

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Canadian Journal of Theology* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_canadian-journal.php

Did Paul go to Qumran?

R. E. OSBORNE

IF THE TITLE of this article has the quality of mystery and suspense normally associated with a "whodunnit," I make no apologies. I have always believed that one of the more pleasant ways in which a Biblical scholar can sharpen his faculties is by reading detective novels. Henry J. Cadbury has said that a New Testament scholar should be "a cross between a detective and a puzzle addict."¹ If the reader finds that the material presented here falls within these terms of reference, I hope he will realize that the writer so intended.

The life of St. Paul is marked by great periods of silence. One of them occurred following his conversion. Paul tells us that he "went away into Arabia" and then "returned to Damascus" (Gal. 1:17). The question that naturally arises is, "Why did Paul go into Arabia and what did he do there?" The clue which solves this puzzling question is found in an understanding of the word "Arabia." Paul is using this word in a technical sense. He is not referring to the large wilderness of Arabia between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf but to the much smaller Kingdom of Nabataea which in New Testament times occupied a crescent-shaped area lying south and east of the Dead Sea with its capital at Petra.² The identification of this area raises a geographical difficulty for those who speculate on the possibility that Paul may have had some contact with the monks of Qumran. A glance at a map reveals that Damascus is at least two hundred miles north of Petra. While Paul's activities may not have extended to the capital of the Nabataean Kingdom, is it feasible to argue that he would have ventured even as far south as Qumran, which is one hundred and twenty-five miles from Damascus? Several clues help us to answer this question. There is a statement in Paul's letter to the Corinthians which tells us that he made a dramatic escape from the ethnarch of Aretas of Damascus (2 Cor. 11:32). We may conclude from this bit of evidence that Damascus at that time was under the authority of Aretas king of the Nabataeans. It is worthy of note that in the Arabic version of the Polyglots this passage in Gal. 1:17 is rendered: "Immediately I went to El Belka." J. B. Lightfoot locates this place as east and northeast of the Dead Sea.³ If he is correct, Paul was very close to Khirbet Qumran. Indeed, we could render the verse, "I went away into Arabia (and also during that time to Qumran); and again I returned to Damascus." Furthermore, need we think, as some scholars do, that one

1. H. J. Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History* (Naperville, Ill.: Allenson, 1955), p. 6.

2. *Oxford Bible Atlas*, p. 93.

3. J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London: Macmillan, 1900), p. 87.

hundred and twenty-five miles would be too great a distance for Paul's initial missionary activity? For the man whose later journeys carried him westward beyond Greece to Rome and possibly even to Spain and who could say that he had "fully preached the Gospel of Christ from Jerusalem and as far round as Illyricum" (Rom. 15: 19), a journey of one hundred and twenty-five miles cannot be ruled out as being too great. Geographically, from what we know of Paul's later activity, it is quite feasible to suggest that he visited the monastery at Qumran. But did he in fact do so and is there any evidence to support such a theory?

We return now to the first question, "Why did Paul go into Arabia?" The answer that is usually given to this question is that he went there for the same reason that the Old Testament prophets and leaders went there—because the desert was the place traditionally associated with manifestations of God. Moses, Elijah, and Amos, for example, all went into the desert. In the New Testament both John the Baptist and Jesus go into the desert.⁴ But the assumption that Paul went into Arabia for a period of solitary meditation or to "think out his theology" is open to serious doubt. P. Bonnard says: "C'est que ce séjour en Arabie (Gal.) et à Damas (Act.) ne fut pas une retraite silencieuse mais une première activité apostolique."⁵ The Kingdom of Nabataea was not all a desolate waste. Knowing what we do about Paul's character and judging by the pattern of his later activities it is more reasonable to believe that he would be engaged in some form of missionary activity, as Bonnard says. The overwhelming experience which had confirmed the truth of the Gospel in his soul and commissioned him as the Apostle to the Gentiles compelled him to proclaim the glad tidings. Nothing could be more incompatible with his subsequent behaviour than three years of unbroken retreat. There was, it is true, an element of mysticism in Paul's nature but it was the mysticism of the activist. He would need time to reflect on his conversion experience on the Damascus road but he would do this in fellowship with others. These three years were probably spent in fellowship in Damascus and missionary activity in the Nabataean Kingdom to the south. This theory is by no means a new one and was the view held by the Early Church Fathers.⁶ Moreover, as F. W. Beare has pointed out,⁷ the fact that Paul had to escape the hostility of the ethnarch of Aretas (2 Cor. 11:32–33; Acts 9:23–25) indicates that his activity at this time was not wholly devoted to private retreat and meditation.

