and falsehood, pride and haughtiness, lying and deceit, cruelty and gross impiety, anger, folly, and proud jealousy. Loathsome works, impure doings, a blasphemous tongue, blindness of eyes, dullness of ears, stiffness of neck, and a hardened heart are the "gifts" of the spirit of perversion (iv 2-11).

To the Covenanters the world was thus divided into two camps, the sons of light and of darkness. Between them there could be no peace: hated and cursed were those who walked by the spirit of untruth. Believing that they lived at the end of days, the Qumranites felt that, as a company of God's warriors, they were called to fight a battle against the hated forces of Belial. This battle, they were sure, would bring to a close the suffering of the just and the arrogance of the wicked, whose end would be shame, eternal ruin, destruction in the fire of darkness (IQS i 10; ii 5-9; iv 12-13). But to the sons of truth there would be granted eternal rejoicing, a crown of glory, the

26. The strength and scope of this tradition is manifest, for instance, in the opening words of the earliest Christian manual of morality, the Didache: "Two ways there are, one of life and one of death." The way of life is to love God and neighbor, the Didache continues and, unlike the Rule, adds that to love the neighbor is to bless those who curse, to love those who hate, indeed to have no enemy. In Jewish thought this tradition developed into the doctrine of yegor tou and yegor ba-ra', the good and the evil inclinations. For a detailed discussion of the affinities of early Christian writings and the "two ways" passage of the Rule, see Jean-Paul Audet, O.P., "Affinités littéraires et doctrinales du 'Manuel de Discipline,'" Revue Biblique, LIX, 2 (1952), pp. 219-238; LX, 1 (1953), pp. 41-82.
raiment of majesty; before God they would stand on the heights of heaven, and in concert with its angels they would praise His name forever and ever (1QS iv 7–8). Thus the Rule enjoins the priests of the Community to bless "the men of God's lot" in this way—an expanded form of the Aaronic blessing:

May He bless you with all good
and keep you from all evil;
May He give light to your heart with living wisdom
and be gracious to you with eternal knowledge;
May He lift up His loving countenance to you for eternal peace.

(ii 2–4)

QUMRAN AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

How did the Covenanters respond when the good news of Jesus reached them, as it must have; what did they think of the high priest's enmity to Him and what of the events of Holy Week? Their deep spirituality, their feeling for the greatness of hidden things, no less their conviction that God's appointed time had come, would incline one to suppose that they welcomed the gospel as soon as they heard of it, and that they sensed something of the significance of the Passion. Men of zeal they were: it would be no surprise to see many of them hastening into the Church. As far back as 1912, when the Qumran library had not yet been discovered and all that was known of it was the Damascus Document, Dr. R. H. Charles suggested that the "sons of Zadok" might account for Luke's joyful report: "A large number also of the priests accepted the faith" (Ac 6:7).27 Again, in his recent commentary on the Letter to the Hebrews, Père C. Spicq, O.P., thinks it may have been to these priests that the Epistle was written, for its emphasis is on Christ, the High Priest and Mediator of a superior covenant.28 Possibly, then, the "Hebrews" were priests from, or sympathetic to, Qumran, and not the priests in power.

But all these are conjectures, and not likely ones. The men of Qumran seem never to have been very numerous, and the archaeological record shows that they stayed at Qumran until they were forced

out by the Romans. There were those who must have left them from time to time, and probably many who did not finish their novitiate; but the Community itself remained rigorously apart even from the rest of the people of Israel. This exclusiveness could not but have been a barrier between it and the Church, whose mission it was to break down the barriers between man and man, between Jew and Gentile. An anthem of the Covenanters’ holy war sang:

Rise, mighty one;29 bring back thy captives, man of glory!
Seize thy plunder, thou who dost valiantly!
Lay thy hand on the necks of thy enemies
and thy foot on the heaps of the slain;
smite the nations, thy adversaries,
and let thy sword consume guilty flesh!

(IQM xii 10–12)

Not only did the Covenanters pledge “eternal hate for the men of the pit,” not only did their Levites “curse all the men of Belial’s lot”—merely to show mercy to God’s enemies was abhorrent to them (1QS ix 21–22; ii 4–5; IQM iii 5). It was surely, then, with the Qumranites in mind that in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus announced: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and shalt hate thy enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute and calumniate you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven” (Mt 5:43–45).30 This was a plea; but did the men of Qumran hear it?

