

on a fountain of righteousness
and on a storehouse of power,
on a spring of glory

(hidden) from the assembly of flesh.

God has given them to His chosen ones
as an everlasting possession,
and has caused them to inherit
the lot of the Holy Ones.

(1QS xi, 5-8)

The sentiments expressed in the Hymns, of love and gratitude and awareness of God's presence, represent a true religiousness and must have helped the sectary not to allow his life – governed as it was by laws and precepts – to slide into one of mere religious formalism.

Thou hast upheld me with certain truth;

Thou hast delighted me with Thy Holy Spirit

and [hast opened my heart] till this day . . .

The abundance of (Thy) forgiveness is with my steps

and infinite mercy accompanies Thy judgement of me.

Until I am old Thou wilt care for me;

for my father knew me not

and my mother abandoned me to Thee.

For Thou art a father

to all [the sons] of Thy truth,

and as a woman who tenderly loves her babe,

so dost Thou rejoice in them;

and as a foster-father bearing a child in his lap,

so carest Thou for all Thy creatures.

(1QH xvii [formerly ix], 32-6)

Whether the average Essene actually succeeded in fulfilling his high ideals, we cannot of course know: experience past and present has shown that paths to sanctity devised by organized religion are beset with snares. As has been noted earlier (pp. 31-2 on 4Q477), in some individual cases, moral shortcomings were actually recorded. But there can be no doubt of the sectaries' intention. The aim of a holy life lived within the Covenant was to penetrate the secrets of heaven in this world and to stand before God for ever in the next. Like Isaiah, who beheld the seraphim proclaiming 'Holy, holy, holy', and like Ezekiel, who in a trance watched the winged cherubim drawing the divine throne-chariot, and like the ancient

Jewish mystics who consecrated themselves, despite official disapproval by the rabbis, to the contemplation of the same throne-chariot and the heavenly Palaces, the Essenes, too, strove for a similar mystical knowledge, as one of their number testifies in a description of his own vision of the ministers of the 'Glorious Face'.

The [cherubim] prostrate themselves before Him and bless. As they rise, a whispered divine voice [is heard], and there is a roar of praise. When they drop their wings, there is a [whispered] divine voice. The cherubim bless the image of the throne-chariot above the firmament, [and] they praise [the majesty of the luminous firmament] beneath His seat of glory. When the wheels advance, angels of holiness come and go. From between His glorious wheels there is as it were a fiery vision of most holy spirits. About them, the appearance of rivulets of fire in the likeness of gleaming brass, and a work of . . . radiance in many-coloured glory, marvellous pigments, clearly mingled. The spirits of the living 'gods' move perpetually with the glory of the marvellous chariot(s). The whispered voice of blessing accompanies the roar of their advance, and they praise the Holy One on their way of return. When they ascend, they ascend marvellously, and when they settle, they stand still. The sound of joyful praise is silenced and there is a whispered blessing of the 'gods' in all the camps of God.

(4Q405 20, ii-22)

3 WORSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY OF THE COVENANT

In addition to the worship of God offered through a life of holiness, the Qumran sectary had more particularly to perform the ritual acts prescribed by Moses in the correct manner and at the right times. The earthly liturgy was intended to be a replica of that sung by the choirs of angels in the celestial Temple.

To judge from the many references to it, the time element both calendaric and horary was crucial. The Community Rule lays down that the Community was not to 'depart from any command of God concerning their appointed times; they shall be neither early nor late for any of their appointed times, they shall stray neither to the right nor to the left of any of His true precepts' (1QS i, 13-15). This injunction asks for exact punctuality in regard to the two daily moments of prayer meant to coincide with and replace the perpetual burnt-offering sacrificed in the Temple at

sunrise and sunset (Exod. xxix, 30; Num. xxviii, 4), but it demands in addition a strict observance of the sect's own liturgical calendar.