4. The word "desert" in Luke 3:2 has a specific reference, viz., the region of Qumran. See J. Daniélou, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Primitive Christianity* (New York: New American Library, 1962), pp. 16ff.

5. P. Bonnard, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Galates*, Commentaire du Nouveau Testament, IX (Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, S.A., 1952), p. 46.

6. Cf. E. de W. Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (Naperville, Ill.: Allenson, 1956), p. 90. Burton cites Chrysostom, "See how fervent was his soul, he was eager to occupy lands yet untilled; he forthwith attacked a barbarous and savage people, choosing a life of conflict and much toil." Similarly: Hilary, Victorinus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodore, Primasius, and the Oecumenian commentator. Jerome supposes that Paul preached in Arabia but that his preaching was unsuccessful.

7. F. W. Beare, *St. Paul and His Letters* (London: Adam & Charles Black), p. 20.

The suggestion was made above that during this period Paul may have visited Qumran. At any rate it is geographically feasible. Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, J. Klausner made the suggestion that Paul spent much of his time in Damascus with a sect called "the sons of Zadok," who were deeply devoted to a faith in the Messiah.⁸ This suggestion paved the way for the theory put forward by A. Powell Davies, following the discovery of the Scrolls, that Paul spent some time in Essene encampments in and around Damascus.⁹ J. Daniélou says that "the Christianity which St. Paul found in Damascus was the Christianity of converted Essenes."¹⁰ If this is so, would he not have heard of the monastery at Qumran? And having heard of it would his questing spirit not have taken him on a journey to visit the monks at Qumran, perhaps even a missionary journey?

Let us first examine the theory that Paul may have had contact with the Essenes in and around Damascus. If this can be established with any certainty, we shall examine the evidence further to see if there is any support for the theory that he might also have visited their headquarters in the remote Dead Sea area. We turn now to an evaluation of the evidence to see if a case can be made out in favour of both theories.

Professor A. M. Hunter has written, "We need not spend time on the Essenes, a society of some four hundred ascetics living a communal life near the Dead Sea. They never appear in the Gospel pages, and the notion that Jesus or the Baptist had some connection with them is nowadays left to cranks or the writers of historical romances."¹¹ Presumably the same may be said of any suggestion that Paul had a connection with the Essenes. But we must remember that Hunter was writing in 1950, only three years after the discoveries in the caves, and before the publication of the Scrolls and their positive identification with the Essene sect at Qumran. Since that time there has been general agreement among scholars that the Scrolls are of Essene origin.¹²

Let us return for a moment and refresh our memories concerning Paul's activities before his conversion. We have the picture of the "angry young man" setting out for Damascus armed with letters from the high priest giving him authority to bring to trial any that he found of "this Way."¹³ This raises the questions: Why did these followers of the Way (these first

8. J. Klausner, *From Jesus to Paul* (New York: Humanities Press, 1956), pp. 319, 332. The subject is discussed in greater detail by H. Schonfield in *The Jew of Tarsus* (Toronto: Nelson), pp. 105ff.