To doubt that large numbers of them flocked into the infant Church

29. Probably the “mighty one” is the conquering, royal Messiah. Very much as in the Jewish apocryphal literature, the Community’s messianic concepts seem to have been in a state of fermentation. In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, for instance, Simeon exhorts his children to obey the two tribes of Levi and Judah, “for the Lord shall raise up from Levi as it were a High Priest, and from Judah as it were a King” (7:2). The Community’s expectation seems to have been threefold: for the prophet, the kingly Messiah, and the priestly Messiah. Thus the Rule demands that there be no departure from any counsel of the Law “until there shall come a prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel” (ix 11). Whatever had been cloudy in the people’s messianic hope the New Testament brought to a limpid end: the prophetic, kingly, and priestly offices are united in Jesus, the one Messiah.

30. Until recently, Jewish writers often claimed that this saying of Jesus could not be wholly authentic, that only later prejudice could have interpolated the words, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Thou . . . shalt hate thy enemy,'” for nowhere in the Old Testament or in the known traditions was such a precept to be found. But now that we have the Scrolls of the Desert, the evangelists are once more proved reliable reporters.
is not to imply that none of them came to her, nor is it to imply that there were no links at all between her and them. It has often been said, and certainly not without reason, that the aged Simeon, Zachary the priest, John the Baptist, and those first apostles who had been the Baptist’s disciples, felt the influence of Qumran or of groups in some way like it. It has also been thought that the Baptist, having early lost his elderly parents, was adopted by the priestly Community of Qumran and raised as its ward. Although this cannot be proved, it is not at all improbable, for Luke tells that “the child grew and became strong in spirit; and was in the deserts until the day of his manifestation to Israel” (1:80). If he was indeed reared in the bosom of the Community, perhaps even becoming a professed member,¹ he must have broken with it; in any case, he went far beyond its spirit. Though both the Community and John found their program in the Isaianic injunction to clear in the wilderness the way of Yahweh and to make straight in the desert a triumphant highway for Him (Is 40:3; 1QS viii 14; Mt 3:3), the manner in which they obeyed was quite different. In order to make ready the way by which the Lord would enter, the men of Qumran formed a taut organization which to this day compels our admiration. But all John sought for his work was a simple company of disciples, for he knew and declared his task to be transitory. While the Qumranites saw themselves as the only sharers of the messianic future, the Baptist wanted to be no more than a voice announcing the Bringer of the Spirit’s fire, no more than the least servant of the Mighty One to come, no more than the friend of the Bridegroom, soon to step aside (Lk 3:16; Jn 3:29). The Covenanters withdrew into isolation, permitting only such dealings with the rest of men as could not be avoided. John, however, drew to himself the people of “Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region about the Jordan” (Mt 3:5), inviting everyone, even those the Qumranites called “men of the pit,” to repent and, in token of repentance, to be baptized. The followers of the Teacher of Justice took it on themselves to practice the Law to the letter, so that they might atone for the sinfulness around them. When John preached teshubab, repentance—the change of heart he demanded was simply respect for the neighbor

¹ To Wilson, the Baptist’s regimen of locusts and wild honey recalls the expelled Essenes, who attempted to live on grass because they had vowed to eat nothing prepared by those not of their brotherhood (The Scrolls from the Dead Sea, New York: Oxford University Press, 1955, p. 94).
and brotherly sharing, truth, justice, and love (Lk 3:11-14). But all differences pale beside this one: that he was a finger pointing to the Christ.

Whether or not John the Baptist ever lived at Qumran as one of the šabey Yisraēl, the "penitents of Israel" (CD iv 2), there was more in his preaching than he could have learned from them, for "the word of God came to John" (Lk 3:2). One must say the same of the whole New Testament: many a phrase in it reads like a phrase from the Scrolls, and yet so much in it one would seek in vain in the writings of Qumran. Still, unhesitatingly and gladly we must acknowledge that in them there has been given us an important element of the "evangelical milieu," 32 of the historical setting into which Christ came, of the frame for His word and work.

There are numerous resemblances between the language of the Covenanters and that of St. John and St. Paul. I can mention only a few. 32 "In the abode of light are the origins of truth, and from the source of darkness are the origins of error," declares the Rule (iii 19). Though part of a far mightier vision, this contrast is one of St. John's great themes. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness" (1 Jn 1:5); the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness grasped it not" (Jn 1:5). Of the sons of justice, the Rule says that they walk "in the ways of light," and of all the rest that they walk "in the ways of darkness" (iii 20-21). How frequently St. John speaks of those who walk in the light and those who stumble in darkness! There is one passage in particular which, though in a context altogether Christian, combines three expressions dear to the Qumranites, "light," "fellowship," and "practicing the truth":

If we say that we have fellowship with [God], and walk in darkness, we lie, and are not practicing the truth. But if we walk in the light as He also is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.

(x Jn 1:6–7)

"Sons of light" was a name cherished by the Covenants, and St. John tells of Christ's call: "Believe in the light, that you may become sons of light" (Jn 12:36). St. Paul too, in language akin to that of Qumran, urges: "Now you are light in the Lord. Walk, then, as children of light" (Eph 5:8).

