

II. Hebrews and Qumran

The discovery of scrolls near Khirbet Qumran in 1947 and subsequent years has sparked off a great deal of speculation concerning the origins of Christianity. Some superficial study has arrived at conclusions that Christianity is merely an offshoot of Essenism, it being generally thought that the Qumran community must have close affinity with the Essenes. More serious study of the Qumran literature, however, has provided valuable information concerning a dissenting group within Judaism before and during the time of Christ.

Whether or not the Qumran community was Essene, information concerning the latter has been preserved only in the writings of Philo of Alexandria, Pliny the Elder, and Flavius Josephus, all record of the life and teaching of the sect having been effectively cut off from the main stream of Judaism. Hence, besides the interesting question of the relation of the Qumran community and the Essene sect, the scrolls provide details of the life and teaching of a Jewish community outside the main stream of Jewish tradition yet forming part of the total background against which Christianity emerged.

In particular, this has had significance for the study of those New Testament books which scholarship has tended to view in terms of late Hellenistic influence, as it has given evidence of the existence within Palestine from the earliest days of Christianity of a developed kind of thought which, from basic Hebrew thought-forms, may more satisfactorily illumine the background of these writings. For this reason, the Scrolls demand close consideration in assessing elements in the background of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

(a) Biblical Exegesis

Among the documents discovered at Qumran have been a number of fragments of Biblical commentaries, and these, along with the other works, exhibit a particular method of Biblical interpretation.¹ The divine revelation is thought of as consisting not only of the divine mystery (רִי) here seen as revealed in Scripture but also of the interpretation (רִשְׁוֹנָה – cf. Dn. 4.9). Thus the interpretation has remained hidden until the appearing of God's chosen interpreter, the Teacher of Righteousness, whose function is to expound aright God's Law. Thus, in the Habakkuk commentary on 2.1,2, this comment is made, "God told Habakkuk to write down the things that were to come upon the latter age, but he did not inform him when that moment would come to fulfilment. As to the phrase, *that he who runs may read*, this refers to the teacher who expounds the Law aright, for God has made him *au courant* with all the deeper implications of the words of his servants" (1QpHab vii.1-5).²

From this it appears not only that the meaning of the revelation is imparted by the Teacher of Righteousness but that the words of the prophets had in fact a primary reference to the latter age in which the community believed themselves to be living. It is in this sense that the divine revelation is incomplete until the Teacher brings its necessary רִשְׁוֹנָה. Thus, Habakkuk's references in 1.6ff to the Chaldeans (בְּלָשָׁן) must in fact refer to the Kittians (כִּיטָיִם) – possibly a reference to Rome (cf. Dn. 11.30), or to the Seleucids (1QpHab ii.12ff.).³ Examples of this could be multiplied. Bruce comments, "These persons and events were understood to belong not to the time immediately following the prophetic pronouncements but to the time immediately following the rise and activity of the Teacher of Righteousness."⁴ This method of interpretation as exemplified in the Habakkuk commentary demands the fragmentation of the text so that in its various parts it may be referred to the new situation. Further, since the original historical situation seems to be of little account in any case, the transition to allegorism is an easy one, a method especially ready to hand where the text was

¹ Cf. F.F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts* (Tyndale, London, 1960); W.H. Brownlee, *The Meaning of the Qumrân Scrolls for the Bible* (O.U.P., New York, 1964), ch.4.

² Quotations are from T.H. Gaster, *The Scriptures of the Dead Sea Sect* (Secker & Warburg, London, 1957), standard reference abbreviations, however, being used.

³ F.F. Bruce, *op. cit.*, pp. 22ff; Bruce, *The Teacher of Righteousness in the Qumran Texts* (Tyndale, London, 1956), pp. 10-11; H.H. Rowley, *The Teacher of Righteousness and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (John Rylands Library, Manchester, 1957), p. 127ff.

⁴ *Biblical Exegesis*, p.10.

fragmented. Thus, “Lebanon” in Hab. 2.17 refers to the Communal Council, and the “beasts” to “the simple-minded Jews who carry out the Law” (1QpHab xi.17ff). T.H. Gaster is probably right in suggesting that “the point of the interpretation lies in the fact that the members of the Brotherhood wore white,”⁵ and this tends to emphasise that the interpretation is allegorical.

W.H. Brownlee has suggested that this type of commentary should be called *midrash peshet* to indicate affinity with the exegetical method of the old Jewish commentaries, yet to distinguish it from other types of Jewish *midrash*.⁶ However, the usefulness of this classification is doubtful, since *midrash* is hardly a rigidly defined method of exegesis, and the double terminology only tends to cloud the differences. Superficially there is often a similar form with the scriptural quotation or phrase followed by its interpretation. However, the Qumran *pesharim* are marked out by their strong eschatological emphasis and by a more definitive presentation. Midrashic exposition, on the other hand, sees a multiplicity of meanings in each word of Scripture, gained through a process of progressive interpretation. For this reason the views of a number of Rabbis may be cited and even set in debate where there is disagreement. The *midrash halakhah* hence becomes the reading of the “oral traditions” back into the *Torah*, thus demonstrating their Mosaic origin and establishing their authority. The parabolic aspect of *midrash haggadah* seems to be completely missing from the Qumran commentaries.

It has been suggested that the method of exegesis in the Epistle to the Hebrews has striking parallels with the *peshet* method of Qumran. F.F. Bruce has thought that the most striking parallel related to Hab. 2.3f.⁷ In the Habakkuk commentary, the passage is referred to those who will know God’s deliverance from the house of judgment because of their continuing obedience to the Law and their faith in the Teacher of Righteousness (1QpHab vii.6ff). In Heb. 10.37-39, it is referred to those who “have faith and keep their souls” in waiting for the coming one. Bruce has suggested that the application might be rendered in *peshet* idiom thus:

For still the vision awaits its time; it hastens to the end – it will not lie. If it seem slow, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay. Its interpretation concerns those who look for the return of the Messiah; the appointed time is very near, and the faithful ones wait in hope for him to come.

Behold, he whose soul is not upright in him shall fail. Its interpretation concerns the apostates, who no longer wait for the Messiah; and because they draw back, God is displeased with them and they are on the way to perdition.

But the righteous shall live by his faith. Its interpretation concerns those who wait in hope, who do not draw back like the apostates, for they are righteous, and because they are strong in faith they will save their souls.⁸

However, while there is a *peshet* type of **application** exhorting continued faith in their spiritual leader who has for them eschatological significance, this rendering shows the extent to which the *peshet idiom* is absent.