He shall bless Him [with the offering] of the lips at the times ordained by Him: at the beginning of the dominion of light, and at its end when it retires to its appointed place; at the beginning of the watches of darkness when He unlocks their storehouse and spreads them out, and also at their end when they retire before the light; when the heavenly lights shine out from the dwelling-place of Holiness, and also when they retire to the place of Glory; at the entry of the (monthly) seasons on the days of the new moon, and also at their end when they succeed to one another . . .

(1QS IX, 26-X, 4)

To understand the peculiarity of Essenism in this respect, a few words need to be said about the calendar followed by non-sectarian Judaism. Essentially, this was regulated by the movements of the moon; months varied in duration from between twenty-nine and thirty days and the year consisted of twelve months of 354 days. Needless to say, such a lunar year does not correspond to the four seasons determined by the movements of the sun in terms of solstices and equinoxes. The shortfall of about ten days between the lunar and the solar years was therefore compensated for by means of 'intercalation', i.e. by inserting after Adar (February/March), the twelfth month of the year, a supplementary 'Second Adar' at the end of every thirty-six lunar months.

The Qumran sect rejected this seemingly artificial system and adopted instead a chronological reckoning, probably of priestly origin, based on the sun, a practice attested also in the Book of Jubilees and 1 Enoch, and fully laid out in the remains of a series of calendrical documents (4Q320-30). The outstanding feature of this solar calendar was its absolute regularity in that, instead of 354 days, not divisible by seven, it consisted of 364 days, i.e. fifty-two weeks precisely. Each of its four seasons was thirteen weeks long divided into three months of thirty days each, plus an additional 'remembrance' day (1QS x, 5) linking one season to another ($13 \times 7 = 91 = 3 \times 30 + 1$). In tune in this way with the 'laws of the Great Light of heaven' (1QH xii, 5) and not with the 'festivals of the nations' (4QP^{Hos}=4Q171 II, 16), Qumran saw its calendar as corresponding to 'the certain law from the mouth of God' (1QH xx [formerly xii], 9). Its unbroken rhythm meant furthermore that the first day of the year and of each subsequent season always fell on the same day of the week. For the Essenes this was Wednesday, since according to Genesis i, 14-19, it was on the fourth day that the sun and the moon were created. Needless to

add, the same monotonous sequence also implied that all the feasts of the year always fell on the same day of the week: Passover, the fifteenth day of the first month, was always celebrated on a Wednesday; the Feast of Weeks, the fifteenth day of the third month, always on a Sunday; the Day of Atonement, the tenth day of the seventh month, on a Friday; the Feast of Tabernacles, the fifteenth day of the seventh month, on a Wednesday, etc. This solar calendar with its eternal regularity cannot of course stand up to the astronomical calculation of 365 days 5 hours 48 minutes and 48 seconds to the year, but the Scrolls so far published give no indication of how the Essenes proposed to cope with this inconvenience, or whether indeed they were even aware of it.

One practical consequence of the sect's adherence to a calendar at variance with that of the rest of Judaism was that its feast-days were working days for other Jews and vice versa. The Wicked Priest was thus able to travel (journeys of any distance being forbidden on holy days of rest) to the 'place of exile' of the Teacher of Righteousness while he and his followers were celebrating the Day of Atonement (cf. above, p. 55). In fact, it is likely that the persecutors of the sect deliberately chose that date to oblige the sectaries to attend to them on what they considered to be their 'Day of Fasting' and 'Sabbath of repose', and thus 'confuse them and cause them to stumble'. The same sort of story is told in the Mishnah of the Patriarch Gamaliel II, who endeavoured to humiliate Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah by sending him the following instruction: 'I charge you that you come to me with your staff and your money on the Day of Atonement according to your reckoning' (Rosh ha-Shanah II, 9).

