

# *The Teacher of Righteousness in the Qumran Texts*

By

**F. F. BRUCE, M. A.**

*Professor of Biblical History and Literature  
in the University of Sheffield*

*First Published - February 1957*

LONDON

THE TYNDALE PRESS

## **THE TYNDALE LECTURE IN BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY, 1956**

*This lecture was delivered in Cambridge on July 6th, 1956, at a meeting arranged by the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research.*

### **FOREWORD**

The invitation from the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research to deliver this year's Tyndale Lecture in Biblical Archaeology, in addition to the two Tyndale Lectures which I have delivered in years gone by, in the New and Old Testament fields respectively, was a high honour.

I should like to make it clear that, at the present stage of our knowledge, no pronouncement about the Qumran texts can claim anything like finality, and the following pages are simply offered as a contribution to the discussion which is going on at present, and which is likely to go on for many years. Not to mention the texts which are still unpublished, those which we already know call for further study; for one thing, the relation between the Teacher of Righteousness and the *Hymns of Thanksgiving* must be more fully investigated.

The footnotes include references to some books and articles which have appeared since the lecture was given.

*October, 1956.*

F. F. B.

### **CONTENTS**

- I. THE TEACHER AND THE TEXTS [p. 7]
  - 1. The Zadokite Work [p. 8]
  - 2. The Qumran Commentaries [p. 9]
  - 3. An Eschatological Figure [p. 11]
  - 4. The Hymns of Thanksgiving [p. 15]

## II. THE TEACHER AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES [p. 16]

1. Dating the Teacher [p. 16]
2. The Wicked Priest [p. 18]
3. Was the Wicked Priest Alexander Jannaeus? [p. 21]
4. The Man of Falsehood and the House of Absalom [p. 25]
5. Identifying the Teacher [p. 27]

## III. THE TEACHER AND CHRISTIANITY [p. 28]

1. The Teacher and Jesus [p. 28]
2. Was the Teacher martyred? [p. 31]
3. The Teacher and Messiahship [p. 34]

[p. 7]

# THE TEACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE QUMRAN TEXTS

## I. THE TEACHER AND THE TEXTS

'The Teacher of Righteousness' is the name given in a number of the lately discovered Qumran documents to a man who was held in high veneration by the religious community on whose beliefs and practices these documents have thrown so much light. If he was not actually the founder of the community, it was certainly he who impressed upon it those features which distinguished it from other pious groups which flourished among the Jews during the last two or three centuries of the Second Commonwealth. So far as we can gather from our present sources of information, he is never referred to by his personal name in the Qumran texts.<sup>1</sup> The title bestowed on him by his followers, 'The Teacher of Righteousness' (Heb. *moreh šedeq* or *moreh haššedeq*), may echo Hosea x. 12, where the prophet calls to his people: 'break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness (Heb. *yoreh šedeq*) upon you.' The RV margin gives 'teach you righteousness' as an alternative translation to 'rain righteousness upon you'; in any case, *moreh šedeq* is the participial form corresponding to the imperfect *yoreh šedeq* which Hosea uses. Numerous attempts have been made to identify the Teacher of Righteousness with some figure or other mentioned elsewhere in Jewish literature;<sup>2</sup> and as the career of the Teacher, in so far as it can be pieced together from the Qumran texts, is linked very closely with the careers of

<sup>1</sup> H. J. Schoeps suggests that his name was Zadok: that it was after his name that his followers styled themselves 'sons of Zadok' (*Urgemeinde, Juden-christentum, Gnosis* [Tubingen, 1956], p. 74).

<sup>2</sup> Mention must be made of the view that the Teacher of Righteousness was not the title of one individual but of a succession of religious leaders; cf. I. Rabinowitz, 'A Reconsideration of "Damascus" and "390 Years" in the "Damascus" ("Zadokite") Fragments', *JBL*, 73 (1954), pp. 11 ff.; T. H. Caster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures* (New York, 1956), pp. vi *et passim*; C. T. Fritsch, *The Qumran Community* (New York, 1956), pp. 83f. But even if it was a title borne by several leaders in succession, the traits of the Teacher of Righteousness in the documents under consideration are so individual that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that one particular person is intended throughout.

[p. 8]

one or two contemporaries who are mentioned in equally allusive terms, it might be more accurate to entitle the present study *The Teacher of Righteousness—and others*.

## I. THE ZADOKITE WORK

The Teacher of Righteousness had been known in some degree to students of post-biblical Hebrew literature for many years before the first discovery of manuscripts at Qumran. He figures quite prominently in the Zadokite work which came to light in two imperfect manuscripts in the famous Cairo *genizah* towards the end of last century. This work has most recently been edited by Dr. Chaim Rabin,<sup>1</sup> who distinguishes two treatises in it, one of which he calls the *Admonition* and the other the *Laws*. Not long after the first manuscripts were discovered at Qumran, it was recognized that a close affinity existed between some of them and the Zadokite work; and subsequently fragments of the Zadokite work were actually found at Qumran. It is now quite clear that the two parts of the Zadokite work originated in the same milieu as the community documents of Qumran.

At the beginning of the Zadokite *Admonition* we are told how God, in a time of apostasy,

remembered the covenant of the forefathers and caused a remnant to remain for Israel and did not give them up to be consumed. And in the epoch of wrath, three hundred and ninety years after He had given them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, He visited them: and He caused to sprout from Israel and from Aaron a root of [His] planting to possess His land and to grow fat in the goodness of His soil. And they considered their iniquity and knew that they were guilty men; but they were like blind men and like men that grope for a way for twenty years. And God took note of their deeds, for they sought Him with a perfect heart; and He raised up for them a teacher of righteousness to lead them in the way of His heart, that He might make known to the last generations what He was about to do to the last generation—the congregation of deceivers.<sup>2</sup>

Later references in both parts of the Zadokite work make it plain that the authors believed that salvation was to be found in following the directions of the Teacher of Righteousness.

<sup>1</sup> *The Zadokite Documents* (Oxford, 1954). The *editio princeps* was produced by S. Schechter, *Fragments of a Zadokite Work* (Cambridge, 1910); a translation was included by R. H. Charles in his *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the O. T.* (Oxford, 1913), Vol. ii, pp. 785 ff.

2 P. 1, 11. 4-12.

[p. 9]

## 2. THE QUMRAN COMMENTARIES

This tallies with much that is said about the Teacher of Righteousness in the commentaries (*pesharim*)<sup>1</sup> on Habakkuk and Micah found in the first Qumran cave.

In the Habakkuk *peshet* the prophet's warnings of judgment are directed against those who refuse to believe the things which

the Teacher of Righteousness [told them] from the mouth of God.<sup>2</sup>

And when the commentator goes on to denounce the covenant-breakers

who will not believe when they hear all that is c[oming upon] the last generation, from the mouth of the priest into [whose heart] God has put [wisdo]m to interpret all the words of His servants the prophets, [through] whom God told all that was to come upon His people and up[on His land],<sup>3</sup>

it is most natural to infer that 'the priest' in question is identical with the Teacher of Righteousness.<sup>4</sup>

In Hab. ii. 1f. the prophet describes how, in his concern to understand the divine purpose, he determined to wait for the fresh light that might come from the further unfolding of that purpose in the course of events, and received the assurance that the final vindication of God's righteousness would not be long delayed. Here is the commentator's interpretation of these verses:

God commanded Habakkuk to write the things that were coming upon the last generation, but the fulfilment of the epoch He did not make known to him. And as for the words, 'that he may run that readeth it', their interpretation concerns the Teacher of Righteousness, to whom God made known all the mysteries of the words of His servants the prophets.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew *term pesher* ('interpretation') is used in these commentaries to denote the elucidation of a prophetic text in terms of persons and events of the commentator's day.

<sup>2</sup> Col. 2, 11. 2-3 (on Hab. i. 5).

<sup>3</sup> Col. 2, 11. 6-10 (on Hab. i. 5).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 4Q p Ps. 37, fragment A, col. 2, 1. 15, where the man whose 'goings are established of the LORD' (Ps. xxxvii. 23) is interpreted as being 'the priest, the Teacher of R[ighteousness].' See J. M. Allegro in *PEQ*, 86 (1954), pp. 69 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Col. 7, 11. 1-5.

[p. 10]

That is to say, Habakkuk was enabled to foresee what was going to happen at the time of the end, but he was not told when the time of the end would be. This 'mystery' (the word is *raz*, which is used in a similar sense in the Book of Daniel)<sup>1</sup> was reserved for the Teacher of Righteousness. When he arose, God showed him that the time of the end was close at hand, and gave him to understand how the predictions of Habakkuk and the other prophets were shortly to be fulfilled. (We may compare what is said in 1 Pet. i. 10 ff. about the prophets' endeavour to ascertain the time which was indicated in the words which they uttered by divine inspiration—a mystery which had now been revealed to those who believed the gospel and recognized in Jesus the suffering and glorified Messiah of whom those prophets had spoken.) For, the community of Qumran believed, the prophets had all spoken of the time of the end rather than of the days in which they themselves lived. If Balaam spoke of 'a star out of Jacob' which would 'smite through the corners of Moab' (Nu. xxiv. 17); if Ezekiel described the aggression and overthrow of 'Gog, of the land of Magog' (Ezk. xxxviii. 1 ff.); if Isaiah announced the Assyrian's fall 'with the sword, not of men' (Is. xxxi. 8); if Habakkuk witnessed the advance and decline of 'the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation' (Hab. i. 6)—these prophets were not concerned about persons and events of their own times, but with the defeat of the Kitti'im by the sons of light at the time of the end.