There is in the writings of Qumran a strong emphasis on devotion to one's brother, on "loyal love" for one's fellow, but the brother or fellow to be loved is always a member of the Community. Indeed, this commandment of love is linked with the commandment of "eternal hate for the men of the pit." 34 Such a precept of hate is entirely alien to St. John's Gospel, for, he confesses, "God so loved the world [that is, all men] that He gave His only-begotten Son" (Jn 3:16). True, there is a definite resemblance between St. John and Qumran in their stress on brotherly love. "Love one another," Jesus told His little band of disciples at the Last Supper (Jn 13:34); the Evangelist, repeating this command again and again, adds joyfully: "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren" (1 Jn 3:14). His look is toward the companions in the faith, and this may make the love he pleads for appear at first as limited as the love of the Covenants. But the path St. John records is an infinite circle, from God to Christ, from Christ to Christians, and back through Christ to God: "As the Father has loved me, I also have loved you. . . . Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15:9, 12). Since love "in Christ" is infinite, there is nothing exclusive about it: all are invited to enter this circle, at once closed and open.

Another instance of similarity is in the Prologue of St. John's Gospel:

All things were made through [the Word], and without Him was made nothing that has been made.

(1:3)

34. 1QS ii 24; cf. 1 9–10; ix 16–22; x 20–21.
This may well have been an echo of the closing psalm of the Rule:

By [God's] knowledge everything comes to pass;
and everything that is He establishes by His purpose;
and without Him it is not done.

(xi 11)

But if it was an echo, how mighty an echo, greater than the parent sound, for St. John speaks not merely of that Knowledge which is in the heavens, rather of the Word which had become flesh and been seen and heard.

Turning to St. Paul: in his epistles he often writes of God's everlasting design to redeem the world as the "mystery of God." It is the mystery "hidden for ages and generations, but now . . . clearly shown to His saints" (Col 1:26), His mysterious wisdom, unknown to the rulers of this world but revealed to those who love Him (1 Cor 2:7–10). The Hymns and Rule of Qumran also exult in God's decree of salvation as His "marvelous mysteries," His "wonderful counsel" (iv 23–24), as the "mysteries of His understanding and His glorious wisdom," hidden from the sons of perversion but confided to His elect (1QS iv 18). The Covenanters' use of "mystery," raz, gives refreshing evidence that St. Paul's use of mysterion was not a surrender to the dominance of Eastern mystery cults, as has so often been asserted, but had its deep roots in Israel's tradition. Yet for all the remarkable parallel in words and even content, the two "mysteries" differ: for St. Paul the mystery is Christ crucified and risen, His passion, His triumph—hence mankind's healing and glory.

St. Paul never tires of extolling the grace of God which makes just: not through our own efforts but through His mercy manifest in Christ are we justified. There is a similar insistence on merciful justification among the men of Qumran, quite different from the accent of the Pharisees on works. One of the most beautiful features of the Qumran spirituality, Dr. Grossouw writes, is the consciousness that even the brethren are sinful and that salvation comes from God alone.35 The Qumran Hymnal exclaims:

I know, indeed, that man has no justice,
and the son of man no perfect way.
To God Most High belong all the works of justice. . . .

(iv 26–27)

Here is another classical expression of the Covenanters’ teaching that man depends entirely on God’s mercy, a teaching which, as often as it broke through the walls of Qumran, must have prepared hearts for the Good News:

As for me, if I slip,
the steadfast love of God is my salvation forever;
and if I stumble in the iniquity of flesh,
my vindication in the righteousness of God will stand to eternity. . . .

In His mercy He has brought me near,
and in His righteousness He will cleanse me
from the impurity of man,
from the sin of the sons of man.

(IQS xi 11–15)

There are many other parallels. The “overseer” of Qumran, for instance, and the “bishop” of whom St. Paul writes to Timothy and Titus have certain traits in common; indeed, the term mebokker and the term episkopos are so much alike that one could be the translation of the other. The Scrolls speak of “the prince of lights” and of “the angel of darkness,” the Apostle of Satan’s disguising himself as “an angel of light” and of “our wrestling . . . against the world-rulers of this darkness” (2 Cor 11:14; Eph 6:12). His plea, “Put on the armor of God” (Eph 6:11), recalls the Qumranites’ warfare against the forces of Belial, the “worthless one”; once his words are so like theirs that they could almost be a quotation: “Do not bear the yoke with unbelievers. For what has justice in common with iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what part has the believer with the unbeliever?” (2 Cor 6:14–15). Among the works of truth the Rule records are “a spirit of humility, and slowness to anger, and great compassion, and eternal goodness” (iv 3); the Apostle admonishes the Colossians to put on “a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience” (3:12). “To be far from all evil and cleave to all good works,” we read among the ordinances of the Community (i 4–5); and the Romans are told by the Apostle to “hate what is evil, hold to what is good” (12:9). Again, how close “I will sing with knowledge”
(1QS x 9) is to "I will sing with the spirit, but I will sing with the understanding also" (1 Cor 14:15)!