Another peculiarity of the liturgical calendar of the Community, attested in the Temple Scroll, was the division of the year into seven fifty-day periods - hence the name pentecostal calendar - each marked by an agricultural festival, e.g. the Feast of New Wine, the Feast of Oil, etc. A similar system is mentioned by Philo in connection with the Therapeutae in his book, *On the Contemplative Life*. One of these festivals, the Feast of the New Wheat, coincided with the Feast of Weeks and was for the Essenes/Therapeutae also the principal holy day of the year, that of the Renewal of the Covenant, the importance of which is discussed above (p. 44). From the Book of Jubilees, where, as has been said, the same calendar is followed, it is clear that Pentecost (the Feast of Weeks), together with the Feast of the Renewal of the Covenant, were celebrated on the fifteenth day of the third month (Jub. VI, 17-19; cf. also 4Q266 fr. 11 ii; 270 fr. 7 ii). An outline of the ceremony performed on this holy

day, with its confession of sin and its blessings and curses, is preserved in the Community Rule (1QS I, 16-11, 25; cf. also 4Q280, 286-7). The sectaries assemble for the service in strict hierarchical order: the priests first, ranked in order of status, after them the Levites, and lastly 'all the people one after another in their Thousands, Hundreds, Fifties and Tens, that every Israelite may know his place in the Community of God according to the everlasting design' (1QS II, 22-3). Blessing God, the priests then recite his acts of loving-kindness to Israel and the Levites recall Israel's rebellions against him. This recognition of guilt is followed by an act of public repentance appropriate to a community of converts.

We have strayed! We have [disobeyed!] We and our fathers before us have sinned and acted wickedly in walking [counter to the precepts] of truth and righteousness. [And God has] judged us and our fathers also; but He has bestowed His bountiful mercy on us from everlasting to everlasting.

(1QS I, 24-11, 1)

After the confession, the priests solemnly bless the converts of Israel, calling down on them in particular the gifts of wisdom and knowledge:

May He bless you with all good and preserve you from all evil! May He lighten your heart with life-giving wisdom and grant you eternal knowledge! May He raise His merciful face towards you for everlasting bliss!

(1QS II, 2-4)

This paraphrase of the blessing of Israel which God commanded Moses to transmit to Aaron and his sons in Numbers vi, 24-6, and which recalls the fourth of the daily Eighteen Benedictions of traditional Judaism, is accompanied by a Levitical curse of the party of Belial and a special malediction directed by both priests and Levites at any sectary whose conversion may be insincere:

Cursed be the man who enters this Covenant while walking among the idols of his heart, who sets up before himself his stumbling-block of sin so that he may backslide! Hearing the words of this Covenant, he blesses himself in his heart and says, 'Peace be with me, even though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart'.

(1QS II, 11-12)

The Cave 4 sources of the Damascus Document depict also the ritual of dismissal from the Community. The Priest overseeing the Congregation, addressing God, declares:

Thou hast cursed those who transgress (the boundary) but we maintain it.

Thereupon 'the dismissed man shall leave and whoever eats from what is his or greets the man who has been dismissed, and agrees with him, ... his judgement shall be complete' (4Q266 fr. 11 ii; 270 fr. 7 ii).

Each benediction and curse is approved by the whole congregation with a twice repeated 'Amen'.

The ceremony of the Renewal of the Covenant seems to be the only rite described in any detail in the Community Rule and the Damascus Document, but as the Essenes laid so much emphasis on the full and punctilious observance of the Law of Moses it may be taken for granted that they did not omit the many other basic acts of Jewish religion and worship. The fact that the Community Rule is satisfied simply to state without any specification that a single deliberate transgression of the Mosaic Law would entail irrevocable expulsion from the sect implies that the elite sectaries subject to this rule did not need detailed guidance: they were supposed to be fully versed in the Torah. Legislation addressed to less well-trained members, contained in the Damascus Document and in the Temple Scroll, is more discursive. Circumcision, for example, which was certainly practised, is mentioned in connection with female uncleanness after childbirth when Leviticus xii, 3 is cited in passing (4Q266 fr. 6 ii). It is also referred to figuratively in the context of severing the 'fore-skin of the evil inclination' (1QS v, 5), or possibly and by implication as the 'Covenant of Abraham' mentioned in connection with (Gentile) man-servants (CD XII, 11; XVI, 6). The laws of purity were also assuredly essential to the sect, and some practical guidance is given in 11QTS XLVI-11, 4Q274-84, and MMT. The dietary laws are dealt with in the Damascus Document, MMT and the Temple Scroll. For instance, the eating of 'live creatures' (e.g. larvae of bees, fish and locusts) is declared to be prohibited in CD XII, 11-15. MMT states that a live animal foetus must be slaughtered before becoming fit for consumption (4Q396 frs. 1-21). Further laws appear in the Temple Scroll XLVII-XLVIII. Josephus also remarks that an Essene was forbidden to eat food prepared by people not belonging to the brotherhood (*Mār* II, 143).