These Kitti'im, the last Gentile oppressors of the people of God, have been variously identified. The two Qumran texts which make most frequent reference to them are the Habakkuk commentary (where Habakkuk's 'Chaldeans' are explained as being the Kitti'im) and the *Rule of War* (where the 'sons of light' take the field against the 'Kitti'im of Assyria' and subsequently attack '[the king of]<sup>2</sup> the Kitti'im in Egypt'). An adequate discussion of the identity of the Kitti'im cannot be launched here. They are either Graeco-Macedonians (*cf.* the

use of 'Kittim' in 1 Macc. i. 1; viii. 5) or Romans (*cf.* Dn. xi. 30, where 'ships of Kittim'—an echo of Balaam's words in Nu. xxiv. 24—are

<sup>1</sup> Dn. ii. 18, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30, 47; iv. 9 (Aram. 6); LXX and Theodotion render it by *μυστήριον*. *Cf.* p. 15, n. 3.

<sup>2</sup> While the words 'the king of' represent a conjectural restoration of a lacuna in the text, the context strongly suggests that the author is interpreting the reference to 'the king of the south' in Dn. xi. 40.

[p. 11]

Roman triremes).<sup>1</sup> On the whole it seems more probable that they are Romans. This identification is supported by the description of their irresistible advance in the Habakkuk *peshet* and by the fact that the military organization detailed in the *Rule of War* appears to be based on Roman rather than on Graeco-Macedonian models.<sup>2</sup> If they are to be identified with Graeco-Macedonians, the particular Graeco-Macedonians referred to would be the Seleucid forces of Antiochus IV and his successors. But this seems to be excluded by a passage in the Nahum *peshet* from Cave 4 which mentions an interval of time 'from Antiochus to the rise of the rulers of the Kittim'.<sup>3</sup> In any case, the men of Qumran expected to participate in the annihilation of the Kittim in that bitter struggle of the end-time when, according to Dn. xii. 1, Michael the archangel would intervene as the champion of the people of God and ensure them final victory.

The exegetes of Qumran might well have expressed their viewpoint in the words of Peter in Acts iii. 22, 24: 'Moses... and all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days.' And this exegetical viewpoint, which interpreted all that the prophets had spoken in terms of the epoch which had now set in, was the viewpoint adopted by the Teacher of Righteousness and taken over from him by his followers. Who then was this man, whose original and creative interpretation of prophecy had so profound an influence on the thought and life of the Qumran community?

### 3. AN ESCHATOLOGICAL FIGURE

It is not at all certain if the Teacher of Righteousness can be identified with any historical figure mentioned outside the

<sup>1</sup> In Dn. xi. 30, LXX (but not Theodotion) translates Kittim by *Ῥωμαῖοι*. The Latin Vulgate translates 'ships of Kittim' in Dn. xi. 30 by *trieres et Romani*, and 'ships shall come from the coast of Kittim' in Nu. xxiv. 24 by *uenient trieribus de Italia*. In Nu. xxiv. 24 the Targum of Onkelos renders 'Kittim' as 'Romans'.

<sup>2</sup> The battle-formation resembles the Roman *triplex acies* of the first century B.C. and not the Hellenistic *phalanx*. The fullest study of the subject is Y. Yadin's Hebrew edition of the document: *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness* (Jerusalem, 1955). T. H. Gaster adds some relevant points in the introduction and notes accompanying his English translation of the document in *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, pp. 273 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Cf.* J. M. Allegro, 'Further Light on the History of the Qumran Sect,' *JBL*, 75 (1956), pp. 89 ff.; the reference is to 1. 3 of the column reproduced there.

[p. 12]

Zadokite and Qumran literature. But we can put together the fragments of information about him which that literature supplies, so as to obtain as clear an impression as possible of the kind of man he was.

As we have seen, his followers believed that he had been initiated by God into the mysteries of His purpose, so as to understand the true interpretation of the prophets of old. What he thus learned from God he imparted to his disciples. The fragmentary *peshar* on Micah, found in Cave 1, commenting on the words of Micah i. 5b ('and what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem?') says:

[Their interpretation con]cerns the Teacher of Righteousness: he it is who [teaches the law to] his [council] and to all those who offer themselves willingly to be gathered among the elect people [of God, practising the law] in the council of the community, who will be saved from the day [of judgment].<sup>1</sup>

It appears, therefore, that his disciples did not merely go to him for lessons in biblical exegesis, but took energetic steps to put his instruction into practice, believing that herein lay their salvation in face of the swiftly approaching day of divine visitation.

Similarly the well-known words of Hab. ii. 4b ('the just shall live by his faith') are explained in the Habakkuk *peshar* as follows:

Their interpretation concerns all the doers of the law in the house of Judah, whom God will save from the house of judgment because of their trouble and their faith in the Teacher of Righteousness.<sup>2</sup>

Again, at the end of the *Zadokite Admonition*, the following promise is made:

All who hold fast to these rules, to go out and to come in according to the law, and who listen to the voice of the Teacher, and make confession before God, saying, 'Verily we have done wickedly, both we and our fathers, by walking contrary to the ordinances of the covenant; just and true are thy judgments against us'; who do not act with a high hand against His holy ordinances and righteous judgments and truthful testimonies; who learn from the former judgments wherewith the men of the community were judged; who hearken to the voice of the Teacher of Righteousness, and do not repudiate the ordinances of righteousness when they hear them—they shall rejoice and be glad, and their heart shall be strong, and they shall gain the

<sup>1</sup> D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik, *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, i (Oxford, 1955), p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Col. 8, 11. 1-3.

[p. 13]

mastery over all the children of the world, and God shall make propitiation for them, and they shall see His salvation, for they have put their trust in His holy name.<sup>1</sup>

It is equally plain that those who disregarded the words of the Teacher of Righteousness were believed to have lost all hope of salvation.

The appearance of the Teacher of Righteousness was regarded as a sign that the last days were approaching. He was not the Messiah, but his ministry signified that the messianic age would not be long delayed. Perhaps his followers believed at one time that the messianic age would be inaugurated within his lifetime; but after his death a revision of this opinion was necessary. An unspecified interval elapses in the *Zadokite Admonition*

from the day of the gathering in of the unique Teacher until the rise of a Messiah from Aaron and from Israel.<sup>2</sup>

It may well be that the original text of this passage referred to 'the rise of *Messiahs* from Aaron and from Israel'; but in any case it must be construed as meaning a Messiah from Aaron (*i. e.* a priestly Messiah) and a Messiah from Israel (*i.e.* a lay, and probably Davidic, Messiah).<sup>3</sup> However that may be, the Teacher appears to have played the part of a forerunner, 'to make ready for the Lord a people prepared,' rather than the part of a Messiah.

While the interval between his 'gathering in' and the rise of the Messiah or Messiahs is unspecified, the former event is mentioned again, a few lines later, as the beginning of a more specific interval of time:

from the day of the gathering in of the unique Teacher until the consuming of all the men of war who returned with the Man of Falsehood is about forty years.<sup>4</sup>

The problem of identifying these 'men of war' may wait until something further is said about the 'Man of Falsehood'; for

<sup>1</sup> P. 20, 11. 27-34.

<sup>2</sup> P. 19, 1. 35-p. 20, 1. 1. For 'unique Teacher' (*moreh hayyahid*) some would now read, in the light of the Qumran texts, 'Teacher of the community' (*moreh hayyahad*), but the emendation is unnecessary.

<sup>3</sup> The reason for this interpretation is that the Qumran community is now known to have looked for the 'coming of a prophet and the *Messiahs* of Aaron and Israel' (1QS, col. 9, 1. 11). See K. G. Kuhn, 'Die beiden Messias Aarons und Israels,' *NT Studies* 1 (1954-5), pp. 168 ff.

<sup>4</sup> P. 20, 11. 14-15. Here 'unique Teacher' represents *yoreh hayyahid* (*yoreh* being marked in the manuscript as a questionable reading); again, the emendation of *hayyahad* for *hayyahid* is unnecessary.