There are similarities elsewhere in the New Testament. The Rule's precept on fraternal correction, that no Covenanter accuse his brother before the Community unless he had first rebuked him before witnesses, approaches Christ's urging to show an erring brother his fault first alone, then before witnesses, and then, if he still refuses to listen, before the Church (1QS vi 1; Mt 18:15–17). The canticles St. Luke records in his Gospel of the Infancy—the Magnificat and, even more, the Benedictus—recall, in certain of their phrases, the Psalms of Thanksgiving. "The Way" is one of the names by which the Covenancers designated their way of life; in the Acts of the Apostles, "the Way" is the road Jesus walked and showed, and hence those who walk it after Him, His little Church (1QS ix 18; Ac 9:2 et al.). "The council" and "the many" of the Community have their counterpart in "the Twelve" and "the multitude" of the infant Church (Ac 6:2). There is a resemblance between the communal spirit of Qumran, with its communally owned property, and the life of the Christians in Jerusalem: "The multitude of the believers were of one heart and one soul, and not one of them said that anything he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common" (Ac 4:32). There were sacred cleansings and sacred meals at Qumran, which unknowingly called for a cleansing and a meal to come, indeed for the cleansing and the meal.36 "Holy Community," "holy congregation," "holy building," "men of

36. As to the cleansings: The ritual washings at Qumran, even though they were not for "all nations" and for "every creature," and were not "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19; Mk 16:16); even though they did not carry the tremendous promise that Christian baptism does, may well be thought of as among its foreshadowings. For the baptism Christ gave to His Church was not a rite altogether new, rather is it an old rite with a new meaning and a transcendent efficacy. But as one of its foreshadowings, the purifications of Qumran do not stand alone. Not to speak here of the baptism of proselytes to the Synagogue, Jewish tradition has always taught that Israel entered into its covenant with God by circumcision, sacrifice, and baptism, and that it received its baptism when the Lord demanded that the people be sanctified and their garments washed (Ex 19:10). Jewish tradition even goes so far as to teach that "to receive the spirit of God, or to be permitted to stand in the presence of God (His Shekinah), man must undergo Baptism (Tan. Mezora', 6, ed. Buber, p. 46), wherefore in the messianic time God will Himself pour water of purification upon Israel in accordance with Ezekiel 36:25 (Tan. Mezora', 9–17, 18, ed. Buber, pp. 43, 53)" (Jewish Encyclopedia, II, 489). Thus the Mishnah tractate on the Day of Atonement calls God "Thou, the mikvah of Israel," mikvah meaning "hope" and also "pool of immersion" or "fountain." "As the fountain renders clean the
perfect holiness,” or “holy ones of the Most High” are some of the names given to the Community; “God’s building,” “temple holy in the Lord,” “saints” are among the early titles given to the Church and its members.37

These are by no means all the points on which the Desert Scrolls and the New Testament meet; there are hundreds of similarities. But similarity is not identity. Sameness of expression need not imply sameness of meaning nor bespeak dependence.38 In fact, where an unclean, so does the Holy One, blessed be He, render clean Israel” (Yoma 85b; cf. B. Talmud, SOncino ed., Yoma, pp. 423–424).

As to the meals: The common meals of Qumran were banquets of brotherly love, and in this they can be looked on as an intimation of the Christian Eucharist, but never as more than that. Professor Allegro, however, tells us that “it seems probable that every communal repast was considered to some extent a rehearsal of the Messianic Banquet,” and that this was “basically the same act” as the Eucharist (op. cit., pp. 114–115). Professor Frank M. Cross speaks of “the communion meal of the Essenes [sic]” and of their “liturgical anticipation of the Messianic banquet” (“The Scrolls from the Judean Desert,” Archaeology, IX, 1, March 1956, p. 49). I see no warrant for either assertion. What they refer to is a fragment found in Cave One, the “Two Columns,” which begins: “This is the rule for the whole congregation of Israel at the end of days,” and which gives the protocol to be followed at the messianic banquet (“the Priest” most likely referring to the priestly Messiah, and “the Messiah of Israel” to the kingly Messiah, as spoken of in note 29): “[When] they shall gather at the common [table] [or to drink] the wine, and when the common table is set and the wine [mixed] for drinking, [let no one stretch out] his hand for the first portion of the bread or the [wine] before the Priest; for it [is for him to bless] the first portion of the bread and wine [and for him to stretch out] his hand for the bread first. After[wards] the Messiah of Israel shall [stretch] his hands over the bread; [and then] the whole congregation of the Community [shall pronounce the blessings], each [according to his] rank. This rule shall obtain at every [meal when] at least ten are gathered together” (1QS ii 17–22). This text would seem simple enough, telling no more than that the Priest-Messiah will have precedence over the King-Messiah, a layman, and, of course, over the whole congregation, and that a similar order in blessing is to be followed at all meals. Not content with so simple a meaning, fitting so well into the Qumran framework, with its reverence for the priestly dignity, Allegro and Cross have weighted the text in favor of their own interpretation by translating “communion table” instead of “common table.” In any case, we have the impartial testimony of Dr. Gaster. He does not think that the meal described in the fragment is the messianic banquet, but “even if, for argument’s sake,” he writes, “this document did refer to a divine eschatological Messiah attending a banquet with his disciples, it would still not be a eucharist in the Christian sense, for there is not the slightest suggestion that the bread and wine were regarded as his flesh and blood or that consumption of them had any redemptive power. At most, it would be an agape, or ‘love-feast.’” Without ambiguity he declares: “There is no Communion [at Qumran]” (op. cit., pp. 19–20).