9. A. Powell Davies, *The First Christian* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, 1958), p. 182.

10. J. Daniélou, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Primitive Christianity*, p. 102.

11. A. M. Hunter, *The Work and Words of Jesus* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1950), p. 26.

12. F. M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1958), pp. 45ff.

13. Gal. 1:13ff.; 1 Cor. 15:9ff.; Acts 9:1ff., 22:4ff., 26:9ff. It is an interesting parallel and perhaps worthy of more study that the use of the term "way" occurs also in the *Manual of Discipline* of the Qumran Sect (viii. 18, 21; ix. 5, 6, 8, 9) where it is combined with the adjective "perfect," i.e. "the perfect way" or "perfection of the way."

Christians) flee to Damascus? Why not to some other city? Two reasons immediately suggest themselves. First, there were already Essenic settlements there in which they could find refuge. F. A. Schilling¹⁴ has suggested that the early Christians fled from Jerusalem to Damascus because they were in sympathy with the Zadokite Sect there. The identification of this Sect with the Qumran Covenanters has been increasingly accepted as more evidence comes to light from the Dead Sea area. Secondly, the Essenes had already demonstrated at Jerusalem that their teachings were the most fruitful soil for the Gospel seed. The fact that the Essenes never appear in the pages of the New Testament by name as do the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians suggests that they were sympathetic to the new movement and provided the milieu in which Christianity flourished. R. Bultmann claims that the Jerusalem Church was an Essene group that existed *before* the crucifixion of Jesus and came into the Church as the sect of the Nazarenes.¹⁵ The "speeches" of Peter and Stephen as reported in Acts are in line with the eschatological outlook of the Dead Sea Scriptures. Furthermore, the community of possessions which characterized the early days of the Church was agreeable to the Essenes and may well have been suggested by them. Other points of similarity will immediately come to mind, for example, fellowship meals and baptism.

We must at this point make a distinction between the Essenes of Qumran and those living in the cities of Palestine.¹⁶ Did these urban groups originally live at Qumran and were they perhaps dispersed as the Early Church was from Jerusalem? There is evidence to support this view, though it is also possible that they always existed as two separate groups, those who hived off in the monastery at Qumran and those who lived in cities. The fact that some groups of Essenes adhered rigidly to their celibate vows¹⁷ while others permitted marriage¹⁸ would lend support to this view. Coins found in the excavations at Qumran indicate that the settlement was abandoned during the long reign of Herod the Great (B.C. 37-4). The reason is generally thought to be a severe earthquake which is reported to have taken the lives of thirty thousand persons in Palestine. Excavations at Qumran show evidence of such a disaster. One of the baptismal cisterns was split in two and the wall of a great tower cracked and toppled into a ravine.¹⁹ Scholars think that this may have been the disaster that caused the survivors to disperse to Damascus. The so-called *Zadokite Document*, also known as

14. F. A. Schilling, "Why Did Paul Go to Damascus?" *Anglican Theological Review*, XVI (1934), 199.

15. R. Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting* (Cleveland: Meridian, 1956), p. 175.

16. Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, II. viii. 4 informs us that the Essenes were to be found in every town in Palestine. It is generally conceded that Josephus has a tendency to exaggerate but even so this is a piece of evidence which cannot be dismissed lightly.

17. *Ibid.*, II. viii. 2.

18. *Ibid.*, II. viii. 13.

19. See diagram, frontispiece, M. Burrows, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Viking, 1958); M. Black, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins* (New York: Scribner, 1961), Plate 10, p. 115.

the *Damascus Document*, which was discovered in the Old Synagogue at Fostat, Egypt, and published in 1910, tells of an emigration to "the land of Damascus" under the leadership of one who is called "the star" (vii. 5, vii. 18). There are also references to "those who entered the covenant in the land of Damascus" (vi. 9, viii. 21). A copy of this document has been found in the Dead Sea caves. However, it must be noted that scholars are not generally agreed as to whether there actually was an emigration of the sect to Damascus or not.²⁰ O. Cullmann represents those who think that Paul had some contact with the Essene community. He says, "We have seen that the Essenes had a settlement in Damascus. We know also from Paul himself, that after his conversion he remained in Damascus. Might he not have met members of the sect during his stay there?"²¹ This hypothesis, attractive as it may seem, has not met with any general agreement. Millar Burrows represents those who reject it and says that we do not know when the Essenes came to Damascus and furthermore "we do not know, as a matter of fact, that they were ever at Damascus."²² If Paul did in fact meet some Essenes in Damascus, the most likely candidate from the pages of the New Testament is Ananias, who is mentioned in Acts 9: 10-17 and again in Acts 22: 12-16.