On three other topics, the Qumran sources are less taciturn: ritual ablations, Temple worship and the sacred meal. Discussed already as part of the life of the sect, it remains now to consider the doctrinal significance of these rites.

Josephus, as will be recalled, observes that the Essenes took a ritual

bath twice daily before meals (cf. *Mār II*, 129, 132). 4Q114 – entitled ‘Baptismal liturgy’ – deals definitely with such a bathing ritual but the text is so mutilated that no readable translation is possible. As regards the bath itself, the Damascus Document adds that the minimum quantity of clean water required for a valid act of purification was to be the amount necessary to cover a man (CD x, 12–13). This is not of course an Essene invention, but typically, where the Mishnah prescribes a minimum of forty *seahs* (about 120 gallons), the sect’s teaching concentrates on the practical purpose of the Mishnaic rule, namely that ‘in them men may immerse themselves’ (Mikwaot vii, 1), and eliminates the obligation of having carefully to measure out what that quantity should be. Of greater interest, however, is the theological aspect, with its insistence on a correlation between the inner condition of a man and the outer rite. The wicked, according to the Community Rule, ‘shall not enter the water... for they shall not be cleansed unless they turn from their wickedness’ (1QS v, 13–14). True purification comes from the ‘spirit of holiness’ and true cleansing from the ‘humble submission’ of the soul to all God’s precepts.

For it is through the spirit of true counsel concerning the ways of man that all his sins shall be expiated... He shall be cleansed from all his sins by the spirit of holiness... and his iniquity shall be expiated by the spirit of uprightness and humility. And when his flesh is sprinkled with purifying water and sanctified by cleansing water, it shall be made clean by the humble submission of his soul to all the precepts of God. (1QS iii, 6–9)

The second issue has to do with the sect’s attitude towards the Temple and Temple sacrifice. While some Essenes, notwithstanding their vow of total fidelity to the Law of Moses, rejected the validity of the Sanctuary and refused to participate (temporarily) in its rites (cf. Philo, *Omnis probus* 75; Josephus, *Antiquities* xviii, 19), they evaded the theological dilemma in which this stand might have placed them by contending that until the rededication of the Temple, the only true worship of God was to be offered in their establishment. The Council of the Community was to be the ‘Most Holy Dwelling for Aaron’ where, ‘without the flesh of holocausts and the fat of sacrifice’, a ‘sweet fragrance’ was to be sent up to God, and where prayer was to serve ‘as an acceptable fragrance of righteousness’ (1QS viii, 8–9; ix, 4–5). The Community itself was to be the sacrifice offered to God in atonement for Israel’s sins (1QS viii, 4–5; 4Q265 fr. 7 ii).

Besides this evidence in the Community Rule, the equation of Council of the Community with the Temple also appears in the Habakkuk Commentary (xii, 3–4) in a most interesting interpretation of the word ‘Lebanon’. Traditionally, ‘Lebanon’ is understood by ancient Jewish interpreters to symbolize ‘the Temple’. For example, Deuteronomy iii, 25, ‘Let me go over... and see... that goodly mountain and Lebanon’, is rendered in Targum Onkelos as, ‘Let me go over... and see... that goodly mountain and the Temple’. The Qumran commentator, explaining the Habakkuk text, ‘For the violence done to Lebanon shall overwhelm you’ (Hab. ii, 17), proceeds from the belief that the Council of the Community is the one valid Temple. He then sets out to prove it by directly associating Lebanon with the Council in the conviction that the traditional exegesis will be familiar to all his readers: Lebanon = Temple. Temple = Council of the Community, *ergo* Lebanon = Council of the Community.¹