What calls for close consideration here, however, is the relation of ch. 11 to this exegesis. The need to see this in terms of the continuity of the argument is clear,⁹ but, while there are some developments of thought throughout this chapter, basically it seems related as a whole to 10.37-39. The particular section of exhortation in the Epistle begins at 10.19. The progress of thought is that, having confidence to enter into God’s presence by virtue of Christ’s better sacrifice and having a great priest over God’s house, we are to enter fully into this experience, holding fast to our confession; this is the more important when we consider how serious is deliberate apostasy and how severe a punishment it deserves; but early in your life as Christians you endured suffering, proving that you could hold fast; so, do not throw away your confidence now but press on to receive the promise; the prophet, seeing the imminence of the coming one, urged that God’s righteous one lives by faith, and does not shrink back; now this refers to us, who are not among those who shrink back to destruction but among the people of faith whose soul is preserved – indeed, many in former times have lived and even died holding on to faith in God’s promises which they believed he would sometime fulfil; but now, having received these better things promised, we are encouraged by these who

⁵ *op. cit.*, p.253.

⁶ *op. cit.*, p. 64; cf. E.E. Ellis, *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament* (Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh, 1957), pp. 139-147.

⁷ “‘To the Hebrews’ or ‘To the Essenes’?”, *NTS*, 9, 3 (Apr. 1963), p.221.

⁸ *Biblical Exegesis*, pp. 82-83.

⁹ Cf. J. Moffatt, *op. cit.*, p. 158; H.W. Montefiore, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

have lived by faith (but especially by Jesus, the greatest example of all, on whom faith depends from start to finish) not to lose heart but to press on with endurance – your sufferings will, in fact, equip you the better to run the race of faith.

From this analysis, the primary function of ch. 11 in the development of this exhortation is clear. It is not an *excursus* on the subject of “faith”, but an amplification of 10.39, especially of *πίστεως* which, if not actually a periphrasis for “those who have faith”, certainly designates a class having this quality. In this view, 11.1 is to be seen as a description of the practical results of faith¹⁰ rather than as a definition of faith.¹¹ The contents of ch. 11 are summed up in 12.1 with *νέφος μαρτύρων*, and the exhortation moves on to adduce the supreme example of Jesus – he who is more than just an example, but is faith’s *ἀρχηγός* and *τελειωτής*. Yet they are not being urged to Christian heroism of some quasi-Stoical kind. In the case of Jesus, suffering led to joy and a sitting at God’s right hand. They too must look beyond the present suffering of sonly discipline to the peaceful fruit of righteousness which it produces (c. 11). There thus seem to be good grounds, in considering the type of exegesis used in 10.37-39, for including ch. 11 in this consideration.

There does not seem to be any parallel to this in the Qumran literature discovered so far. J. Héring considers that the number of Semitisms in ch. 11 make it possible that the author has used a Jewish *midrash* eulogising the pious men of the past and that Sir. 44-50 provides a comparison.¹² The parallel is of importance as providing background for the collation of a number of Old Testament characters, though it is hardly strictly a *midrash*. C. Spicq sees this enumeration of historical examples as a classical rhetorical procedure of antiquity,¹³ though, as he himself notes, Biblical parallels may be adduced (Ezek. 20; Neh. 9.6ff; Pss. 78, 105, 106, 135, 136). One might further mention the example of Stephen’s defence in Acts 7. The parallel is remarkably close if it is remembered that for rhetorical reasons it would have been impossible for Stephen to state at the beginning the passages which seem to be implied as the basis of this exegesis – such as “you are a stiff-necked people” (Ex. 33.3) and “The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place; but they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, till the wrath of the Lord rose against his people till there was no remedy” (2 Chron. 36.15-16ff). There are a few examples of *midrash* in which a number of Biblical examples are brought to mind (*cf.* ‘Ab. Zar. 24b ff). The feature of Stephen’s speech and of Heb. 11, which is missing from the examples of *midrash* and from Ecclesiasticus, is their eschatological progression. The examples of hard-heartedness move forward to a signal example of faith in the faith of Christ who is in fact the author and finisher of faith. This eschatological note is in keeping with the Qumran literature, though in Qumran exegesis historical significance seems to be lost in eschatological fulfilment. In Heb. 11 they are kept together.

However, it is important to consider the use made of Old Testament quotations in the Qumran texts apart from the commentaries. J.A. Fitzmeyer has analysed such quotations in some detail,¹⁴ and it will be of more use to deal with his conclusions than with this detail. He groups the quotations into a number of classes. Two of these are of interest here, the class of “modernised texts” and the eschatological class. Fitzmeyer uses the former term in preference to the designation “typological” to refer to texts which are used of some new event on the contemporary scene. “A situation is found in the Old Testament which is analogous to the new one and the two are linked by a common element in such wise that the old one sheds light and meaning on the new and invests it with a deeper significance.”¹⁵ The majority of New Testament examples cited are from Hebrews.¹⁶ The references in the Damascus document, however, evoke again an earlier comment, for it seems that “the old one” loses its own meaning in the process of “shedding light and meaning on the new.” There is no hint that a situation was found in the Old Testament analogous to a contemporary situation – the Old Testament reference was meant primarily for this contemporary situation. This is seen clearly in reference to such a passage as the one describing the works of Belial (CD iv.12ff).

¹⁰ C. Spicq, *op. cit.*, II, p.336.

¹¹ R.C.H. Lenski, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

¹² *op. cit.*, p. 104.

¹³ *op. cit.*, II, pp. 334-335; *cf. ibid.*, pp. 19-21.

¹⁴ “The Use of Explicit Old Testament Quotations in Qumran Literature and in the New Testament,” *NTS*, 7, 4, pp. 297-333.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 309.

¹⁶ *ibid.* p. 316n.

Some of Fitzmeyer's references in Hebrews could be viewed similarly (as 1.5, 8-9, 10-12, 13 *et al.*), but it must be insisted that in others (as 3.7-11) the regard of Hebrews for historical setting of what is fulfilled in Christ is evident. The regard for historical setting is, however, present in a reference set in the eschatological class (CD vii.10-12), though this is necessitated by the text quoted (Is. 7.17). The eschatological emphasis of the Qumran community has already been noted. There is a strong relation of this in Hebrews to what may be called "typological". Thus, Fitzmeyer's references to Hebrews under the eschatological class (10.30, 37-38) may be readily augmented from his references under what he terms "modernised texts" (notably 8.8-12). However, the concept of the covenant merits fuller consideration later. What may be noted here is that, while Fitzmeyer has shown that the Qumran literature has classes of quotations which may be found in the New Testament, the comparison is a broad one and, in fact, the broad use of these classes in the New Testament cautions against an easy conclusion of the dependence of Hebrews specifically on a Qumran type of background.

Fitzmeyer has also given consideration to the introductory formulae used in the Qumran literature. These have similarities with the usage of the New Testament as a whole, especially in the designation of the Old Testament as "Scriptures", with phrases parallel to the common New Testament introduction, *γέγραπται*.¹⁷ However, notably this phrase only appears in Hebrews by way of quotation from the LXX (10.5-7; Ps. 40.6-8). In the comparison with Philo, it has been noted that the method of quotation in Hebrews differs from the general practice of New Testament writers, Hebrews tending to emphasise the divine source of the words. Parallel uses in Qumran literature do not show any real parallel to this, as the words so quoted are always from passages already attributed to God in the Old Testament (*cf.* CD vi.13, viii.19).¹⁸ Other personal references of quotations are to the particular Old Testament personage concerned – as, for example, Isaiah (CD vi.7-8).¹⁹ The comparison with Heb. 12.21 – Moses to the people of Israel concerning Sinai, "I tremble with fear" (Dt. 9.19) – is no real parallel, for the latter could not be taken as other than a human reaction. This, however, is not the case in the Qumran references, which in a Hebrews background might easily have been directly attributed to God (*cf.* Heb. 1.6-12).