37. 1QS ix 2; xi 8; CD xx 2, 8; 1 Cor 5:9; Eph 2:21; Phil 1:1.

38. The assertion of identities may betray a writer’s lack of depth. On page 89 of his book, Wilson quotes first from the apocryphal Testament of Joseph: “I was beset with hunger, and the Lord Himself nourished me. . . . I was sick and the Lord visited me. I was in prison and my Lord showed favor to me” (1:5–6).
The Community of Qumran

untrained eye might see a dependence of the New Testament on the Qumran writings, there is very often simply a dependence of both on the Old Testament or on the apocryphal literature, which, though not inspired, expressed the hope of the devout that in the end God would right all things. No doubt, Jesus (and later His apostles) often used the Qumranite idiom to convey His message as He (and later they) used the language of apocryphal writings and of early rabbinical interpretations. For instance, when He called Himself the Son of Man, He made His own an expression to which the apocryphal Book of Enoch had given great color and messianic dignity. Or in saying that Abraham had seen His day and been glad, He leaned on a tradition, frequently recorded in rabbinical literature, that the patriarch had been granted a vision of his own times and of the next, that is, the days of the Messiah. Again, in the commission to Simon Peter, son of John, to head the Church, the terms “blessed art thou,” “rock,” “Church” (qabhal), “the gates of Gehenna,” “binding and loosing” are all terms and images which were part of rabbinical exegesis and law. Thus in Jesus there came to flower, and there is thus alive in the Church, not only holy Scripture but Jewish tradition—all that was true in every segment of the people and of its thought. No stone did He reject that could be built into the lasting house of God, no fruit yielding a seed that could be sown again. There was nothing partisan in Him; rather did He draw apostles and disciples from all “parties.” John and Andrew had been followers of the Baptist; Simon Zelotes probably, and certainly the Good Thief, members of the Zealots, the party of national freedom; Nicodemus and Paul Pharisees; while Barnabas had been a Levite. As little, then, as He was a Zealot,

Then he quotes the words of Christ: “For I was hungry and you gave me food ... I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison, and you came to me” (Mt 25:35–36; R.S.V.). Wilson notes the similarity of words but seems unaware of the entirely new dimension in Christ’s saying. Whereas the words attributed to Joseph bespeak the creature’s gratitude to God, the words Christ promised to utter at the Last Judgment bespeak the ineffable: God’s gratitude to His creature. Joseph’s words tell of man dependent, Christ’s words of God so magnanimous as to accept man’s mercies to his fellow man as done to Him.

a Pharisee, or a Sadducee, was He an "Essene." But He was the Christ of Zealots, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Qumranites—because He was the Hope of Israel and Redeemer of the entire world.

No one can be surprised to hear Christ use the idiom of those He lived with, walked among, and spoke to, His kinsmen according to the flesh, unless he has forgotten that all this was ordained, that God had made the Israel of old the courier of His word, and that the Church has always claimed to have received the Old Testament with the New and to be carrying both toward the day of glory. As Professor Joseph Coppens writes:

No theologian trained in the historic method would ever dream of claiming for the Christian message a total originality, as if God had wanted to write His word on a tabula rasa, with materials borrowed from another world, from another planet. Only simplistic minds can so picture revelation, can picture Christianity as descending from the heavens ready-made, all dressed in supernal, transcendent formulas and expressions. If God had spoken to the world in a "language of heaven," no one would have understood. Whenever He addresses His word to mankind, we know in advance that it will be incarnate, and this incarnation is not brought about in concepts and terms entirely new. It is realized with elements borrowed from pre-existent institutions, civilizations, and tongues. This is all the truer of Christianity, since Jesus, His gospel, His Church, regard and present themselves as the heirs of the Old Testament's revelation, beliefs, and hopes, which they came to fulfill.40