The symbolical approach of the sect to sacrificial worship may account for Essene celibacy (where it was practised). Sexual abstinence was imposed on those participating in the Temple services, both priests and laymen; no person who had sexual intercourse (or an involuntary emission, or even any physical contact with a menstruating woman) could lawfully take part. More importantly still, bearing in mind the central place occupied by prophecy in Essene doctrine, clear indications exist in inter-Testamental and rabbinic literature that a similar renunciation was associated with the prophetic state. Thus Moses, in order always to be ready to hear the voice of God, is said by Philo to have cleansed himself of ‘all calls of mortal nature, food, drink, and intercourse with women’ (*Life of Moses* ii, 68–9). Consequently, despite the attempt made by Philo and by Josephus to attribute the sect’s celibacy to misogyny, a more reasonable explanation would be that it was thought that lives intended to be wholly consecrated to worship and wholly preoccupied with meditation on prophecy should be kept wholly, and not just intermittently, pure.

The common table of the Essenes, the third special cultic subject to be examined, has already been discussed in Chapter II (p. 32), but one remaining point needs to be mentioned, namely that since the rules relating to the daily meal and the messianic meal are the same, it is not unreasonable to infer from the New Testament parallel that the former

1. Another metaphorical use of Lebanon (= the foreign nations) is implied in the quotation of Isa. x, 34 in the Rule of War (4Q285 fr. 5).

was thought to prefigure the latter. As is well known, the evangelist Matthew portrays the Last Supper as the prototype of the great eschatological feast, quoting Jesus as saying:

I tell you, I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom. (Matth. xxvi, 29)

4 FUTURE EXPECTATIONS IN THE COMMUNITY OF THE COVENANT

The Essene sect was born into a world of eschatological ferment, of intense expectation of the end foretold by the Prophets. Using biblical models as vehicles for their own convictions, the Teacher of Righteousness and the Community's sages projected an image of the future which is elaborate and colourful, but which cannot always be fully comprehended by us, partly because some of the associations escape us, and partly because of gaps in the extant texts. They foresaw in their Community's story the fulfilment of the prophetic expectations concerning the salvation of the righteous. It was from their ranks, swollen by the re-conversion of some of the 'Simple of Ephraim' (4QP^aNah=4Q^aR16g III, 4-5) who had caused such distress by their previous apostasy, and by other Jewish recruits (1QSa I, 1-5; cf. also 4Q471^a), that the sons of Light would go to battle against the sons of Darkness. The Community or the 'exiles of the desert' would move to Jerusalem after a preliminary attack on the 'army of Belial', symbolized by the 'ungodly of the Covenant' and their foreign allies from the environs of Judaea, and an assault on the Kittim occupying the Holy Land. These events were expected to cover a period of six years. The seventh, the first sabbatical year of the War, would see the restoration of Temple worship.

Of the remaining thirty-three years of its duration, four would be sabbatical years, so the War would be waged during twenty-nine: against the 'sons of Shem' for nine years, against the 'sons of Ham' for ten years, and against the 'sons of Japheth' for another ten years (1QM I-11). The final conflict would end with the total defeat of the 'King of the Kittim' and of Satan's hosts, and with the joyful celebrations of the Hero, i.e. God, by the victorious sons of Light.

[Rise up, O Hero!

Lead off Thy captives, O Glorious One!

Gather up] Thy spoils, O Author of mighty deeds!

Lay Thy hand on the neck of Thine enemies
and Thy feet [on the pile of the slain!]

Smite the nations, Thine adversaries],
and devour the flesh of the sinner with Thy sword!

Fill Thy land with glory

and Thine inheritance with blessing!

[Let there be a multitude of cattle in Thy fields,
and in] Thy palaces

[silver and gold and precious stones]!

O Zion, rejoice greatly!

Rejoice all you cities of Judah!

[Keep your gates ever open
that the] host of the nations

[may be brought in]!

Their kings shall serve you

and all your oppressors shall bow down before you;

[they shall lick the dust of your feet.