[p. 14]

the moment, let it suffice to point out that they need not be taken literally as military men, since there is a deliberate echo of Dt. ii. 14-16. There we have a reference to 'men of war' who were consumed within a period of thirty-eight years—the Israelites of military age who came out of Egypt at the Exodus, all of whom died out before the people arrived in the territory of Moab, on the eve of the settlement in Canaan. It is probable that the writer of the *Admonition* expected the 'men of war' whom he had in mind to be consumed on the eve of the messianic appearing, in which case the interval between the Teacher's death and the advent of the messianic age was estimated at forty years.<sup>1</sup>

There is also some reason to believe that, when the Teacher of Righteousness died, his followers came to expect that he would be raised again by a special resurrection immediately before the messianic advent and solve all the outstanding problems of legal interpretation. This inference has been drawn, for example, from the exegesis of the 'Song of the Well' (Nu. xxi. 17f.) in the Zadokite *Admonition*:

The 'well' is the law; the diggers are the repentant ones of Israel, who went out of the land of Judah and sojourned in the land of Damascus...; the 'Staff' is the Expounder of the Law ...; and the nobles of the people are those who have come to dig the well with the staffs which the 'Staff' ordained to walk therewith during the whole epoch of wickedness, and apart from them they will not grasp (instruction) until he who teaches righteousness arises in the end of the days.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The interval of forty years plays a recurrent part in Qumran eschatology, but we must beware of trying to make it bear the same significance every time it appears. A systematic eschatology cannot be constructed from the documents; the sect naturally modified its interpretation of the last things in the light of events. The forty years' interval was probably posited because it was felt appropriate that Israel's history should end, as it began, with a

probationary period of this duration. We may compare the forty years' warfare in 1QM and the forty years after which, according to 4Qp Ps. 37, fragment A, col. 1, 11. 6-8, the wicked shall cease to exist. In early Christian literature we have the interpretation of Ps. xcv. 10 in Heb. iii. 9 ff. in reference to a forty years' probation following the death and exaltation of Christ. J. L. Teicher, who identifies the Teacher of Righteousness with Jesus, similarly makes the forty years in the Zadokite *Admonition* as quoted above run from A.D. 30 to 70 (*Journal of Jewish Studies* 2 [1950], p. 121).

<sup>2</sup> P. 6, 11. 4-11. The closing words, 'ad 'mod yoreh haššedeq b'ah'rit hayyamim, probably constitute a conscious allusion to Ho. x. 12 (cf. p. 7). 'Staff' (RV 'sceptre' in Nu. xxi. 18) represents Heb. m'hoqeq, which means 'lawgiver' as well as 'ruler's staff' (cf. Gn. xlix. 10); there is an obvious play on this twofold sense of the word in the Zadokite exegesis of the passage.

[p. 15]

The meaning of this remarkable sample of *peshet* is not as plain as we could desire, and those who have studied it are not agreed about the persons and events referred to. But it is probable that the community's migration to Damascus took place after the death of the Teacher of Righteousness,<sup>1</sup> under the guidance of his successor, the Expounder of the Law<sup>2</sup> (here called the 'Staff'). If, then, they believed that the epoch of wickedness which followed the Teacher's death would be brought to an end when he arose in the last days, this would imply a second 'arising'—a resurrection from the dead.

#### 4. THE HYMNS OF THANKSGIVING

Another possible source of information about the Teacher is the collection of *Hymns of Thanksgiving* found in Cave 1.

A number of these record in the first person singular the experiences of one who claims to have been endowed with exceptional insight into the mysteries of the divine purpose. He says, for example, in the course of his thanksgiving to God:

Thou has granted me knowledge in thy wonderful mysteries, And in thy wonderful secret counsel  
with me thou hast displayed strength.<sup>3</sup>

No doubt any member of the community who had been instructed in these deep matters might regard himself as possessing exceptional insight of this kind in contrast to those who were 'outside the covenant'; and the hymns may well have been sung meaningfully in the covenanters' gatherings for worship. But many of them strike a personal note which strongly suggests that they were first composed to express the experience and devotion of one man, and that one man could hardly have been anybody other than the Teacher of Righteousness.

<sup>1</sup> But some scholars deny that a literal migration to Damascus is intended: see I. Rabinowitz, *loc. cit.*, and T. H. Gaster, *op. cit.*, pp. 4, 24, 101; also R. North, 'The Damascus of Qumran Geography', *PEQ* 87 (1955), pp. 34 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The Expounder of the Law (*doresh hattorah*) is mentioned again in the Zadokite *Admonition*, p. 7, 1. 18, where the 'star' of Nu. xxiv. 17, further identified with the 'star' of Amos v. 26, is explained as referring to 'the Expounder of the Law who comes to Damascus'. See also pp. 34f.

<sup>3</sup> Col. 4, 11. 27-28. The word rendered 'mysteries' is the plural of *raz* (see p. 10 with n. 1); 'secret counsel' is *sod*, used in a sense comparable to that which it has in Job xv. 8; Ps. xxv. 14; Je. xxiii. 18, 22; Am. iii. 7.

[p. 16]

Against me the assembly of the wicked raged tumultuously;



They roared like the gales of the seas,  
When the waves thereof make a tumult,  
And cast up mire and dirt.  
Thou hast appointed me as a banner for the righteous elect,  
An interpreter of knowledge in wonderful mysteries,  
A touchstone [for those who seek] the truth,  
And a banner for those who love correction.  
I am a man of strife to interpreters of error,  
[But a man of pea]ce to all of upright vision.  
I become a spirit of jealousy before all seekers after sm[ooth things];  
The men of deceit roar against me like the loud roar of many waters.  
Devices of Belial were their plans;  
They turned to destruction the life of a man  
Whom thou hast established and taught by my mouth.  
Understanding hast thou put in my heart,  
To open the fountain of knowledge to all who understand.<sup>1</sup>

## II. THE TEACHER AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

### I. DATING THE TEACHER

What can be said now about the time at which the Teacher of Righteousness flourished? If we can fix his place in history with some degree of certainty, the chance of being able to determine his identity will be to that extent increased. But the fact that in recent years he has been identified with the high priest Onias III, who was assassinated in 171 B.C., and with Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified exactly two hundred years later, as well as with a variety of persons belonging to the intervening period, suggests that the chronological data available are not conclusive.

It might seem at first that the *Zadokite Admonition* supplied adequate information. For, in the passage quoted above on p. 8, the rise of the Teacher of Righteousness appears to be dated 410 years after the beginning of the Babylonian exile. The righteous remnant, we are told, began to sprout 390 years after God had given Israel 'into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon'; and after they groped like blind men for twenty years

<sup>1</sup> Col. 2, 11. 12-18.

[p. 17]

God raised up the Teacher of Righteousness.<sup>1</sup> If these intervals are dated from the fall of the monarchy in 587 B.C., then the righteous remnant began to sprout *c.* 197 B.C., and the Teacher of Righteousness was raised up *c.* 177 B.C. These dates would suggest that the righteous remnant were the *hasidim* who resisted the prevalent Hellenism of the Seleucid regime, and they would at least support the identification of the Teacher with the high priest Onias III.<sup>2</sup>

We must, however, reckon with the possibility that the figures are intended to accord with an exegetical scheme rather than with historical fact. First of all, the figure of 390 years is probably derived from Ezk. iv. 4f., where Ezekiel is directed to bear the iniquity of the house of Israel in a symbolical fashion for 390 days, 'each day for a year'.<sup>3</sup> And secondly, the whole reckoning may well represent an interpretation of the seventy heptads of Dn. ix. 24 ff.<sup>4</sup> If to

the 390 years we add the 20 years of groping,  $x$  years for the ministry of the Teacher of Righteousness, and 40 years for the period following his death, we have only to equate  $x$  with 40 to reach a total of 490 years. This, of course, is far short of anything that could be called demonstration; but in view of the various attempts made in the last two centuries of the Second Jewish Commonwealth to fix the beginning and end of Daniel's seventy heptads,<sup>5</sup> the suspicion cannot be suppressed that this

<sup>1</sup> But I. Rabinowitz (*loc. cit.*, p. 34) maintains that the 390 years of the *Admonition* do not begin, but end, with the destruction of Solomon's temple by the Chaldaeans (their *terminus a quo* being the division of the monarchy). The Teacher of Righteousness mentioned in this passage (p. 1, 1. 11) he identifies with Nehemiah. T. H. Gaster (*op. cit.*, p. 100) expresses general agreement with this interpretation, but prefers to identify the Teacher of Righteousness with Ezra, since the Teacher was evidently a priest, as was Ezra, who (according to Ne. viii. 1 ff.) was also an expounder of the law.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. H. H. Rowley, *The Zadokite Fragments and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 62 ff.

<sup>3</sup> It may well be that the LXX, which reads 190 years (and not 390), preserves the original text of Ezekiel; but plainly the Zadokite author found 390 years in his Hebrew Ezekiel, as we do today.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel's seventy heptads are themselves probably schematic; see E. J. Young, *The Messianic Prophecies of Daniel* (Grand Rapids, 1954), p. 56.

<sup>5</sup> The chronological data of Josephus reflect a Pharisaic interpretation of the seventy heptads which dated them from the first year of Cyrus (Ezra i. 1) and made the beginning of the seventieth heptad coincide with the accession of Alexander Jannaeus in 103 B.C. (*cf. Antiquities*, xiii. 301, 318). The traditional Jewish chronology of *Seder 'Olam* is based on a later reinterpretation which makes the seventy heptads run from the destruction of the first temple by the Babylonians to the destruction of the second temple by the Romans. Another reinterpretation of the seventy heptads, which may prove to be of special relevance to the Qumran texts, is implied in the *Testament of Levi* xvi. 1ff. (See p. 31.)