Perhaps of more significance has been the discovery of the use of *testimonia* by the Qumran community in their Messianic expectations. In particular, the document known as 4Q Testimonia contains the following texts – Dt. 5.28-29; 18.18; Num. 24.15-17; Dt. 33.8-11; and an elaborated version of Josh. 6.26. Except for the last these are without commentary, so that it is therefore possible that it is portion of another document.²⁰ The possible use of an early Christian collection of *testimonia* by some of the New Testament writers is a question of some importance.²¹ It has been more recently urged with special reference to the Epistle to the Hebrews by F.C. Syngé. He suggests that it is assumed that the readers agree that the passages quoted in ch. 1 refer to the Son and affirms, "The most satisfying answer to the last question [*i.e.* why the readers should thus agree with him] is this, that Hebrews has before him a collection of proof texts which was already an authoritative book in the Church."²² However, it seems rather tenuous to conclude that, as 1.6 seems to allude to Prov. 8.22ff and to follow this with a quotation from Dt. 32.43 LXX and as Justin Martyr, using proof-texts in the *Dialogue with Trypho*, does from Prov. 8 to Dt. 32, "it seems clear that the connection is not merely in the head of Hebrews: it is there in his Testimony Book!"²³

C.H. Dodd has rightly cautioned that the postulation of a document "outruns the evidence, which is not sufficient to prove so formidable a literary enterprise at so early a date."²⁴ The evidence points rather to the existence of a method of Biblical study involving the selection of certain large sections of the Old Testament scriptures, especially from the prophets and the Psalms, and the study of these as wholes on

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 300.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 301.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 302.

²⁰ W.H. Brownlee, *op. cit.*, p. 48; T.H. Gaster, *op. cit.*, pp. 353-355.

²¹ *cf.* C.H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (Nisbet, London, 1952), pp. 28-60; E.E. Ellis, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-107.

²² *Hebrews and the Scriptures* (S.P.C.K., London, 1959), p.2. Note M. Barth, "The Old Testament in Hebrews. An Essay in Biblical Hermeneutics" in W. Klassen and G.F. Snyder (eds.), *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation* (S.C.M., London, 1962), p. 64 – "His method is nearer [*i.e.* than the *peshar* method] the *haraz* ('string of pearls') method of the rabbis, which in turn seems to be reflected among the Qumranites by the collections of *testimonia*".

²³ Syngé, *op. cit.*, p. 4

²⁴ *op. cit.*, p. 26.

intelligent and consistent principles as setting out the “determinate counsel of God” fulfilled in the gospel facts. This whole body of material formed “the starting point for the theological constructions of Paul, the author to the Hebrews, and the Fourth Evangelist.”²⁵

The Qumran *testimonia*, however, at least bear witness to the possibility of such a collection, though it must be asked to what extent these passages were actually regarded as *testimonia*. Certainly, they hardly figure clearly in the present texts as such, Num. 24.17 being quoted in two passages (CD vii.19-20; 1QM xi.6-7) and others not at all (though there is an allusion to Dt. 33.11 in 1 QH ii.5). Thus, even at Qumran there was a broad Scriptural reference, even though there seems to have been particular interest in Deuteronomy, the Psalms and the prophets (especially Isaiah). It may be noted that there are a considerable number of quotations from Dt. 32, a passage to which there a considerable number of allusions in the New Testament also (as in Rom. 10.19; 1 Cor. 10.20,22; Phil. 2.15; *et al.*). It is noteworthy that one of the fragments from cave 4 includes the longer text of this Song quoted in Heb. 1.6, known previously only in the LXX.²⁶

This evidence at least points to a broader background of the Epistle than was formerly acknowledged. The approach to and use of the Scriptures show that the exegetical methods of Hebrews may be related to a Palestinian background, though the parallels are not close enough to establish dependence. This type of approach to the Scriptures, however, may have had more influence in Jewish circles in the first century AD than is realised from the main stream of Jewish literature.

(b) Attitude to Sacrifices, Temple and Priesthood

Possibly the reason why the influences of Qumran thinking do not seem to have been preserved in the main stream of Judaism was because of their rigorous attitude to Temple worship and the Jerusalem priesthood. It seems clear that they did not reject animal sacrifices and a priesthood **in principle**, but protested against the evils and corruption of the Jerusalem *cultus*. It should be noted that this protest movement began with the Hebrew prophets, who were concerned on the one hand to reform sacrificial practice (as in Is. 1.11; Jer. 11.12; Ezek. 20.31; Hos. 4.13) and on the other to reform sacrificial theory, laying greater emphasis on ethical duty (as in Mic. 6.6ff; Hos. 6.6). Care must, therefore, be exercised not to overestimate the originality of the Qumran protest, while taking note of it as a particular protest movement in New Testament times.

Philo described the Essenes as being “primarily religious devotees, not by any cult of animal sacrifices, but in their resolve to maintain the sanctity of their minds” (*Quod Omn.* 75). It must be agreed with Matthew Black that this is a “simple negative”.²⁷ There is no amplification to indicate that they **repudiated** animal sacrifices, only an assertion that such cult was not part of their communal life and that they laid emphasis rather on sanctity. Josephus’ reference in the *Antiquities* is more pointed. Black renders the best-attested text, “In sending gifts to the Temple, they render up (their) offerings with superior purifications as they think. And for this reason they are excluded from the public precinct and give up their offerings by themselves...”²⁸ “Gifts” here are *ἀναθήματα*, a general term for offerings, while “offerings” (*θυσίαι*) are most usually animal sacrifices. On this understanding of Josephus, the group saw some duty towards the Temple, but avoided contact with the corrupt *cultus* of the Temple, perhaps tending to a spiritual interpretation of sacrifice.

The practice of the Qumran community affords a striking parallel to this. Thus, it is laid down that “No one is to send to the altar either burnt-offering or meal-offering or frankincense or wood by the hand of one suffering from any of the proscribed impurities, thus permitting him to render the altar impure; for Scripture says, ‘The sacrifice of the wicked in an abomination, but the mere prayer of the righteous is like an acceptable offering’ ” (CD xi.18ff). Black has suggested that it is these precautions with regard to the person conveying the offering which may be implied by the “superior purifications” noted by Josephus.²⁹ However,

²⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 126-127.

²⁶ F.F. Bruce, *NTS*, 9, 3, p. 221.