Shout for joy, O daughters of] my people!

Deck yourselves with glorious jewels

[and rule over the kingdom of the nations!]

Sovereignty shall be to the Lord]

and everlasting dominion to Israel.

(1QM XIX, 2-8)

Such was to be the course of the War in its earthly dimensions. But it would possess in addition a cosmic quality. The hosts of the sons of Light, commanded by the 'Prince of the Congregation', were to be supported by the angelic armies led by the 'Prince of Light', also known in the Scrolls as the archangel Michael or Melchizedek. Similarly, the 'ungodly of the Covenant' and their Gentile associates were to be aided by the demonic forces of Satan, or Belial, or Melkiresha'. These two opposing camps were to be evenly matched, and God's intervention alone would bring about the destruction of evil (1QM XVIII, 1-3). Elsewhere the grand finale is represented as a judgement scene in which the heavenly prince Melchizedek recompenses 'the Holy Ones of God' and executes 'the vengeance of the judgements of God' over Belial and his lot (11QMelch II, 9, 13). Yet, if my interpretation of another non-messianic composition (4Q246) is correct, the symbolical opponent, usurping in this writing the title 'son of God' and 'son of the Most High',

is said to be overcome by 'the people of God' ready to establish with the help of the Great God an eternal kingdom.

The role of the priests and Levites in this imaginary ultimate grappling of good with evil, as described in the War Scroll, emerges as that of non-combatants, performing various battle rituals and directing the various war activities (advance, retreat, ambush, etc.). However, it is more difficult to determine the function of the commander-in-chief, the so-called 'Prince of the Congregation'. We learn that on his shield will be inscribed his name, the names of Israel, Levi and Aaron, and those of the twelve tribes and their chiefs (1QM v, 1-2); but little room appears to be left in the War Rule for him to act as the Royal Messiah. God himself is the supreme agent of salvation and after him in importance is Michael.

In some other Scrolls, by contrast, the theme of Messianism is more prominent. Complex and *svi generis*, it envisages sometimes one messianic figure, royal, Davidic, triumphant (4Q285, 4Q161, and the Damascus Document speaking of the Messiah – in the singular, cf. 4Q266 fr. 11 i, 12 – of Aaron and Israel), again and again two, and once possibly even three Messiahs. The lay King-Messiah, otherwise known as the 'Branch of David', the 'Messiah of Israel', the 'Prince of [all] the Congregation' and the 'Sceptre', was to usher in, according to the sect's book of Blessings, 'the Kingdom of his people' and 'bring death to the ungodly' and defeat '[the kings of the] nations' (1QSB v, 21, 25, 28). The recently and groundlessly advanced theory that 'the Prince of the Congregation, Branch of David' of 4Q285 is a suffering and executed Messiah is contradicted both by the immediate context and the broader exegetical framework of Isaiah x, 34-xi, 1 on which 4Q285 depends (cf. 4Q161, ffs. 8-10; 1QSB v, 20-29). As befits a priestly sect, however, the Priest-Messiah comes first in the order of precedence; he is also called the 'Messiah of Aaron', the 'Priest', the 'Interpreter of the Law' (cf. 1QSa II, 20). The King-Messiah was to defer to him and to the priestly authority in general in all legal matters: 'As they teach him, so shall he judge' (4QpIsa=4Q161 ffs. 8-11, 1.23). The 'Messiah of Aaron' was to be the final Teacher, 'he who shall teach righteousness at the end of days' (CD VI, 11). But he was also to preside over the battle liturgy (1QM xv, 4; xvii, 13; xviii, 5) and the eschatological banquet (1QSa II, 12-21).