[p. 18]

may be another of them. We may therefore feel disinclined to accept the chronological figures of the Zadokite *Admonition* as evidence for the Teacher's date without supporting testimony.

We may turn to the *pesharim*, then, to see what help they supply. If we could identify some of the Teacher's contemporaries who are mentioned there, we might be able to give him an approximate date. But here too we are confronted by a difficulty; the *pesharim* allude to the Teacher's contemporaries in such vague terms that their identification is almost as uncertain as the Teacher's is, although some of them ought to be persons of whom we know from other sources.

## 2. THE WICKED PRIEST

One of these contemporaries is the Teacher's great adversary, described as the Wicked Priest. It may be that an examination of the references to him will help us in our quest.

There appears to have been one outstanding occasion when the Wicked Priest manifested his hostility to the Teacher of Righteousness. The writer of the Habakkuk *peshar* quotes Hab. ii. 15 in the form: 'Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that addeth his fury thereto, and maketh him drunken also, in order to look upon their *sacred seasons!*'<sup>1</sup> Then he comments:

Its interpretation concerns the Wicked Priest, who pursued after the Teacher of Righteousness to swallow him up<sup>2</sup> in his hot fury, even to his place of exile, and on the occasion of the sacred

season of rest, the day of atonement, he appeared among them to swallow them up<sup>2</sup> and to make them stumble on the fast-day, their sabbath of rest.<sup>3</sup>

This comment can be more easily understood when we reckon with the high probability that the Teacher and his disciples followed a different calendar from that which regulated the sacred seasons in the Jerusalem temple.<sup>4</sup> The point then is that the

<sup>1</sup> Reading *mo<sup>a</sup>dehem* in place of *m<sup>e</sup>orehem* ('their nakedness').

<sup>2</sup> Or 'to throw him (them) into confusion' (*l<sup>e</sup>ball<sup>e</sup>o*, *l<sup>e</sup>ball<sup>e</sup>am*).

<sup>3</sup> Col. 11, 11. 4-8.

<sup>4</sup> Probably the calendar of *Jubilees*, according to which the year consisted of 364 days, with 12 months of 30 days each and an additional day (included in the reckoning of the weeks, but not of the months) at the end of each quarter. In this calendar the sacred anniversaries fall on the same week-day year by year. The *Book of Jubilees* is mentioned with approval in the *Zadokite Laws* (p. 16, 11. 3-4), and fragments of the work have been found in the Qumran caves. Cf. A. Jaubert, 'Le calendrier des Jubilés et de la secte de Qumrân: ses origines bibliques,' *Vetus Testamentum* 3 (1953), pp. 250 ff.; J. Morgenstern, 'The Calendar of the Book of Jubilees: its Origin and its Character,' *Vetus Testamentum* 5 (1955), pp. 34 ff. See also S. Talmon, 'Yom Hakkippurim in the Habakkuk Scroll,' *Biblica* 32 (1951), pp. 549 ff.

[p. 19]

Teacher and his community were observing the Day of Atonement, the great fast of the Jewish year, in their place of retreat, when the Wicked Priest, for whom it was an ordinary day, invaded their meeting-place in order to throw them into confusion and make them do things which in their eyes would be sinful because they ought not to be done on a 'sabbath of rest'.

But the Wicked Priest came to a bad end, and in that end the commentator recognizes the hand of divine justice. He quotes Hab. ii. 7 ('Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee...?'), and says:

[Its interpretation con]cerns the priest who rebelled [and transgre]ssed the ordinances of [God]... therefore they smote him with the judgments of wickedness, and wrought horrors of sore diseases upon him, and deeds of vengeance upon his body of flesh.<sup>1</sup>

It is not unreasonable to suppose that 'the priest who rebelled and transgressed the ordinances of God' is identical with the Wicked Priest. At any rate, when the commentator comes to the second part of verse 8 ('because of men's blood, and for the violence done to the land, to the city and all that dwell therein'), he makes the identification quite explicit:

Its interpretation concerns the [Wi]cked Priest: because of the [e]vil done to the Teacher of Righteousness and the men of his council, God gave him into the h[ands of] his [en]emies, to afflict him with a stroke, to make him waste away in bitternesses of soul, because he acted wickedly towards His elect.<sup>2</sup>

Yet at one time better things might have been expected of the Wicked Priest, but a craving for riches proved too strong for him. In Hab. ii. 5 the commentator reads '*wealth* is a treacherous dealer' instead of the MT '*wine* is a treacherous dealer';<sup>3</sup> and his comment on this verse and the next one runs as follows:

Its interpretation concerns the Wicked Priest, who was called by the name of truth<sup>4</sup> when first he arose, but when he ruled in Israel his heart was exalted and he forsook God, and dealt

treacherously with the ordinances for the sake of wealth. He looted and amassed the wealth of the men of [v]iolence who

<sup>1</sup> Col. 8, 1. 16-col. 9, 1. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Col. 9, 11. 9-12.

<sup>3</sup> Reading *hon yibgod* for MT *hayyayin boged*.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. *niqra' shem ha'emet* T. H. Gaster translates it: 'enjoyed a reputation for truth' (*op. cit.*, p. 253).

[p. 20]

rebelled against God; and he took the wealth of nations, adding to himself iniquity and guilt, and acted in ab[om]inable ways, with every defiling impurity.<sup>1</sup>

This is amplified in the comments on Hab. ii. 16f. Verse 16 (which was read: 'thou art filled with shame for glory; drink thou also, and *reel*;<sup>2</sup> the cup of the LORD's right hand shall be turned unto thee, and foul shame shall be upon thy glory') is explained thus:

Its interpretation concerns the priest whose shame was mightier than his glory, for he did not circumcise the foreskin of his heart but walked in the ways of drunkenness to quench his thirst. But the cup of the fever of [ree]ling<sup>3</sup> will overwhelm him, to add to his [shame and] ignominy.<sup>4</sup>

And verse 17 (which was read: 'the violence done to Lebanon shall cover thee, and the destruction of the beasts *will terrify thee*;<sup>5</sup> because of men's blood, and for the violence done to the land, to the city and to all that dwell therein') is explained thus:

The interpretation of this saying refers to the Wicked Priest, to repay him his recompense as he recompensed the poor. For 'Lebanon'<sup>6</sup> is the council of the community, and 'the beasts' are the simple ones of Judah, the doers of the law. God will condemn him to destruction even as he plotted to destroy the poor. And as for the words, 'because of the blood *of a city*,<sup>7</sup> and for the violence done to the land,' the 'city' is to be interpreted of Jerusalem, where the Wicked Priest wrought abominable works and defiled the sanctuary of God; and 'violence done to the land' refers to the towns of Judah, where he plundered the wealth of the poor.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Col. 8, 11. 8-13.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *w<sup>e</sup>hera'el* by metathesis for MT *w<sup>e</sup>he'arel* ('and be as one un-circumcised').

<sup>3</sup> There is a lacuna here (*kos h<sup>a</sup>mat [...]*); if we restore the mutilated word to *ra'al* ('reeling'), the sense is that given above; if we restore it to 'el ('God'), the meaning will be: 'the cup of God's wrath'.

<sup>4</sup> Col. 11, 11. 12-15.

<sup>5</sup> Reading *y<sup>e</sup>hitteka* (with LXX and other versions; cf. RV margin) for MT *y<sup>e</sup>hitan* ('made them afraid', RV).

<sup>6</sup> T. H. Gaster suggests that *Lebanon* ('white') is an allusion to the white habit worn by members of the Qumran community (*op. cit.*, p. 231).

<sup>7</sup> Heb. *midd<sup>e</sup>me qiryah*, a deviation from the biblical text, which the commentator has just quoted (col. 12, 1. 1) in the received form *midd<sup>e</sup>me 'adam* ('because of men's blood', RV).

<sup>8</sup> Col. 12, 11. 2-10.

[p. 21]

So the Wicked Priest did not even spare the poor in his greed. But the commentator is thinking of a particular class of poor—his own community. For (like some early Christians)<sup>1</sup> the members of the Qumran community liked to refer to themselves as 'the poor', taking their

cue from various Old Testament passages where 'poor' and 'pious' are practically synonymous. It may be, then, that one of the forms of persecution which the Teacher of Righteousness and his followers had to endure at the hands of the Wicked Priest was the confiscation of their property.