²⁷ *The Scrolls and Christian Origins* (Nelson, London, 1961), p. 39.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p.40.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p.41.

it seems necessary to conclude that the sacrificial system was actually regarded as being of much less importance to the Qumran community than Black seems to conclude from their practice of sending offerings to Jerusalem. This is seen quite clearly in the *Manual*, “When these things obtain in Israel, as defined by these provisions, the Holy Spirit will indeed rest on a sound foundation; truth will be evinced perpetually; the guilt of transgression and the perfidy of sin will be shriven; and atonement will be made for the earth more effectively than by any flesh of burnt offerings or the fat of sacrifices. The ‘oblation of the lips’ will be all justice like the erstwhile ‘pleasant savour’ on the altar; righteousness and integrity like that free-will offering which God deigns to accept. At that time, the men of the community will constitute a true and distinctive temple – a veritable holy of holies – wherein the priesthood may fitly foregather, and a true and distinctive synagogue made up of laymen who walk in integrity” (1QS ix.3-6). Black is at variance with Gaster’s translation here, rendering as if “expiation is assured through the flesh of holocausts and the fats of sacrifice”, this not excluding, however, “the spiritual sacrifices appropriate in such a community.”³⁰ S.E. Johnson agrees with Gaster’s interpretation, and comments, “The Manual of Discipline by itself does not prove that the members of the sect participated in the Temple sacrifices or refrained from them. The Damascus Document, which in all probability comes from the same group, denounces the contemporary cultus. When the Manual of Discipline uses sacrificial language it does so metaphorically.”³¹

The Epistle to the Hebrews hardly forms a close parallel to this kind of teaching. In no case is there allusion to the corruption of the *cultus*, only to its imperfection and transitoriness. Indeed, the regulations of divine worship (*δικαιώματα λατρείας*) were an integral element of the first covenant (9.1). It is only because they were thus an integral element that they could foreshadow the good things to come. The idea of animal sacrifices is not repudiated, though their effectiveness is limited to the purity of the flesh (*τὴν τῆς σαρκὸς καθαρότητα* – 9.13). The cleansing of the conscience is only possible through the better sacrifice, “the blood of Christ” (v. 14). This latter is not a spiritualised symbol, but an historical actuality, Christ having died “once for all” (*ἐφάπαξ*). Thus, the new covenant is founded on the perfect sacrifice. Ps. 40.6-8 is quoted in 10.5-7, but is not used to set “sacrifice and offering” in contrast with the spiritual sacrifice of obedience (as in 1QS ix.4-5). Rather, the sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin-offerings offered according to the Law are set in contrast to the once-for-all offering of the body of Jesus Christ. This involved obedience, because it was a self-offering (*cf.* 5.8), though the “one sacrifice for sins” (10.12) is hardly just his obedience, this being but a part of his total self-offering. There is no repetition of this sacrifice, but his followers are called upon to offer to God through him “a sacrifice of praise” (*θυσίαν αἰνέσεως* – *cf.* Lev. 7.12, LXX), evidently seen as a thank-offering, and to be diligent in doing good and sharing, for God is pleased with such sacrifices (13.15,16). Although this final chapter is generally acknowledged as an authentic part of the Epistle, it gives the impression of an appendix, setting out some final practical exhortations after the conclusion of the main development of thought.³² This focuses attention all the more on the central place of the self-sacrifice of Christ. There is no longer any question of corrupt sacrificial system, for the perfect sacrifice has taken place. The spiritual sacrifices to which Christians are called are not a corrective to the evils of a system, but derive their meaning from the perfect sacrifice (note 13.12,13). The practices of the Qumran community offer striking parallels to this concluding idea of spiritual sacrifices in Hebrews, but instead of being “not very far, after all” from it,³³ it is here suggested that it is “quite some considerable distance away, nonetheless” in this passage is seen in relation to the teaching of the whole Epistle.

With regard to the Temple itself, the Qumran community does not appear to have been against it in principle. Their return to the desert was a separation from the rest of society, but does not seem to have involved a rejection of the Temple in favour of the tabernacle.³⁴ In Hebrews, there is no reference to the Temple (*νάος*), but consistently to the tabernacle (*σκηνή*). The explanation of this can hardly be that the

³⁰ *ibid.*, p.43. O. Cullman agrees with this, citing as further support IQM 11.5-6, vii.11 – “A New Approach to the Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel” in *ET*, LXXI, 2, p.39.

³¹ “The Dead Sea Manual of Discipline and the Jerusalem Church of Acts” in K. Stendahl (ed.), *The Scrolls and the New Testament* (S.C.M., London, 1958), p.137.

³² *Cf.* J. Héring, *op. cit.*, p.121 – “(a) Contrary to the rest of the epistle, its moral prescriptions are joined with one another rather badly, no more are they connected well to the end of chap. 12; (b) it adds nothing new; (c) only in this chapter does the author speak as if he was really writing a letter.”

³³ S.E. Johnson in K. Stendahl (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.137.

³⁴ *Cf.* F.F. Bruce, *NTS*, 9, 3, p.299.

Temple had been destroyed and the *cultus* had ceased, otherwise a number of passages in Hebrews would be sheer anachronism (as 8.4-5; 10.1-2).³⁵ One wonders whether it is really a sufficient explanation to assert that the writer is not alluding to an existing *cultus* and Temple, but is merely quoting from the LXX. Thus, Moffatt writes, “He never refers to the temple... It is the tabernacle of the pentateuch which interests him, and all his knowledge of the Jewish ritual is gained from the LXX and later tradition. The LXX is for him and his readers the codex of their religion...”³⁶

There are other factors which suggest that the reference to the tabernacle may be deliberate. The people of God are portrayed as being “strangers and sojourners” (11.13). Their promised land is not Palestine, but a heavenly country (v.16); and the city they are seeking is not the earthly Jerusalem (vv. 9, 10, 16). Indeed, although they had gained approval through their faith, yet they did not receive what was promised (v.39). To this corresponds the statement that the children of Israel were not given “rest” by Joshua (4.8).³⁷ There is no clear or strong statement against the Temple, though “tabernacle” would plainly be the more congruous with this view of the people of God. This principle is extended, moreover, to the people of God after the time of Christ. Although they live in the time of better things, “the best” remains as a promise into which they must be diligent to enter (4.1, 9-11). Furthermore, even as the bodies of the sacrificial animals were burnt “outside the camp” (the nomadic setting), so Jesus suffered “outside the gate” (specifically the established city³⁸), and his followers must go out to him “outside the camp”, not having a lasting city, but seeking that to come (13.11-14).