The third figure, 'the Prophet', is mentioned directly through briefly only once: we are told that his arrival was expected together with that of the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel (1QS IX, 11). The whole messianic

phrase is absent, however, from all the extant 4Q manuscripts of the Community Rule. Viewed in the context of inter-Testamental Jewish ideas, the Prophet was to be either an Elijah returned as a precursor of the Messiah (Mal. iv, 5; 1 Enoch xc, 31, 37; Math. xi, 13; xvii, 12), or as a divine guide sent to Israel in the final days (1 Mac. iv, 46; xiv, 41; Jn. i, 21), no doubt identical with 'the Prophet' promised by God to Moses ('I will raise up for them a prophet like you ... He shall convey all my commands to them', Deut. xviii, 15-18; cf. Acts iii, 22-3; vii, 37). An identification of 'the Prophet' with a 'new Moses' is supported by the inclusion of the Deuteronomy passage in the Messianic Anthology or Testimonia from Cave 4 (4Q175) as the first of three messianic proofs, the second being Balaam's prophecy concerning the Star to rise out of Jacob (Num. xxiv, 15-17), and the third, the blessing of Levi by Moses (Deut. xxxiii, 11), prefiguring respectively the royal Messiah and the Priest-Messiah.

If it is proper to deduce from these not too explicit data that, if ever expected by the Qumran sect, the messianic Prophet (or prophetic Messiah) was to teach the truth revealed on the eve of the establishment of the Kingdom, it would follow that his part was to all intents and purposes the same as that attributed by the Qumran Essenes to the Teacher of Righteousness. If this is correct, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that at some point of the sect's history the coming of the Prophet was no longer expected; he was believed to have already appeared in the person of the Teacher of Righteousness.

The evidence available does not permit categorical statements on the sectaries' views about what was to follow the days of the Messiahs. Some kind of metamorphosis was awaited by them, as is clear from the Community Rule – 'until the determined end, and until the Renewal' (1QSRV, 25). But one cannot be sure that it was understood as synonymous with the new creation of the Apocalypses of Ezra (vii, 75) and Baruch (xxxii, 6). Similarly, the 'new Jerusalem' described in various manuscripts (cf. 1Q32; 2Q24; 4Q554-555; 5Q15; 11Q18) does not match by definition the Holy City descending from above of 1 Enoch (xc, 28-9) or Revelation xxi, but could be an earthly city rebuilt according to the plans of angelic architects.

As for the afterlife proper, and the place it occupied in Essene thought, for many centuries in the biblical age Jews paid little attention to this question. They believed with most peoples in antiquity that after death the just and wicked alike would share a miserable, shadowy existence in

Sheol, the underworld, where even God is forgotten: 'Turn, O Lord, save my life,' cries the psalmist, 'for in death there is no remembrance of thee; in Sheol who can give thee praise?' (Ps. vi, 5; cf. Isa. xxxviii, 18; Ps. lxxxviii, 10-12, etc.) The general hope was for a long and prosperous life, many children, a peaceful death in the midst of one's family, and burial in the tomb of one's fathers. Needless to say, with this simple outlook went a most sensitive appreciation of the present time as being the only moment in which man can be with God.

Eventually, the innate fear of death, and the dissatisfaction of later biblical thinkers with a divine justice that allowed the wicked to flourish on earth and the just to suffer, led to attempts in the post-exilic era to solve this fundamental dilemma. The idea of resurrection, or rather of the re-union of body and soul after death, first appears as a metaphor in Ezekiel's vision of the re-birth of the Jewish nation after the Babylonian captivity as the re-animation of dry bones (Ezek. xxxvii; cf. also 4Q385 fts. 2-3). Later, after the historical experience of martyrdom under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, resurrection was expected to be the true reward of individuals who freely gave their lives for God - i.e. for their religion (Dan. xii, 2; 2 Mac. vii, 9; xii, xiv, 46, etc.). At the same time, the notion of immortality also emerged, the idea that the righteous are to be vindicated and live for ever in God's presence. This view is developed fully in the Greek apocryphal Book of Wisdom (iii, 1-v, 16).

Josephus tells us that the Essenes subscribed to this second school of thought. According to him, they adopted a distinctly Hellenistic concept of immortality, holding the flesh to be a prison out of which the indestructible soul of the just escapes into limitless bliss 'in an abode beyond the ocean' after its final deliverance (*War* II, 154-8). Resurrection, implying a return of the spirit to a material body, can thus play no part in this scheme.