But this ill-gotten gain would bring no good to those who acquired it. Habakkuk had said: 'Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnants of the peoples shall spoil thee' (ii. 8). To which the commentator adds:

Its interpretation concerns the last priests of Jerusalem, who pile up wealth and unjust gain from the plunder of the peoples, but in the latter days their wealth with their plunder will be given into the hand of the army of the Kittim, for they are 'the remnant of the peoples'.<sup>2</sup>

These references to the Wicked Priest have been quoted in detail in the hope that they will help us to reach certain conclusions about his place in history. As the Jerusalem priesthood ceased to function with the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, we naturally look for him before that date. He is said to have 'ruled (*mashal*) in Israel'—a statement which might suit any high priest who acted as president of the Sanhedrin and leader of the nation (as high priests of the Second Commonwealth did), but which would be specially applicable to those members of the Hasmonean dynasty who combined the royal with the high-priestly dignity.

### 3. WAS THE WICKED PRIEST ALEXANDER JANNAEUS?

One Hasmonean ruler who has special claims to be considered as the Wicked Priest is Alexander Jannaeus, who became king and high priest of the Jews in 103 B.C., and held office until his death in 76 B.C. He was notoriously a persecutor of certain religious groups in Judaea, particularly of those which condemned either his high priesthood or his ritual procedure as irregular. He was, moreover, a military adventurer with an insatiable lust for conquest and plunder; and in the course of his campaigns he sacked

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gal. ii. 10 (of the Jerusalem church) and the Judaeo-Christian sect of Ebionites (*'ebyonim*, 'poor', as here).

<sup>2</sup> Col. 9, 11. 4-7.

[p. 22]

many Greek cities on the Palestinian seaboard and in Transjordan and added them to his kingdom, enriching himself with their spoils. But thirteen years after his death Judaea became tributary to the Romans and all the non-Jewish territories which Jannaeus had added to his realm were relieved of the Hasmonean yoke. The Roman occupation of Judaea and Jerusalem might well be regarded as fulfilling the commentator's prediction that the wealth and plunder of the last priests of Jerusalem would be given into the hand of the army of the Kittim.

But, it might be said, Jannaeus did not meet his death at the hands of his enemies, and they did not inflict 'deeds of vengeance upon his body of flesh.' We must remember, however, that persecuted communities have been prone to exaggerate the sufferings later endured by their tormentors, and to ascribe those sufferings to the righteous vengeance of heaven. And in fact Jannaeus did on a number of occasions suffer severe blows at the hands of his enemies. In 100 B.C. he nearly lost his kingdom to the Egyptians, after they had annihilated his army:<sup>1</sup> six years later another army of his was ambushed and wiped out in Transjordan and he himself escaped with his bare life; this was followed by a revolt on the part of many of his Jewish

subjects, who invited the Seleucid king Demetrius III to their aid against Jannaeus: once again his army was routed and he was driven to seek refuge in the mountains (88 B.C.).<sup>2</sup> But for a revulsion of feeling on the part of patriotic Jews, who could not endure the prospect of seeing a Hasmonean ruler dethroned by a Seleucid king, Jannaeus would have involved in irretrievable ruin the fortunes of his dynasty and the freedom of his nation.

But what can we make of the horrors which were perpetrated in his 'body of flesh'? The commentator does not say expressly that these were physical tortures inflicted upon him by human foes into whose power he had fallen. That might well be the sense of his words, but if so we should have to find someone else to satisfy the description. The closing years of Jannaeus's life, however, were troubled by a distressing bodily ailment—a quartan ague, Josephus says<sup>3</sup>—and when the commentator says that 'they' smote him with the judgments of wickedness and wrought horrors of sore disease upon him, 'they' could be interpreted as the supernatural executors of divine vengeance, in

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, xiii. 340-355.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, *War*, i. 90 ff.; *Antiquities*, xiii. 375 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *War*, i. 106; *Antiquities*, xiii. 398.

[p. 23]

accordance with a well-known Hebrew idiom. Josephus tells us, moreover, that Jannaeus's illness was the result of hard drinking;<sup>1</sup> and this agrees with the commentator's statement that the Wicked Priest 'walked in the ways of drunkenness to quench his thirst.'

If the withdrawal of the Teacher and his followers to the wilderness is to be dated in the reign of Jannaeus, it may be set in the context of other disputes which set that ruler at loggerheads with many of his subjects.

One story tells how once, at the Feast of Tabernacles, where he was officiating as high priest, he conducted the ceremony of the water-pouring with such deliberate disregard of what the rank and file of the people believed to be the proper ritual that they pelted him with the citrons which they were accustomed to carry in their hands on that occasion. In his rage he sent soldiers among them, and many were massacred.<sup>2</sup>

It was in his reign that the breach between the Hasmonean dynasty and the Pharisees became absolute; and the circumstances which alienated the Pharisees were such as would *a fortiori* estrange the Teacher of Righteousness and his followers. Echoes of the bitter strife between Jannaeus and the Pharisees may be heard in the Talmudic literature; the time 'when King Jannaeus put the rabbis to death'<sup>3</sup> lingered long in the national memory.

One important passage in the Talmud<sup>4</sup> preserves the tradition of a feast in celebration of a victorious campaign in Transjordan, to which Jannaeus invited all the wise men of Israel.

Now there was a man there who was frivolous, evil-hearted and worthless, Eleazar the son of Po'irah by name. He said to King Jannaeus: 'O King Jannaeus, the hearts of the Pharisees are hostile to you.' 'Then', said the king, 'what shall I do?' 'Test them', said he, 'by the plate between your eyes.'<sup>5</sup> So he tested them by the plate between his eyes. Now an elder, named Judah the son of Gedidiah, was present there. He said to King Jannaeus: 'O King Jannaeus, be content with the kingly crown, and leave the priestly crown to the seed of Aaron!' (For it was rumoured that Jannaeus's mother had been a captive at Modin.)

<sup>1</sup> *Antiquities*, xiii. 398.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Josephus, *Antiquities*, xiii. 372f.; TB *Sukkah*, 48b. The 'Sadducee' in the latter passage is almost certainly Jannaeus.

<sup>3</sup> E.g., TB *Sotah*, 47a.

<sup>4</sup> TB *Qiddushin*, 66a.

<sup>5</sup> If he put on the high-priestly turban with its gold plate (inscribed with the words 'HOLY TO YAHWEH'), they would be obliged to rise or perform some other action in token of respect for his sacred office; if they did not, it would show that they refused to acknowledge him as high priest.

[p. 24]

Accordingly the charge was investigated but not sustained, and the wise men of Israel departed in anger. Then Eleazar son of Po'irah said to King Jannaeus: 'O King Jannaeus, that is the law even for the lowest man in Israel; and shall it be the law for you too, king and high priest as you are?' 'Then what shall I do?' asked the king. 'If you will take my advice, tread them down. '... Immediately the evil burst forth through Eleazar the son of Po'irah: all the wise men of Israel were massacred, and the world was desolate until Simeon the son of Shetach came and restored the Law to its former glory.

This narrative is ascribed to Rabbi Abaye, who apparently did not know that Alexander Jannaeus and his father John Hyrcanus were two distinct persons.<sup>1</sup> Because of this confusion, the story has commonly been held to be a doublet of one which Josephus tells of John Hyrcanus.<sup>2</sup> More probably, however, we have to do with two separate incidents, although the two have been mixed up in the tradition—for example, it was not Jannaeus's mother but his grandmother (the wife of Simon and mother of John Hyrcanus) who was alleged to have been a captive in Seleucid hands at Modin (the family home of the Hasmoneans). This allegation led to a doubt about the legitimacy of her son John Hyrcanus. Had the kingship only been in question, he might have been allowed the benefit of the doubt; but it was a more serious matter when the high priesthood was involved. Hence, as Josephus relates, one of the Pharisees urged John Hyrcanus to lay down the high priesthood.<sup>3</sup> But those who objected to John's tenure of that sacred office because of the doubt about his mother would have objected on the same ground to its tenure by Jannaeus; they were not sure that any descendant of John truly inherited the seed of Aaron. In Josephus's narrative, the man who urged John to lay down the high priesthood was called Eleazar, and the man who incited the king against the Pharisees (but only to the point of severing his alliance with them, not to a wholesale massacre) was a Sadducee named Jonathan. The general drift of the two incidents is similar, but the *dramatis personae* are different, and the consequences were very different too. And not only does Josephus tell of the breach between John Hyrcanus and the Pharisees; he also relates that his son Jannaeus was reviled by his disaffected subjects as being unworthy of the high priesthood and its sacrificial functions because he was descended from a woman who had been a prisoner of war.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> TB *B<sup>r</sup>akot*, 29a.

<sup>2</sup> *Antiquities*, xiii. 288 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Antiquities*, xiii. 291f.

<sup>4</sup> *Antiquities*, xiii. 372.

[p. 25]

Now the Teacher of Righteousness and his disciples were not Pharisees. They maintained a stricter interpretation of the law and a severer discipline than the Pharisees did; but we may be sure that any objection which the Pharisees felt to the Hasmonean tenure of the high

priesthood would be felt more keenly and voiced more vigorously by them. There are certainly legendary features in the Talmudic narrative which has been quoted above, and the slaughter of the rabbis is probably a conflated reminiscence of the massacre at the Feast of Tabernacles and the crucifixion of eight hundred rebel leaders who had invited the aid of Demetrius III against Jannaeus;<sup>1</sup> but the tradition contains a sound core of history, and it is possible that the Teacher's withdrawal to the wilderness, along with his disciples, has some connection with Jannaeus's attack on the rabbis.