H. Koester may be right in seeking 13.12-13 as formulated in conscious contrast to Lev.16.28,³⁹ but is exceeding the evidence in concluding that “outside the camp” is in fact “the worldliness of the world itself and the place where men are exposed to the experience of this world rather than secluded and protected from it”.⁴⁰ One does not deny this as an element in the exhortation of Hebrews both here (“bearing his reproach”) and elsewhere (as in 10.32-33). However, a strong contrast with Judaism is certainly implied (note 13.10), and if vv. 13 and 14 are taken together it is clear that the very reason for our going “outside the camp” is that we know ourselves to be “strangers and exiles on the earth”. The perfect sacrifice did not take place in the Temple, nor yet within an earthly tabernacle. So Christians, without lasting city and hence without temple, but also outside the camp with no earthly tabernacle, are to offer up to God their sacrifices of praise, thanksgiving, well-doing and sharing. To use Koester’s terms, there is here a kind of “worldliness” rather than the “unworldliness” of Qumranian detachment – it is within the activities of the world that the reproach is to be borne and the spiritual sacrifices offered to God. But this must be kept within the perspective of an evaluation of the things of this world as transitory – a feature of the desert community, though not rigidly worked out with reference to the Temple and its *cultus*.

The Qumran scrolls express forthrightly the community’s attitude to the Jerusalem priesthood. One of the greatest opponents of the Teacher of Righteousness was the Wicked Priest. This latter term (הַרְשָׁע הַכֹּהֵן) seems clearly to be a pun for the Chief Priest (הַכֹּהֵן הַרְאִישׁ).⁴¹ While there seems to have been one outstanding occasion when the Wicked Priest exhibited his hostility toward the Teacher of Righteousness (1QpHab xi.4ff), it may also have a wider reference than just one person, involving condemnation of the whole Jerusalem priesthood. This wider reference is explicit in 1QpHab ix.4-7 – “(Hab. 2.8a), this refers to the final priests of Jerusalem who will amass for themselves wealth and gain by plundering the people but whose wealth and plunder will ultimately be delivered into the hands of the Kittaeans, i.e., ‘the rest of the peoples’.” However, the idea of a priesthood is not spiritualised, but there is expectation of a purified priesthood. As in Ezekiel’s vision of the restored Temple (as in 40.46), it is “the sons of Zadok” who are acceptable priests. This designation is made with reference to Ezek. 44.15 in CD iii.21ff, while it is stated to refer to “priests that still keep the Covenant” in 1QS v.2. The former of these two references may possibly have an extended meaning related to the community as a whole, but the latter points to the existence of priests within the community (cf. 1QS vi.8). Indeed, “The priests alone are to have authority in all judicial

³⁵ Cf. J. Héring, *op. cit.*, p.13; C. Spicq, *op. cit.*, I, p.255; B.F. Westcott, *op. cit.*, pp.xlii-xliii.

³⁶ *op. cit.*, p.xvi; cf. also p.xxii; T.H. Robinson, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1933), p.115.

³⁷ C. Spicq, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 95ff.

³⁸ *ibid.*, II, p. 427.

³⁹ “ ‘Outside the Camp’: Hebrews 13.9-14” in *HTR*, LV. 4 (1962), p. 300.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 302.

⁴¹ Cf. W.H. Brownlee, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

and economic patters, and it is by their vote that the ranks of the various members of the community are to be determined” (1QS ix.7).

The Epistle to the Hebrews does not seem directed against the corruptions of the priesthood, but against its inherent imperfection. The reference to the high priest being himself beset with weakness (5.2) is by way of contrast rather than of criticism. It could not have been otherwise – this is why Christ, while experiencing all the frailty of the Aaronic priest, belongs to the superior order of Melchizedek (5.1-10). As far as the earthly priesthood is concerned, the writer can designate it equally as Aaronic or as Levitical (note especially 7.11). Ezekiel seems to have had general condemnation for the Levites, except the sons of Zadok (44.10-16). There is no indication that Hebrews uses the term “Levitical” in any restrictive sense other than that imposed by the normal requirements for priests. Note 7.5 – “the sons of Levi who receive the priest’s office” (*cf.* Ezek. 44.22; Neh. 7.63-64). However, no matter what the order of the earthly priesthood, the coming of Christ does not merely involve the typological **fulfilment** of the former priesthood but a **change** of priesthood (7.12). Thus, the usage of Hebrews may at most indicate that the question of whether the priesthood is to be regarded as Levitical, Aaronic or Zadokite is quite irrelevant to the writer’s thought. The focus is on the superior Melchizedekian priesthood, a royal priesthood. Again, Hebrews shows little of a specifically Qumran background.

Mention must be made here of the attempts to see some relation between Hebrews and Qumran in the light of comparisons with John the Baptist and Stephen.⁴² For Cullmann, the Scrolls open the way to the understanding of what he calls “non-conformist Judaism,” which can account for what were thought to be late Hellenistic elements in the Fourth Gospel and in Hebrews. His thesis is worked out in relation to the Fourth Gospel, but he considers that the Epistle to the Hebrews “is in every respect closely related to the Johannine literature and must very probably be attributed to the same group”.⁴³ His line of argument has three steps, showing a relation between John and Stephen’s group, the Palestinian Hellenists, a relation between John and non-conformist Judaism and a relation between this non-conformist Judaism and Stephen’s group. It is worked out with respect to one theme – the opposition to (or, rather, spiritualisation of) the Temple worship.

The relation between the Fourth Gospel and the Hellenists is seen in the spiritual approach to worship in the discourse with the Samaritan woman (Jn 4.20-24). This is parallel to the attitude of Stephen, and the reference of v. 38 (“others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour”) is taken as a prediction of the Samaritan mission, established by the Hellenist Philip (Acts 8). Cullmann considers that Stephen asserts that the construction of the Temple was the height of Israel’s resistance to the divine law (Acts 7.47ff).⁴⁴ One may note here that “the tabernacle of testimony” was made according to the pattern which Moses had seen (v. 44), and there is reference to this same point in Hebrews (8.5), though it is by no means clear that *κεκλημάτιστα* is meant to imply a criticism of the later Temple. Again, in the Fourth Gospel it must be noted that, while the Word is described as “tabernacling” (*ἐσκήνωσεν*) in our midst (1.14), the Temple itself as the “Father’s house” is defended against the abuses taking place within its precincts (2.14ff). This has some similarities to the type of thought at Qumran as described above, but is hardly echoed in Hebrews. The point is that “As for the Essenes, we know that their attitude toward the Temple was not as favourable as that of the main body of Judaism, even if they did not go as far as the Christian Hellenists”.⁴⁵ This is of some significance, even though Hellenistic Christianity had further reasons for their attitude to the Temple.

While Cullmann does not insist that this polemic is found as such in Qumran, he considers it may have been prepared for by it,⁴⁶ and, while not insisting that the Hellenists were former Essenes, he asserts

⁴² O. Cullmann, “The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity” in K. Stendahl (ed.), *op. cit.*; Cullmann, “A New Approach to the Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel”, *ET*, LXXI, 1 and 2; C. Spicq, “L’Épître aux Hébreux, Apollon, Jean-Baptiste, les Hellénistes et Qumrân,” *RQ*, 1, 3 (Feb. 1959), pp. 365-390. A similar line is followed by S.E. Johnson in K. Stendahl, *op. cit.*; Wm. Manson, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1951), pp. 30-36 *et al.*, sees direct dependence between Stephen’s message and the doctrine developed in Hebrews. M. Simon, *St. Stephen and the Hellenists in the Primitive Church* (Longmans, London, 1958) criticises Wm. Manson’s position (pp. 100ff), but himself concludes that “the Qumran sect was probably close to the Hellenists” (p. 91).