This fulfillment had to be prepared for in successive stages, and among them, since God likes to make man His helper, were the "reactions of the chosen people, which received this revelation, pondered it, and lived it." 41

THE TEACHER OF JUSTICE AND JESUS

The discoveries of the Judaean desert are a blessing to the scholar and to everyone: they illuminate for us the days of Christ's coming and the century or so before it; they stress again, indeed stress in a marvelously new way, the one great bond and the many little bonds between the ancient Israel and the Church. But it is quite another thing to claim, as does Edmund Wilson, that the monastery of Qumran

"is perhaps, more than Bethlehem or Nazareth, the cradle of Christianity." In this he leans on Dupont-Sommer, who—though disavowing in a footnote any intention "to deny the originality of the Christian religion"—presents the Teacher of Justice as a Christ before Christ:

The Galilean Master, as He is presented to us in the writings of the New Testament, appears in many respects as an astonishing reincarnation of the Master of Justice. Like the latter He preached penitence, poverty, humility, love of one's neighbor, chastity. Like him, He prescribed the observance of the Law of Moses, the whole Law, but the Law finished and perfected, thanks to His own revelations. Like him He was the Elect and the Messiah of God, the Messiah redeemer of the world. Like him He was the object of the hostility of the priests, the party of the Sadducees. Like him He was condemned and put to death. Like him He pronounced judgment on Jerusalem, which was taken and destroyed by the Romans for having put Him to death. Like him, at the end of time, He will be the supreme judge. Like him He founded a Church whose adherents fervently awaited His glorious return. Every sentence here is a surface judgment and an oversimplification. The Teacher of Justice is undoubtedly an impressive figure, but he is not of the measure of "the Galilean Master." He and Jesus are incomparable.

To the men of Qumran, their Teacher was the true interpreter of the Law, but nowhere in the Scrolls does he appear like Jesus who, with His magisterial "I say to you," wished to implant the Law into all men's innermost being, to write it into the heart of His people (Jer 31:33). For the Covenanters, "the Law finished and perfected" meant, among other things, a bar on polygamy and a ban on marriage with one's niece. Can this really be likened to the dignity Jesus gave marriage when He restored it as a lasting bond of love between man and

43. The Dead Sea Scrolls, pp. 99–100. It is surely not irrelevant to record that the English translation of this long list suppresses the following sentence of the French original: "Like him [the Master of Justice], He [the Galilean Master] mounted to heaven, near to God." Dupont-Sommer's list of likenesses has been seized on by many in defense of their religious liberalism. In his later book, The Jewish Sect of Qumran and the Essenes, however, Dupont-Sommer himself has been much more cautious; and later still, in reply to a question by the editors of the Saturday Review, he wrote: "I never claimed that the Dead Sea scrolls could strike a blow against the 'uniqueness' of Jesus. . . . I believe that the Dead Sea scrolls do not deny the divinity of Jesus. . . . Viewed as a whole, the originality of the Christian Church seems to me to remain unchallenged" (March 3, 1956, p. 29).
woman, and exalted it as a sacrament, God’s lasting pledge of love for them? Again, for the Covenanters, “the Law finished and perfected” meant a Sabbath rest ever more rigorous. No idle words were to be spoken; nothing to be said about the work of the next day; no beast to be struck, even if it balked at doing its master’s will; nothing to be carried from the house to the outside, or from the outside into the house; nothing to be eaten save what had been prepared in advance; no vessel to be filled in order that one might drink from it later; no perfume to be worn; no aid to be rendered to an animal in giving birth; and no ladder or rope to be brought to help a man fallen into a pit. Can all this really be likened to the glory of the Sabbath as Jesus saw it, when God is honored but man not forgotten, when rest does not drive out compassion?

There is no doubt that the followers of the Teacher looked on him as their master, uniquely inspired, who had received the true expounding of the Law from “the mouth of God.” He was their guide to instruct them about the disaster to come as foretold by the prophets (IQP Hab i 2–3; ii 9–10). Quite other was the mission of Jesus. “According to the New Testament, He was plainly conscious that He had come to fulfill the prophecies and that it was to Him personally that they pointed. He was the end, the primary object, of their foretelling; He knew their innermost meaning, for it was, so 1 Pet 1:11 tells us, His Spirit which had given the prophets their knowledge of the things to come.” Never did the Covenanters call their Master “the Elect.”