#### 4. THE MAN OF FALSEHOOD AND THE HOUSE OF ABSALOM

One may even be permitted to wonder whether the feast given by Jannaeus to celebrate his Transjordanian victories could be linked with the occasion referred to in the *peshet* on Hab. i. 13 ('wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy peace when the wicked swalloweth up the man that is more righteous than he?'):

Its interpretation concerns the house of Absalom and the men of their counsel, who held their peace when the Teacher of Righteousness was chastised, and did not aid him against the Man of Falsehood, who rejected the law in the midst of all their congregation.<sup>2</sup>

If the Man of Falsehood were mentioned in this passage alone, we might identify him with the Wicked Priest, or with a character like Eleazar the son of Po'irah, who (in our Talmudic story) not only withstood the faithful protesters against Jannaeus's tenure of the high priesthood, but also treated the oral law as if it were of no account.<sup>3</sup> But allusions to the Man of Falsehood elsewhere in the Zadokite and Qumran texts indicate that he was the leader of a rival religious movement which (in the eyes of the disciples

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *War*, i. 97; *Antiquities*, xiii. 380.

<sup>2</sup> Col. 5, 11. 9-12.

<sup>3</sup> According to the narrative in TB *Qiddushin*, 66a, when Eleazar advised Jannaeus to trample the rabbis down, the king said: 'But what will happen to the law?' Eleazar replied: 'Look; it is lying rolled up in the corner; anyone who wishes to study can go and study it!' But, as a later rabbi pointed out, the king ought to have said: 'That is all right so far as the written law is concerned, but what of the oral law?' (For the oral law would be lost if the rabbis who knew it were wiped out.)

[p. 26]

of the Teacher of Righteousness) 'led the simple astray'.<sup>1</sup> The identification of this rival movement must be a matter for further investigation; it is worth considering whether the reference may not be to Simeon the son of Shetach and the Pharisees who followed him. We know all too well that sometimes the bitterest expressions of hostility and charges of apostasy are made between groups which outsiders could hardly distinguish the one from the other. Simeon (although, according to rabbinical tradition, he was brother to Jannaeus's wife, Salome Alexandra)<sup>2</sup> had to go into exile for the closing part of Jannaeus's reign; but when Jannaeus died in 76 B.C. and was succeeded by Alexandra as queen regnant, Simeon returned to enjoy a position of great influence and, as we have been told, 'restored the Law to its former glory'. It is at least conceivable that 'the men of war who returned with the Man of Falsehood' (mentioned in a previous quotation from the *Zadokite Admonition*)<sup>3</sup> are the followers of Simeon who came back from exile with him at Jannaeus's death.

As for the 'house of Absalom and the men of their counsel, who held their peace when the Teacher of Righteousness was chastised, and did not aid him against the Man of Falsehood',



their identity also remains to be determined. Some scholars have pointed out that Jannaeus's younger son Aristobulus married the daughter of one Absalom who was his uncle<sup>4</sup>—and therefore either the brother of Jannaeus himself<sup>5</sup> or of his wife Salome

<sup>1</sup> In 1 Qp Micah the references to Samaria in Mi. i. 5f. are interpreted of 'the Prophet of Falsehood (*maṭṭip hakkazab*) [who leads astray the] simple' (Barthélemy and Milik, *op. cit.*, p. 78). In the Zadokite *Admonition* we have mention of 'the man of scoffing who prophesied (*hiṭṭip*) to Israel waters of falsehood and led them astray in a trackless waste...' (p. 1, 11. 14-15); he is further described as one 'walking in wind and raising storms and prophesying (*maṭṭip*) to men with falsehood' (p. 8, 1. 13 || p. 19, 1. 26). In 1 Qp Habakkuk, col. 10, 11. 9-13, the woe upon 'him that buildeth a town with blood' in Hab. ii. 12f. is interpreted of 'the prophet of falsehood (*maṭṭip hakkazab*) who has led many astray, to build a worthless town with blood and to raise up a congregation with lying for the sake of its glory, to make many weary themselves in worthless labour and to direct them in deeds of lying, with the result that their toil will be in vain, because they will come to fiery judgments for having reviled and defamed God's elect ones'. This reminds us of the Zadokite *Admonition's* condemnation of those who (incited apparently by the Prophet of Falsehood) 'built the wall and daubed it with plaster' (p. 8, 1. 12 || p. 19, 1. 25).

<sup>2</sup> TB *B<sup>c</sup>rakot*, 48a.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 13 (with n. 4).

<sup>4</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, xiv. 71.

<sup>5</sup> Sometimes identified with the unnamed brother of Jannaeus mentioned in Josephus, *Antiquities*, xiii. 323.

[p. 27]

Alexandra.<sup>1</sup> Other attempts have been made to find a suitable bearer of the name Absalom around the time in question; but it is more probable that the commentator called a particular group of people the 'house of Absalom' because he recognized a similarity between their behaviour and that of an earlier Absalom, the handsome son of King David who 'stole the hearts of the men of Israel' (2 Sa. xv. 6) and rebelled against his father.

## 5. IDENTIFYING THE TEACHER

These identifications—including that of the Wicked Priest with Alexander Jannaeus—can be no more than tentative; they must be submitted to constant re-examination as further evidence comes to light (although it must be said that at present no other historical figure seems to satisfy so many of the conditions for identifying the Wicked Priest as Jannaeus does). Nor do these identifications (even if they were less tentative than they are) make it much easier for us to give a name to the Teacher of Righteousness. Some<sup>2</sup> have suggested that he might be a pious Jew by the name of Onias, who was stoned to death by the partisans of Hyrcanus II shortly before the Roman conquest in 63 B.C., because he refused to exercise his reputed gift of rain-making in their favour and to the disadvantage of Hyrcanus's brother Aristobulus II.<sup>3</sup> Others have thought of an Essene named Judah—actually the first Essene known to history—who was believed to possess the prophetic gift and who figured in an incident at the Hasmonean court a month or two before Jannaeus's accession in 103 B.C.<sup>4</sup> But nothing that is related of either of these good men bears any obvious relation to the distinctive activities of the Teacher of Righteousness.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (Eng. tr., Oxford, 1952), p. 37; on the other side, D. Barthélemy, 'Notes en marge sur les manuscrits de Qumran', *Revue Biblique*, 59 (1952), p. 215, n. 5.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., R. Goossens, 'Onias, le Juste, le Messie de la Nouvelle Alliance, lapidé à Jérusalem en 65 avant J.-C.', *La Nouvelle Clio*, 1-2 (1949-50), pp. 336 ff.; a paper referred to with considerable approval by A. Dupont-Sommer, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> See Josephus, *Antiquities*, xiv. 22 ff. In TB *Ta'anit*, 23a he is called *Honi hammé'aggel*, 'Onias the circle-drawer' (because his prayers for rain were efficacious when he stood within a circle which he had described on the ground). The Talmudic account of his end is completely different from that given by Josephus, but of the two Josephus's must be accounted the more in accordance with historical fact.

<sup>4</sup> Josephus, *War*, i. 78 ff.; *Antiquities*, xiii. 311f.

[p. 28]

One of the scholars who suggest the identification with Judah the Essene, however—Professor W. H. Brownlee—goes farther and suggests that this Judah and Judah the son of Gedidiah were one and the same person.<sup>1</sup> The grounds for identifying these two bearers of the name Judah are slender in the extreme; but Judah the son of Gedidiah is a less unpromising candidate for identification with the Teacher than some others whose names have been put forward.

Of course, we have been confining our quest to the reign of Alexander Jannaeus and the period immediately preceding his accession and following his death. If it was the Teacher of Righteousness who led his community to Qumran, then our dating finds some support from the coin-record at Khirbet Qumran, which begins with coins of John Hyrcanus (135-104 B.C.). (Coins remain in use for a considerable time after they are struck, but do not circulate before they are struck!) But if we are mistaken in limiting the period of our quest in this way, then we have a wider choice of personalities in our attempt to identify the Teacher. And, among all the identifications which have been suggested outside the period to which our quest has been restricted, none is more worthy of respectful consideration than Professor H. H. Rowley's identification of the Teacher with Onias III, the last legitimate high priest of the house of Zadok, who was deposed by Antiochus IV in 175 B.C., and assassinated at the instigation of the usurping high priest Menelaus in 171 B.C. Menelaus would then be the Wicked Priest; Antiochus is identified with the Man of Falsehood, his forces with the Kittî'im, and the Tobiad family<sup>2</sup> with the house of Absalom.<sup>3</sup>

### III. THE TEACHER AND CHRISTIANITY

#### I. THE TEACHER AND JESUS

As the career and character of the Teacher of Righteousness have been studied with increasing interest and thoroughness during

<sup>1</sup> 'The Historical Allusions of the Dead Sea Habakkuk Midrash', *BASOR*, 126 (April, 1952), pp. 10ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Josephus, *Antiquities*, xii. 160 ff.