⁴³ *ET*, LXXI, 2, p. 41.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1, p. 11.

⁴⁵ Stendahl (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁴⁶ *ET*, LXXI, 1, p. 11.

that “they come from a kind of Judaism close to this group”.⁴⁷ M. Black has acknowledged the impressiveness of Cullmann’s case, but considers that his thesis may have been more convincing if the link with Qumran had been through the Hebraists.⁴⁸ However, Cullmann is not regarding “Hebrews” and “Hellenists” (Acts 6.1) as necessarily a linguistic distinction.⁴⁹ Further, the Acts references aside, it should be noted that “Hebrews” is hardly a normal designation for Aramaic-speaking Jews. Black has pointed out that “the designation, *Ἑβραῖοι*, was an archaic form of speech”.⁵⁰ This designation seems more suited to all we know of the Qumran community. It is just possible that, from the point of view of language, the members of the community might be known as “Hebrews”, and, because of some Hellenising tendencies, as “Hellenists”, though this term seems hardly compatible with their exclusive use of (or insistence on) the Hebrew language.

C. Spicq has taken a somewhat similar line, except that he also brings Apollos and John the Baptist into his discussion. Acts 19 relates that Apollos used John’s baptism and was only imperfectly instructed concerning the Holy Spirit. Some scholars have considered it a distinct possibility that John the Baptist was actually reared by Essenes when he was “in the wilderness” (Lk. 1.80), though not thereby confining John to the Essene mould.⁵¹ Although John spoke of the one coming after him baptising in the Holy Spirit, it is not clear that he fully understood the import of these words. The accounts in Matthew (3.7-12) and Luke (3.7-17) point to **judgment** as the key to this baptism, while Mark (1.7-8) and John (1.15, 26-27, 29-34) give no further indication as to what may be implied by Spirit-baptism. This could explain the misunderstanding of his disciples concerning the nature of this baptism announced by their master and also the conception of the Holy Spirit so little elaborated by Apollos and in Hebrews. The latter only conceives of the Holy Spirit as “inspirer of Scripture and source of the gifts of grace, not as agent of the Christian life”.⁵² It is further suggested that Apollos the Alexandrian could hardly have not frequented the synagogue which could not withstand Stephen’s wisdom (Acts 6.9-10), and that he could have been, if not converted, at least strongly impressed by the preaching of the first martyr. “One would best explain thus the evident affinities between the ‘discourse of Stephen’ and the ‘Epistle to the Hebrews’. The universalist conception of a very spiritual Christianity centred in the person of Christ, the exegeses of detail, the position adopted on the Temple and the relations of the old and the new covenant, are similar to such an extent that numerous authors have attributed to the Deacon the authorship of the Epistle”.⁵³ The Qumran community saw themselves in terms of the exile and exodus (1QS viii.11-13), this being proposed as the pattern for Christians in Heb. 3.7-4.11.

Spicq concludes, “The Epistle to the Hebrews, which is – for style, if not for vocabulary – the most Greek writing of the New Testament, is also one of two which have the most contacts with Palestinian Judaism. On the one hand, the Alexandrian culture of the author and his dependence with regard to Philo are certain; on the other, his centres of interest, his apologetic orientation, especially his exegeses, this or that point of morals, present notable affinities with those of the ‘exiles’ of Damascus or of Qumran”.⁵⁴ Spicq’s conclusion here is rather more balanced than that of Cullmann. The background of Hebrews is notably complex, and, while its many facets must be taken into consideration, no single facet seems to provide an adequate account of the background from which the Epistle emerged.

(c) Messianic Expectations

The Qumran community seems to have looked forward to three main figures – the coming prophet, and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel.⁵⁵ It is especially with the latter two that we are concerned here. Thus, “Until the coming of the Prophet and of both the priestly and the lay Messiah (lit. “the Messiahs of Aaron

⁴⁷ Stendahl (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁴⁸ *op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁴⁹ Stendahl (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁵⁰ *op. cit.*, p. 78.

⁵¹ Cf. W.H. Brownlee, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

⁵² *RQ*, 1, 3, p. 368.

⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 369.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 389.

⁵⁵ F.F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis*, pp. 41-55; K.G. Kuhn, “The Two Messiahs of Aaron and Israel” in K. Stendahl (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 54-64.

and Israel”), these men are not to depart from the clear intent of the Law to walk in any way in the stubbornness of their hearts” (1QS ix,10-11). In 1QSa ii.11ff, the appellation “Messiah” is given only to the “Messiah of Israel”, who seems to be a royal person, though the text does not specifically call him “king”. T.H. Gaster considers that the term “Messiah of Israel” here “means no more than ‘the duly anointed king’”.⁵⁶ However, if it is true that this text is concerned with “the administration of the future ideal community of Israel,” as Gaster goes on to acknowledge, it must surely be taken to have more than general significance, to point in fact to an anticipated “Messiah”, a special “anointed one”. In this text, “the priest” is clearly the “Messiah of Aaron”,⁵⁷ and takes precedence over the “Messiah of Israel” in assembly and feast. This observation is not invalidated by the final clause – “this rule is to obtain at all meals where there are ten or more men present” – which extends the principle of the superiority of the “priestly” over the “royal”, for the principle is seen in terms of its messianic fulfilment.

Now, it should be noted that, while both “priest” and “king” in Israel were “anointed”, the developed Messianic concepts of later Judaism looked for a Messianic figure who was notably a king. Thus, the Synoptics bear witness to the current designation of the Messiah as “son of David,” a title which Jesus is recorded as expressly avoiding in all three (Mt. 22.41-46; Mk 12.35-37; Lk. 20.41-44). The term had become fraught with too much petty nationalism. The Qumran expectations stand in marked contrast to this. K.G. Kuhn has concluded from the section of 1QSa noted above, “The entire passage shows us with complete certainty the concept of two Messiahs: (1) the Messiah of Aaron, the high priest and head of the entire Congregation of Israel, and (2) the Messiah of Israel, the political leader, subordinate and second in rank to the former”.⁵⁸