Until recently, the Scrolls themselves have not been particularly helpful. The Hymns include equivocal statements such as, 'Hoist a banner, O you who lie in the dust! O bodies gnawed by worms, raise up an ensign . . .!' (1QH xiv [formerly vi], 34-5; cf. xix [formerly x], 10-14), which may connote bodily resurrection. On the other hand, the poet's language may just be allegorical. Immortality, as distinct from resurrection, is better attested. The substance of Josephus' account is confirmed, though not surprisingly without any typically Hellenistic colouring (no doubt introduced by him to please his Greek readers). The Community Rule, discussing the reward of the righteous and the

wicked, assures the just of 'eternal joy in life without end, a crown of glory and a garment of majesty in unending light' (1QS iv, 7-8), and sinners of 'eternal torment and endless disgrace together with shameful extinction in the fire of the dark regions' (1QS iv, 12-13). It is interesting to observe that immortality was not conceived of as an entirely new state, but rather as a direct continuation of the position attained on entry into the Community. From that moment, the sectary was raised to an 'everlasting height' and joined to the 'everlasting Council', the 'congregation of the Sons of Heaven' (1QH xi [formerly iii], 20-22).

Shortly after the 'liberation' of the Scrolls in 1991 a previously unknown poetic text, usually designated as the 'Resurrection fragment' (4Q521), surfaced which, echoing Isaiah lxi, 1, describes God in the age of the Messiah as healing the wounded and *reviving the dead*. If this poem is an Essene composition and not a psalm dating to the late biblical period, it can be said that one out of many hundreds of Qumran manuscripts definitely testifies to the sect's belief in bodily resurrection.

In sum, the portrait of the sectary as it is reflected in his religious ideas and ideals bears the marks of a fastidious and deeply committed observance of the Mosaic Law, an overwhelming assurance of the correctness of his beliefs, and certainty of his own eventual salvation. But whereas these characteristics may strike readers today as far too self-confident, one would do well not to overlook other traits conspicuous in particular, in the Essenes' prayers and hymns, which testify to an absolute dependence on the Almighty and a total devotion to what was believed to be God's cause.

For without Thee no way is perfect,

and without Thy will nothing is done.

It is Thou who hast taught all knowledge
and all things come to pass by Thy will.

There is none beside Thee to dispute Thy counsel

or to understand all Thy holy design,

or to contemplate the depth of Thy mysteries
and the power of Thy might.

Who can endure Thy glory,

and what is the son of man

in the midst of Thy wonderful deeds?

What shall one born of woman

be accounted before Thee?

Kneaded from the dust,

his abode is the nourishment of worms.

He is but a shape, but moulded clay,
and inclines towards dust.

(1QS XI, 17-22)

List of Abbreviations

- BAR *Biblical Archaeology Review*
 BASOR *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
 CBQ *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
 CD Cairo Damascus Document
 DJD *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, Oxford, 1955-
 DSS Dead Sea Scrolls
 DSSU R. Eisenman and M. Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered*,
 London and New York, 1992
 Fr. Fragment
 H *Hodayoth*=Hymns
 HJP E. Schürer, G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Goodman,
The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ, Vols.
 I-III, Edinburgh, 1973-87
 IEJ *Israel Exploration Journal*
 JBL *Journal of Biblical Literature*
 JJS *Journal of Jewish Studies*
 JNES *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
 JQR *Jewish Quarterly Review*
 JSJ *Journal for the Study of Judaism*
 JSS *Journal of Semitic Studies*
 M *Mihmab*=War Rule
 MMT *Miqat Ma'ase ha-Torah*=Some Observances of the Law
 MQC J. Trebolle Barrera and L. Vegas Montaner, eds., *The Madrid
 Qumran Congress 1991*, Vols. I-II, Leiden, 1992
 NTS *New Testament Studies*
 P *pesher*=sectarian Bible commentary
 Ps^a Psalms Scroll a=11QP^{s^a}
 Q Qumran cave (1Q, 2Q, etc.=Qumran cave 1, 2, etc.)
 RB *Revue biblique*