<sup>3</sup> H. H. Rowley, *The Zadokite Fragments and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Chapter III, 'The Covenanters and their History' (pp. 62 ff.). Similar identifications to Rowley's are defended by A. Michel in *Le Maître de Justice* (Avignon, 1954), *passim*.

[p. 29]

recent years, he has inevitably been compared with Jesus. One scholar at least (Dr. J. L. Teicher) has gone so far as to identify them.<sup>1</sup> Others have been content to point out (and at times to exaggerate) those features in which the Teacher appears to have anticipated Jesus.<sup>2</sup> Some of those features are obvious and impressive. Both were founders of new communities which claimed to represent the faithful remnant of Israel. Both laid down the outlines of a creative method of biblical interpretation which formed the groundwork of their followers' theological beliefs and directed their course of action.<sup>3</sup> Both were highly venerated by their followers: if the Qumran sect believed that they would escape condemnation in the last judgment because of their faith in the Teacher of Righteousness, Paul proclaims that God justifies the man who has faith in Jesus; and in both cases biblical authority is found for the affirmation in the words of Hab. ii. 4: 'the just shall live by his faith.'

But this last parallel is perhaps not so close as might at first appear. Faith in the Teacher of Righteousness implied mainly belief in his teaching; whereas saving faith in Jesus, according to Paul and his fellow-apostles, involves over and above this a personal commitment to Him as Lord and Redeemer. Besides, the acquittal mentioned in the Qumran *peshet* on Habakkuk is promised to 'all the doers of the law in the house of Judah... because of their trouble (*or* labour)<sup>4</sup> and their faith in the Teacher of Righteousness', whereas the justification of which Paul speaks is something 'apart from the law' which God imparts as a gift of His grace to 'him that hath faith in Jesus'; he insists that personal merit is excluded from the whole matter, for 'to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness' (Rom. iii. 21, 26, iv. 5). The Qumran sect would have thought this a scandalous misapplication of their proof-text from Habakkuk.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 3 (1951), pp. 53 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. Dupont-Sommer, *op. cit.*, pp. 99f.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. F. F. Bruce, 'Qumran and Early Christianity', *NT Studies*, 2 (1955-6), pp. 176 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. <sup>a</sup>*malam*.

<sup>5</sup> It may be said that we ought to relate James's teaching on faith (in Jas. ii. 14 ff.) rather than Paul's to the Qumran doctrine. But James was not expounding Hab. ii. 4, and the faith of which he speaks is not personal commitment to a leader or acceptance of the instruction of a teacher but intellectual assent to propositions, such as that 'God is one' (verse 19).

[p. 30]

Again, a resemblance has been traced between Jesus' interpretation of the marriage law and that laid down in the Zadokite *Admonition*, which may well have come from the Teacher of Righteousness. There is certainly an impressive verbal similarity between the Zadokite quotation of Gn. i. 27 as 'the fundamental principle of creation' (*y<sup>e</sup>sod habb<sup>e</sup>ri'ah*)<sup>1</sup> and our Lord's appeal to the same scripture in Mk. x. 6 ff. as that which was established 'from the beginning of the creation' (ἀπὸ ... ἀρχῆς κτίσεως).<sup>2</sup> But in fact the Zadokite writer is using Gn. i. 27 (along with Gn. vii. 9) as an argument against having more than one wife at a time, which he condemned as a form of fornication; our Lord uses the passage (along with Gn. ii. 24) as an argument against divorce, which in fact is permitted by the Zadokite *Laws*.<sup>3</sup> And any resemblance which might be recognized between the two respective interpretations of the marriage law is offset by the complete contrast between the severity of the Zadokite sabbath law<sup>4</sup> and our Lord's teaching and practice with regard to this institution.

Those who are primarily interested in finding resemblances will tend to overlook the differences; those who are primarily interested in minimizing resemblances will emphasize the differences. Examples could be quoted of those who have gone to either extreme; the proper course is to give due weight to similarities and divergences alike, although this may be felt by many to be a counsel of perfection.

But here is the fundamental difference: whereas Jesus was hailed by His first followers as the long-expected Messiah, it does not appear that the Teacher of Righteousness claimed messianic dignity for himself or received it from others. His death, in fact, preceded the expected advent of the Messiahs of Israel and Aaron by a number of years; he himself was rather their precursor, as John the Baptist is to Jesus in the Gospels. Indeed, the Teacher was identified with John the Baptist by the late Dr. Robert Eisler:<sup>5</sup> but the identification cannot be sustained.

<sup>1</sup> P. 4, l. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Gk. ἀρχή) can mean 'fundamental principle' as well as 'beginning'. Cf. J. L. Teicher in *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 5 (1954), p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> P. 13, l. 17.

<sup>4</sup> P. 10, l. 14-p. 11, l. 18.

<sup>5</sup> *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist* (London, 1931), pp. 254f.; *The Modern Churchman*, 39 (1949), pp. 284 ff.

[p. 31]

## 2. WAS THE TEACHER MARTYRED?

While we have evidence for the Teacher's death, or 'gathering in', we have no evidence thus far for the manner of his death. Attempts have been made, to be sure, to represent it as a remarkable anticipation of the death of Jesus. Professor Dupont-Sommer has maintained that the torments which, according to the Habakkuk *pesher*, were perpetrated on the Wicked Priest's 'body of flesh', were in fact inflicted on the Teacher, not on the Wicked Priest;<sup>1</sup> but this is an unnatural interpretation of the commentator's language. He has further maintained that the passage in the same work which is usually supposed to describe how the Wicked Priest burst in upon the Teacher's retreat on the Day of Atonement actually refers to an epiphany of the martyred Teacher which shone forth upon the Wicked Priest and his partisans on the Day of Atonement in 63 B.C. —the very day, he believes, on which Pompey's forces stormed the temple area in Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> But this too is an unnatural reading of the text.<sup>3</sup>

Professor Dupont-Sommer believes that reference is made elsewhere in Jewish literature of this period to the martyrdom of the Teacher of Righteousness.<sup>4</sup> He thinks in particular of a passage in the *Testament of Levi*, where the iniquity of the Has-monean priesthood is described as follows in the words which Jacob is made to address to his son Levi:

And now I have learnt that for seventy weeks ye shall go astray, and profane the priesthood, and pollute the sacrifices. And ye shall make void the law, and set at nought the words of the prophets by evil perverseness. And ye shall persecute righteous men, and hate the godly; the words of the faithful shall ye abhor. *And a man who reneweth the law in the power of the Most High, ye shall call a deceiver; and at last ye shall rush (upon him) to slay him, not knowing his dignity, taking innocent blood through wickedness upon your heads.* And your holy places shall be laid waste even to the ground because of him.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 27f., 44.

<sup>3</sup> It is, besides, very doubtful if the storming of the temple area did take place on the Day of Atonement in 63 B.C., despite the statement in Josephus, *Antiquities*, xiv. 66. See M. B. Dagut, 'The Habakkuk Scroll and Pompey's Capture of Jerusalem', *Biblica*, 32 (1951), pp. 542 ff.

<sup>4</sup> A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Jewish Sect of Qumran and the Essenes* (Eng. tr., London, 1954), Chapter III, 'The Testament of Levi and the Teacher of Righteousness' (pp. 38 ff.).

<sup>5</sup> *Testament of Levi*, xvi. 1-4.

[p. 32]

The italicized sentence is one which R. H. Charles, in his edition of *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, bracketed 'with some hesitation' as a Christian interpolation; but he wondered whether the reference might not be to the pious Onias, who was unjustly put to death not long before the capture of Jerusalem in 63 B.C., or even to the high priest Onias III, who was murdered over a century earlier.<sup>1</sup> It is striking that, as we have seen, both these men have been identified with the Teacher of Righteousness. Although neither of these identifications is convincing, it is not impossible that the passage in the *Testament of Levi* refers to the Teacher of Righteousness. That the *Testaments* have come down to us in a form which contains Christian interpolations is certain; but we must be more cautious about identifying such interpolations now that Aramaic fragments of the *Testament of Levi* have come to light from Caves 1 and 4 at Qumran.<sup>2</sup> But we should require an explicit account of the Teacher's martyrdom at the hands of the Hasmonean priesthood before we could feel any confidence in concluding that the above-quoted passage from the *Testament of Levi* refers to him.

Another scholar who defends the view that the Teacher of Righteousness had a violent martyr-death meted out to him is Mr. John M. Allegro. He bases his belief mainly on the fragmentary *peshet* of Nahum found in Cave 4, which has a special interest because of its reference to historical characters by name.<sup>3</sup> The comment on Nahum ii. 12 ('The lion... filled his caves with prey, and his dens with ravin') interprets it of a person called the Lion of Wrath,<sup>4</sup> and goes on to mention with horror the practice of 'hanging men up alive'. It may be that the Lion of Wrath is made responsible for this practice, but the text is so mutilated that we cannot be sure. It is reasonable to suppose that the practice alluded to is crucifixion. Mr. Allegro argues that crucifixion would not have been mentioned in a Qumran *peshet* if it had not had some special significance for the community. He identifies the Lion of Wrath with the Wicked Priest, and both

<sup>1</sup> *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs translated...* (London, 1908), pp. 59f.