In Hebrews Jesus is interpreted in terms of both priestly and royal (as exemplified in Melchizedek), the stronger emphasis being on the priestly. That he is thought of as the Davidic Messiah is quite clear. Heb. 1.5 quotes Ps. 2.7 – “Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee” – and 2 Sam. 7.14 – “I will be to him a father, and he will be to me a son.” The second of these clearly refers to the Davidic Messiah, being part of the oracle delivered by the prophet Nathan to David. Ps. 2 is likewise taken to be a royal Psalm. The same may be said of Ps. 45.6-7, quoted in Heb. 1.8-9, and of Ps. 110.1, quoted in Heb. 1.13. This latter passage was evidently commonly referred to the Davidic Messiah in New Testament times, as seems clear from Mk 12.35ff and parallels. There seems to be an allusion to this passage in Heb. 1.3, 8.1, 10.12, 12.2, and its importance is heightened by the use of Ps. 110.4 – “You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek”. There is some cogency in F.F. Bruce’s suggestion – “There was a sound historical justification for ascribing a priesthood of this order to the Davidic Messiah, for it is extremely probable that after David’s capture of Jerusalem he and his successors viewed themselves as heirs to the ancient royal priesthood exercised by Melchizedek and other pre-Israelite rulers of that city”.⁵⁹ However that may be, it is clear that Melchizedek is used because he represents both the priestly and the royal. In a real sense it might be said that “one man fulfils the roles of both Messiahs”.⁶⁰ However, it may be truer to say that the Messiah is conceived of as having a dual role. While the royal function of the Messiah is seen as Davidic, the priestly function is certainly not Aaronic. As noted earlier, while the sacrifices of the Law pointed to the perfect sacrifice of Christ, the priesthood of Christ is of a completely different order. Nonetheless, it is on this priestly function that Hebrews concentrates attention rather than on the royal function.

W. Stott has given careful linguistic study to the concept of “offering” evident in the Epistle. He considers that, in the heavenly role of our great High Priest, the expiatory work has been finished and the royal work begun.⁶¹ This royal work is an integral part of the work of the “priest after the order of Melchizedek”, the latter being both King and Priest. Christ is depicted as “seated” at God’s right hand and “appearing for us” (9.24); he is mediator of the New Covenant (9.15) and “ever lives to make intercession for us” (7.25). Stott points out that it was by no means usual for the priest to be seated for intercession, but that this was rather the royal posture for intercession, as is seen in 2 Sam. 7.1ff – a passage from which quotation is made in Hebrews as noted above. The Lord makes covenant with David through his prophet

⁵⁶ *op. cit.*, pp. 259-260.

⁵⁷ F.F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis*, p. 45; K.G. Kuhn, in K. Stendahl (ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁵⁸ *ibid.* p. 57.

⁵⁹ *Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Paternoster, London, 1956), p. 83; *cf.* *NTS*, 9, 3, p. 223.

⁶⁰ B. Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic* (S.C.M., London, 1961), p. 256; *cf.* H.H. Rowley, *The Qumran Sect and Christian Origins* (John Rylands Library, Manchester, 1961), p. 126.

⁶¹ *NTS*, 9, 1, p. 66.

Nathan. David's response is to go in and "sit before the Lord" (v. 19), there to claim the covenant promises (vv. 24, 26, 27, 29). Hebrews depicts a royal priest seated, as David was, before God, not pleading a sacrifice (the "cleansing" having been already accomplished – 1.4), but now seated in royal state and claiming the fulfilment of the Covenant promises for his seed.

This perhaps tends to oversimplify the situation, for the various concepts involved in Stott's considerations may not be used with the degree of exactness which he presupposes. Nonetheless, this study must be given due weight, and, for the present purposes, gives a useful clue to the concept of royal priesthood elucidated in the Epistle. The priesthood is avowedly not the Aaronic priesthood. This fact is made quite clear by the consideration that our Lord descended from the tribe of Judah, "a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests" (7.14), *i.e.* the royal tribe is not at all linked with the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood. However, as Stott has made clear, the king might at times be involved in some form of priestly role, though this was not within the scope of the special priestly ministrations. In Christ, the priesthood is not fulfilled but "changed" (7.12), and the Melchizedekian priesthood is not based on the law of a physical requirement but on the power of an indestructible life (v. 16). Yet, as noted above, Hebrews lays emphasis mainly on the **priesthood** of this royal person.

While it is clear that the Epistle's concept of a royal-priestly Messiah does not stem from the Qumran concept of the Messiah of Aaron and that of Israel, it must also be agreed with F.F. Bruce that "the argument of Hebrews is not specially directed against the Qumran conception of a priestly Messiah", but rather shows more generally the temporary nature of the whole of the order established in the wilderness days.⁶² Specifically anti-Qumran doctrine might have confirmed a Qumran background, but this is not present. However, Qumran may well have made a general contribution to the background at this point, by an emphasis on the priestly in Israel's destiny. For them, this meant the Aaronic priesthood and thus implied a Messiah distinct from the royal Messiah of Israel and superior to the latter. Hebrews approaches the matter from the conviction that the historical person, Jesus was the one expected Messiah – there is no indication that the writer has ever thought that there might be any more than one Messiah. For the majority of Jewish people, Messiahship meant kingship. Hebrews takes this expectation but concentrates attention on the priestly function of this royal Messiah, who was not (and could not be) an Aaronic priest because he was from the tribe of Judah, but is priest of a superior priesthood "after the order of Melchizedek". This concept may not have been totally strange to Palestinian readers as the expectation of a priestly Messiah was present in non-conformist Judaism, though its difference from the latter is quite marked.

(d) The New Covenant

The Qumran community seems to have seen its existence and function in terms of the New Covenant. Thus, the Zadokite Fragment speaks of "the men who entered the covenant in 'the land of Damascus'" (CD vi.19). The "traitors" have betrayed the New Covenant, not keeping faith with the Covenant of God, profaning his holy name (1QpHab ii.7ff). This Covenant theme occurs many times throughout the Qumran texts, but there is need to consider the extent to which it was thought of as being "new". Thus, T.H. Gaster asserts, "What was envisaged, however, was no 'New Testament' in the Christian sense of the term, no abrogation or substitution of the old Covenant, but simply a new affirmation of it. This was in accordance with the traditional Jewish view that the eternal Covenant is periodically reaffirmed and that the Pact concluded at Sinai was itself but a re-articulation of that which God had previously made, in their several generations, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob".⁶³

However, while Judaism considered that the old Covenant was periodically renewed, this was not usually called a "new covenant". Indeed, Jer. 31.31ff which expresses clearly the concept of the "new covenant" expressly states that it will not be like the old covenant. Although the principle of the new covenant is still the Torah, it is now to be put within them and written on their hearts. This is more than a reaffirmation of the old covenant and seems to be in distinction to such reaffirmations. The same seems to be true to a certain extent of the Qumran community. It is true that a very great emphasis is laid on the Torah. However, the Torah is seen as expounded by the Teacher of Righteousness, and the whole situation

⁶² *NTS*, 9, 3, p. 223.