44. CD iv 20—v 11; Mt 19:49; Mk 10:5–12; CD x 14—xi 18; Mt 12:1–13; Mk 2:23–3:5; Lk 6:1–10; 14:1–5; Jn 5:2–17; 9:1–16.

45. If, as several scholars assume, some of the Hymns were written by, or at least in the name of, the Teacher of Justice, then he thought of himself as a “father” given by God to them He held dear, as their nurse; as one who fed God’s “eternal planting,” for from his mouth came “rain at all seasons, and a fountain of waters unfailing”, as a “banner in the vanguard of righteousness,” “a gust of zeal” (IQH vii 20–21; viii 16; ii 13, 15—Gaster’s translation). But if this is taken as the Teacher’s self-evaluation, then it would be only fair to assume that it is he too who compared himself to a sailor unable to “steer a course upon the waters,” he too who confessed: “Confusion and panic beset me” (cf. Gaster, op. cit., pp. 156, 152).


47. IQP Hab ix 11–12 tells of God’s punishment of the Wicked Priest “because he had acted wickedly against His elect.” The English word “elect” can mean either one or many; and it so happens that—since written Hebrew customarily omits the vowels—the corresponding Hebrew word can be read either as behiro (the singular) or behirarw (the plural). As it is, IQP Hab v 4; x 13; 1QS viii 6; and ix 14, make the latter, “His chosen ones,” a near certainty.
never "the Messiah of God," 48 as Dupont-Sommer would have us believe; and even if they had, they could never have seen him as the "redeemer of the world," for a world-vision was foreign to them. Nowhere is there any suggestion that the Teacher of Justice was the bringer of salvation, that he had come "to save what was lost." Nowhere in the writings of the Community is there any claim for the Master that even slightly resembles Christ's "I am the light of the world"; "I am the way, and the truth, and the life"; 49 "I am the resurrection and the life." Nowhere in the Scrolls is there a word that even faintly approaches the absolute consciousness which could say: "I and the Father are one"; "He who sees me sees the Father." 50

In no instance is it more obvious how Dupont-Sommer inflates minor affinities than when he calls Jesus and the Teacher alike "the object of the hostility of the priests." A dispute of the kind the Teacher

48. One of the Hymns has for its theme the travail of a woman about to give birth. This may stand for the travail of the soul or for the "birth pangs of the Messiah." If the Community thought of itself as the womb that would bring forth the Messiah, then it could not have thought of him who had founded it as the Messiah; nor is there anything in this Hymn to strengthen the hypothesis that the Community expected the Teacher to return as the Priest-Messiah. See particularly Joseph Baumgarten and Menahem Mansoor, "Studies in the New Hodayot—II," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXIV, 3 (Sept. 1955), pp. 188–192. In any case, nothing could be further from the mark than Allegro’s reasoning: "As the Sect saw itself as a pregnant woman giving birth to a Messiah through her travail, so Jesus sees himself born out of the sufferings of his people, and suffering with them. All are his kin, 'Behold, my mother and my brethren' ..." (op. cit., p. 156). The merest glance at the Gospels shows that here, as elsewhere in his book, Professor Allegro indulges in fantasy, if not misrepresentation. For there is no mention of suffering in Mt 12:46–50; Mk 3:31–35; or Lk 8:19–21. What Christ really proclaims there is that He acknowledges as His own, makes His kindred, all who do the will of His Father in heaven.

49. To leap the manifest chasm which separates the Teacher of Justice from Christ, and to sustain his own theological liberalism, which sees in Christianity and, for that matter, in all religion, but a natural phenomenon, Dr. Davies resorts to a string of wild conjectures. Always declaring that he puts forth no more than hypotheses, he writes in regard to Christ’s "I am the way, and the truth, and the life," for instance: "This sort of discourse, sonorous and liturgical in tone and entirely different from the language of Jesus in the first three Gospels, would be quite appropriate to the Essene Teacher of Righteousness ... and the writer of John’s Gospel may have combined some of the Teacher’s doctrine with a reconstructed life of Jesus" (The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls, New York: New American Library, 1956, pp. 107–108). I need not say that I think these conjectures groundless and in error, but I wish I could say at least that I believed in their author’s desire to arrive at the truth. He makes this difficult, for, to give only one example, he goes on to link his conjectures with a statement by Dr. Burrows torn from its context, a statement which gives the impression that Burrows sides with him, which he most certainly does not.