<sup>2</sup> Barthélemy and Milik, *op. cit.*, pp. 87 ff.; see also P. Grelot, 'Notes sur le Testament araméen de Lévi,' *Revue Biblique*, 63 (1956), pp. 391 ff.

<sup>3</sup> 'Further Light on the History of the Qumran Sect,' *JBL*, 75 (1956), pp. 89 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. *k'pir hah'ron*

[p. 33]

with Alexander Jannaeus (a very probable identification, in my judgment); then he points out that the Teacher of Righteousness was an opponent of the Wicked Priest, and concludes that,

since Jannaeus is known to have crucified men who rebelled against him, the Teacher may well have suffered this fate at his hands.<sup>1</sup>

But there is nothing in the Nahum *peshet* quoted by Mr. Allegro to suggest that the Teacher of Righteousness was one of those who were 'hung up alive'. The men whom Jannaeus crucified, according to the macabre narrative of Josephus, were subjects of his who had organized armed rebellion against him and called in the Seleucid king Demetrius III to help them. When at last Jannaeus succeeded in crushing the revolt, he crucified eight hundred captured rebels in Jerusalem, and slaughtered their families before their eyes while they were still alive on the crosses. No wonder that many of his opponents who were still at large fled from his territory, and remained in exile until the end of his reign.<sup>2</sup> Jannaeus's supreme barbarity might well be put on record by people who abominated him as the men of Qumran did (if we assume him to have been the Wicked Priest); but this does not force us to the conclusion that the Teacher of Righteousness was among his crucified victims. In point of fact, the Nahum *peshet* probably indicates that these victims were the 'seekers after smooth things'—an expression by which the Qumran and Zadokite texts several times refer to a religious group with which they disagreed, probably the Pharisees.<sup>3</sup>

The Teacher *may* have met a violent death at the hands of Jannaeus or some such person, and we are not in a position to deny that he was crucified. But we simply do not know as yet

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. M. Allegro, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (Pelican Books, 1956), pp. 99f.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, *War*, i. 93 ff.; *Antiquities*, xiii. 376 ff.

<sup>3</sup> These 'seekers after smooth things' (*doṛ'she haḥ<sup>a</sup>laqot*) appear twice in the fragment of 4Qp Nahum reproduced by Allegro in his *JBL* article mentioned above—once as the associates of King Demetrius, who sought to enter Jerusalem, and once in the context where 'hanging up alive' is mentioned. If Allegro is right in identifying this Demetrius with Demetrius III, then the 'seekers after smooth things' are surely the Pharisaic rebels on whom Jannaeus wreaked so grisly a vengeance. They are mentioned in the Zadokite *Admonition* (p. 1, 1. 18) as followers of the Prophet of Falsehood, and several times in the *Hodayot* (cf. p. 16) as opponents of the Teacher of Righteousness and his community. The designation was probably based on Is. xxx. 10, 'speak unto us smooth things (*ḥ<sup>a</sup>laqot*), prophesy deceits'; it could also be rendered 'expounders of smooth things'.

[p. 34]

the manner or circumstances of his death.<sup>1</sup> Nor is there clear evidence that his followers ascribed atoning efficacy to his death as the early Christians did to the death of Jesus when (following His own example) they interpreted the significance of His passion in terms of the Servant Song of Is. lii. 13-liii. 12. The men of Qumran did not overlook this Servant Song, but they identified the Servant not so much with an individual as with their community, which by its obedience and endurance was to expiate the shortcomings of the erring majority in Israel.

When the Teacher of Righteousness died, the eschatological crisis which his ministry had been expected to usher in still seemed to be delayed. It was perhaps on this account that his followers conceived the belief that he would be raised again on the eve of the coming crisis to resume and complete the work which his death had interrupted.<sup>2</sup> This would be a special resurrection, in advance of the resurrection of the righteous as a whole, of which Dn. xii. 2 spoke. And his resurrection ministry would herald the imminent arrival of the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel.

### 3. THE TEACHER AND MESSIAHSHIP

Is it possible that they expected one of these Messiahs—the Messiah of Aaron—to be the Teacher of Righteousness himself, risen from the dead? It has been maintained that they did,<sup>3</sup> and the possibility may be freely allowed. Mr. Allegro, for example, has pointed out<sup>4</sup> that a fragmentary biblical anthology

<sup>1</sup> In 4Qp Ps. 37, the words 'The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him' (Ps. xxxvii. 32) are followed by a *peshar* which Allegro (*JBL*, 75, p. 94) restores thus: 'Its interpretation concerns the Wicked [Pries]t who s[ent to the Teacher of Righteousness...?] to slay him [... ] and the law which he sent to him.' But even if the *peshar* did refer to the Teacher of Righteousness here, the Wicked Priest's intention of slaying him may have been unsuccessful, for the words of verse 33, 'The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged,' seem to be repeated almost *verbatim* in the *peshar* on that verse, as the sequel to the incident referred to in the *peshar* on verse 32.

<sup>2</sup> H. J. Schonfield holds that it was not the resurrection of the former Teacher of Righteousness but the emergence of a new Teacher of Righteousness that the community looked for 'in the end of the days', and that this second Teacher might perhaps be identified with the priestly Messiah (*Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls* [London, 1956], pp. 36, 61).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. C. T. Fritsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 81f.

<sup>4</sup> 'Further Messianic References in Qumran Literature', *JBL* 75 (1956), pp. 174 ff. On p. 176 he reproduces from 4 Q *Florilegium* some of Nathan's words to David in 2 Sa. vii. 11b-14a ('Moreover the LORD telleth thee that he will build thee a house, and I will set up thy seed after thee, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever: I will be his father and he shall be my son'), with their accompanying *peshar*: 'He is the shoot (*šemaḥ*) of David, who will arise with the Expounder of the Law (*doresh hattorah*)'.

[p. 35]

found in Cave 4 looks forward to the time when the Davidic Messiah will arise 'with the Expounder of the Law'; and it is a natural inference that the 'Expounder of the Law' in this instance is the Messiah of Aaron. The same two figures are evidently associated in a comment on Nu. xxiv. 17<sup>1</sup> made in the Zadokite *Admonition*, where Balaam's 'star out of Jacob' is 'the Expounder of the Law who comes to Damascus', while the 'sceptre' which is to 'rise out of Israel' is 'the prince of all the congregation who, when he arises, will break down all the sons of Sheth.' The 'Expounder of the Law', I suggest, was the title given to the Teacher's successor as head of the community and was borne by several leaders one after the other. The head of the community in office at the time of the end would sponsor and induct the Davidic Messiah. But would that particular head of the community be the Teacher of Righteousness himself, risen from the dead, and would he also be the Aaronic Messiah? Further information must be awaited before a confident answer can be given.

In the present state of our knowledge, it seems more probable that the Teacher of Righteousness in resurrection was expected to fill the rôle which in general Jewish thinking was reserved for the prophet Elijah. For Elijah was widely expected to return to earth on the eve of the 'great and terrible day of the LORD' to discharge a ministry of repentance and restoration so that Israel might be ready for the dawn of that day.<sup>2</sup> (It does not appear, however, that Qumran expectation identified the Teacher *redivivus* with Elijah, any more than it identified him with the other eschatological prophet, the second Moses for whom many looked in fulfilment of Dt. xviii. 15 ff.) The Teacher, even in resurrection perhaps, as certainly in his previous existence, would be a messianic forerunner rather than a Messiah.

Professor Oscar Cullmann,<sup>3</sup> in a criticism of those who have, as he sees it, exaggerated the affinity between the Qumran texts and the Fourth Gospel, has suggested that the tenth chapter of that Gospel envisages just such a figure as the Teacher of Righteousness when it refers to all Jesus' predecessors as 'thieves and robbers' who had no care for the sheep<sup>4</sup> and distinguishes Jesus,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 15, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Mal. iv. 5f.; cf. Mk. ix. 11-13.

<sup>3</sup> 'The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity,' *JBL* 74 (1955), pp. 213 ff., especially p. 225.

<sup>4</sup> Jn. x. 8, 13.

[p. 36]

who laid down His life of His own accord, from others whose lives were taken from them willy-nilly.<sup>1</sup> But such a representation surely goes too far. Neither Jesus nor the Evangelist had any desire to dismiss the prophets and righteous men of earlier days as 'thieves and robbers'. If the Teacher of Righteousness had claimed the messianic dignity there might have been some justification for including him in this judgment. But as it is, Christians may agree that he was indeed (as Maimonides said of another) 'a preparer of the way for King Messiah'—although not necessarily in a sense which either he or his disciples would have recognized at the time.

<sup>1</sup> Jn. x. 17f.

---

© 1956 F.F. Bruce. Reproduced by kind permission of Professor Bruce's daughter.

Prepared for the web by Michael Farmery and Robert I Bradshaw in April 2005.

<http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/>

---