⁶³ *op. cit.*, p. 14.

of the community is seen to be eschatological, awaiting the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel. While in a number of respects the covenant seems little more than a reaffirmation of the old, it is nonetheless the covenant made in the last days with the faithful remnant (*cf.* CD xx.27-34). Furthermore, not only was the Jerusalem *cultus* a matter of protest and of dwindling attention, but a person had to enter into the covenant when he became a member of the community (1QS i.16ff), and the various ablutions and the sacred meal of the community took on, in practice at least, greater significance than the *cultus* even despite its corruption.⁶⁴ W.D. Davies has noted, “Thus the Qumran community is conceived as the faithful remnant, the true Israel, the community of the New Covenant: it seems to have experienced a divine sprinkling with cleansing water, the outpouring of a new Spirit – a kind of baptism of water and the Spirit. The community looked forward to a new Jerusalem and a new temple, where acceptable sacrifices would be offered by an acceptable priesthood”.⁶⁵

This is a more balanced view than that of Gaster at this point. However, the community’s approach to sacrifices should be noted as above. The system of animal sacrifices as such does not seem to have had very great importance, although it was not eliminated from their thought or practice. This would point quite forcibly to a more notably spiritual and moral interpretation of the Covenant than traditional Judaism came to acknowledge before the fall of the Temple. Of course, some degree of spiritualisation was beginning to take place within the synagogues of the Dispersion, although as long as the Temple and its *cultus* persisted this still tended very much to be focussed on the Temple *cultus*. Indeed, this is not seen as distinct from the Temple *cultus* as the doctrine and practices of the Qumran sect seem to imply. It could hence not come to be regarded as being particularly a “new” covenant. The separation of the Qumran sect and their New Covenant seem distinctive.

Hebrews also lays great emphasis on the New Covenant. The longest quotation in the Epistle is from Jer. 31.31-34 (8.8-12), but the idea of the New Covenant figures strongly throughout the Epistle. Attention only needs to be directed to the sections setting out the relation of the old and the new, considered with reference to Philo (see above p. 7ff). In Hebrews, the New Covenant is seen to be more distinctly “new” than the same idea at Qumran. The new is a “better covenant”, enacted on “better promises”, and mediated by the one who has obtained a “more excellent ministry” (8.6). Indeed, the old is becoming obsolete, growing old, and in fact is almost disappearing (8.13). Whereas the sanctuary of the first covenant set out the barrier between the worshippers and God (9.1-10), Christ, the high priest of “the good things to come”, set out by his perfect self-offering to remove the barrier of sin and a guilty conscience and so became mediator of a new covenant by which the called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance (9.11-15). The idea of “inheritance” leads the writer to think of *διαθήκη* in its sense of “will, testament” (vv. 16-18), though the idea receives so little consideration that it is probably to be seen just as an illustration of the connection between *διαθήκη* and blood, while the thought returns to the basis of the old covenant (vv. 18ff). The basis of the New Covenant is the person, sacrifice and priestly ministry of Christ. This is one notable instance where the concept of the New Covenant here differs so distinctly from that of Qumran. Despite the Teacher and the special mediators of the latter days, together with a spiritual and moral interpretation of the Covenant, the “Christian” orientation of Hebrews makes the latter radically distinct. The presence within Palestine of a body of “Covenanters” may have brought this element of thought to mind, though it is one of the strands of Old Testament teaching which one would expect the early Christians to seize and use in their expositions of the Way.

(e) Summary

The Qumran writings are valuable in the study of Hebrews, not because of any direct dependence which may be proved, but because they indicate a broader background of thought from within which Hebrews may have arisen. If a pure Philonism is inadequate to explain the background of thought lying behind Hebrews, neither is a pure Qumranianism, though the latter shows that certain ideas which were formerly regarded as distinctively Greek or Judaeo-Hellenistic are to be found in a Palestinian dissenting group which sought to be notably Hebraic. The means by which these ideas came to be present in this group

⁶⁴ *Cf.* M. Black, *op. cit.*, p. 96ff.

⁶⁵ *Christian Origins and Judaism* (Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1962), p. 102.

it is not our present purpose to enquire. Certain features make their Qumranian form attractive to the present study.

As with Philo there is a seeking into the meaning underlying the Old Testament Scriptures – an enquiry which leads to a similar disregard of historical situation. With the Qumran literature, however, the application is not only moral, but specifically eschatological. Hebrews has a strong historical sense together with an eschatological and moral emphasis. It is this historical sense that leads to the conclusion that the exegesis of Hebrews is not basically allegorical or eschatological but typological. Yet having acknowledged this, it is still true that, while parallels exist to both the allegorical and the eschatological, it is only the latter which finds its place in the thought-structure of the writer.

The question of the use of *testimonia* in Hebrews and in the Qumran texts must remain an open one. Even if this use and its characteristics be determined in the case of the Qumranites, it is by no means established that this is the method of Hebrews. Indeed, the Qumran practice is of such importance in establishing the possibility of such a hypothesis that it can hardly for that reason be taken as a sure sign of interdependence.

The attitude to Temple, priesthood and sacrifices, is of greater importance as bearing on the very fabric of thought of the Epistle. It does not seem possible here to establish a direct relation, for Hebrews strikes at deeper principles. The *cultus* is not described as inherently wrong, nor is there allusion to its corruption – rather, the *cultus* is imperfect. The spiritual sacrifices of Christians stem from the one perfect sacrifice of Christ, a sacrifice which was not merely some epitome of the sacrificial principle but which actually took place within time and space. However imperfectly, the old sacrificial system pointed towards this sacrifice.

A similar principle seems to be involved with regard to the priesthood of Christ and the heavenly sanctuary, except that the priesthood of Christ does not seem directly related to the Levitical priesthood, and the heavenly sanctuary was foreshadowed by the tabernacle rather than by the Temple. The Qumran scrolls give insight into the complex of Palestinian thought at this point. The presence of such ideas is important, even though it is not clear that they were being accepted, rejected or modified by the author of Hebrews, as might be expected if this background were specifically in mind. There may, indeed, have been some connection between the concept of “tabernacle” and the wilderness community of Qumran, though the latter do not seem to have thought of themselves in these terms.

With the concept of “priesthood”, however, the situation is more complex. There is no evidence so far that the Qumran community thought of there being any other priesthood than that of Aaron. However, they looked forward to two Messiahs – priestly and royal – the priestly being the greater of the two. The writer of Hebrews knows that there is only one Messiah, Jesus, historically of the tribe of Judah. Quite easily, therefore, he is seen as royal Messiah, but the writer wants to emphasise his priesthood. This cannot be Aaronic in origin, and so the theme of Melchizedek is developed. The Qumran emphasis on the Messiah as priest, it should be noted, is a very significant contribution, if only as an element of first-century Palestinian thought.

Perhaps of even more significance, though for the same reason, is the existence within Palestine of an eschatological community with a new emphasis on the Torah, calling its members into a New Covenant with the Lord, engaging in their own peculiar lustrations and communal meal.

However, all of these facets fall short of proof of a direct dependence of Hebrews on a Qumran type of thought except for those who are satisfied by the slenderest evidence. Nevertheless, it is equally clear that these facets enter into the background of thought against which Hebrews has emerged. At this point the nature of the relationships is not clear. What is clear is that the problem of the background of Hebrews cannot be satisfied by any easy solution.