had with the official priesthood of the Temple is entirely absent from, and foreign to, the Gospels. Unlike the men of Qumran, Jesus and His disciples worshipped in Jerusalem. Unlike the men of Qumran, Jesus paid honor to the priests of the Temple—ten lepers He cured by sending them: “Go, show yourselves to the priests” (Lk 17:14). Dupont-Sommer assumes that the Teacher of Justice was the victim of violence; though, as I have shown, the language of the Scrolls suggests the opposite, this is possible, for many holy men in Israel had known such an end. But whether or not he died a violent death, never once do the Desert Scrolls tell of him what the New Testament proclaims again and again of Jesus: that He “died for us,” that He “was delivered up for our sins,” that His death was the ransom and reconciliation of all men. To the “men of his party,” the Teacher was not a saviour. Nor was he, as Dupont-Sommer so eagerly assumes, the “supreme judge.” In the Habakkuk Commentary we read: “Into the hand of His elect God will deliver the judgment of all the nations” (v 4). His “elect” here are “the doers of the Law, whose hands do not grow slack from the service of the truth” (vii 11–12), not just their Teacher. For the Covenanters considered it the task of the whole Community as the instrument of God, the Supreme Judge, “to render to the wicked their recompense” (1QS viii 7). Nowhere do the Scrolls say that the Master of Qumran would return as the Messiah; all they proclaim is that in the end of days one would arise to teach justice, that God would send a faithful shepherd (CD vi 10–11; 1Q34 III ii 8).

To bring to a close the argument with Professor Dupont–Sommer: One need not be a Christian to see that the Teacher’s foundation and the Church of Christ are not on the same plane, and that not too much ought to be made of the name they have in common. When the disciples of the Teacher spoke of themselves as “those who entered the New Covenant in the land of Damascus” (CD vi 19), they saw themselves as reaffirming the ancient Covenant of Sinai. Theirs was a most earnest attempt to restore what they felt their fathers had abandoned, a fresh and determined will to go back to, and carry out again, the commandments given through Moses. The New Testament, however, did not merely restore or reinforce the work of Sinai; it

went beyond it. To the apostles, the New Covenant was more excellent than the first—not that the Old was not good and noble, but that the New was better and nobler; it was more excellent, for it was sealed not in the blood of wordless, will-less beasts but in the blood of the one Christ (Heb 9:13–15). To them the Old was the beginning of revelation, the New its crown; there was the dawn, here the day.

That there was on the one hand an overwhelming missionary thrust and on the other a complete absence of missionary intention brings into focus the difference between Christ’s New Covenant and the New Covenant of Damascus. The followers of the Teacher of Justice had gone to the wilderness, there to await God’s judgment, but the desert showed them no far horizon; in a way it threw them on themselves, so that they forgot the prophetic vision that “all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (Is 52:10). They considered themselves “an eternal planting” (IQS viii 5), but outside they saw a hopelessly lost world, destined to eternal death, a world they swore to leave to its own devices (IQS v 9–20; ix 21–23). The apostles, on the other hand, were told to go out into the world and preach the gospel to all the nations; to go to the crossroads and plead with the poor, the outcasts, the crippled, blind, and lame, to come in and fill the house of the Lord (Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15; Mt 22:9–10; Lk 14:21–24). Their Master, unlike the Teacher of Justice, made publicans His companions, sinners His friends, and opened the kingdom to harlots. For all the true praise the Community gave to God’s mercy, the evil of the world hung like a cloud over Qumran. Not that the infant Church, in its gladness over God’s eagerness to forgive, forgot His anger over sin, not that it had any illusions about this world or saw it any less dark. But it was filled with trust in the catholicity, the conquering power, of grace; filled with confidence in God “who wishes all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4).\(^2\)

In contrasting the Community with the Church, I am in no way attempting to lessen the greatness of the Teacher and his men. Quite the contrary, I am led by their Rule, which bids that “none shall be abased below his appointed position or exalted above his allotted place” (ii 23). There was truth and real beauty at Qumran, much that commands respect, much that compels admiration. Still, the Com-

munity is not the New Covenant. None of its members could possibly have written St. Paul's hymn on love, none said that without love all gifts are vain, all life is empty (1 Cor 13). None could have exclaimed, like St. John, that not to love is not to know God, for God is love (1 Jn 4:8).

Thou cause of all good,
Fountain of all knowledge,
Spring of holiness,
Zenith of all glory,
Might omnipotent,
Beauty that never fades!

(IQS x 12) 58

So the Qumranites called God. The man who thus inspired them must have been a towering figure. His title bespeaks his greatness, but no less his limitation: he was the Teacher of Justice. He did not plead with the burdened to come to him, nor weep over Jerusalem for not having sought the wing of his care. We do not read of him that he had compassion with a widow who had lost her only child, nor that he spoke of God as a father longing for his wayward son and going out to meet him. He did not see God's love as searching for man the way a poor woman searches for a lost coin, nor could he ever have told the parable of the Good Samaritan in answer to the question: "Who is my neighbor?"

The Teacher of Justice and Christ are incommensurable; Qumran is not the cradle of the Church. Still, for all their shortcomings, the monks of Qumran, poor, chaste, and obedient, penitents of Israel, warriors against the forces of darkness, watchers for God's kingdom, are the Christian's kin.

53. The translation is by Gaster, op. cit., p. 117.