... so I came to Damascus. There, a man called Ananias, a devout observer of the Law and well spoken of by all the Jews of that place, came and stood beside me and said, "Saul, my brother, recover your sight." Instantly I recovered my sight and saw him. He went on: "The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear his very voice, because you are to be his witness before the world, and to testify to what you have seen and heard. And now why delay? Be baptized at once, with invocation of his name, and wash away your sins."

Two elements in this account are particularly interesting. (1) Ananias refers to the "Righteous One," a term which is reminiscent of the "Teacher of Righteousness" or "Righteous Teacher" of the Scrolls. (2) Ananias was "a devout observer of the Law and well spoken of by all the Jews of that place." This description is compatible with what we know of the monks of Qumran, who represented a "return to the Law" movement within Judaism.

We turn now to another area of investigation. It has become fashionable since the discoveries at Qumran to find parallels between Christian teaching and practice and those of the Scrolls. This "parallelomania" has led some

20. For example, I. Rabinowitz has disputed this claim on the evidence that a copy of the *Zadokite Document* found in the Dead Sea caves seems to date from 37 B.C., later than the earthquake. See "A Reconsideration of 'Damascus' and '390 Years' in the 'Damascus' ('Zadokite') Fragments," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXIII (1954), 11-35. B. Gartner and D. Howlett view this reference to emigration to Damascus as purely symbolical. On the other hand, Schonfield, Frilich, and Milik look upon it as an historical event. The emigration has been regarded as a dramatic fulfilment of Amos 5:27, "Therefore I will take you into exile beyond Damascus."

21. O. Cullmann, "Beginnings of Christianity," *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, ed. K. Stendahl (New York: Harper, 1957), p. 25.

22. M. Burrows, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 119.

scholars to make flamboyant statements.²³ Never in the history of biblical scholarship has so much exaggeration been perpetrated by so many! It is wise, therefore, to sound a note of caution in the question before us. The truth probably lies somewhere between the two extremes. We have seen that the numismatic evidence lends support to the theory that the settlement at Qumran was abandoned for forty years and we may reasonably assume that not all the members of the Sect perished in the earthquake. Besides, Josephus and Philo both inform us that some Essenes lived in towns and cities,²⁴ and the *Zadokite* (Damascus) *Document* refers to Damascus. These facts all lend support to the theory that Paul had some encounter with the Essenes in and around Damascus.²⁵ Beyond that we cannot go. To date there has not come to light a single fragment of evidence that Paul and the Essenes ever came together either at Qumran or at Damascus.

But if there are no direct references to the Qumran Covenanters in Paul's Epistles or references to Paul in the Dead Sea Scrolls can we not shed some light on our question by a comparison of the ideas and language found in the respective writings? In the *Habakkuk Commentary* and in other scrolls as well, there is mention of a "Righteous Teacher" and his opponent, a "Wicked Priest."²⁶ In the second chapter of the *Habakkuk Commentary* there is a detailed account of this Wicked Priest, who was pure of heart when he first took office but who later persecuted the Teacher of Righteousness and tried to destroy him on the Day of Atonement. A great deal of speculation has taken place as to the identification of these two persons. On the one hand the Teacher has been variously identified as Menahem, Nehemiah, Ezra, Onias III, and Jose ben Joezer. On the other hand, the Priest has been identified with Alexander Jannaeus, Aristobolus II, Hyrcanus II, Jason, Menelaus, Eleazar, Antiochus Epiphanes, and Alcimus. With so much speculation going on it was inevitable that someone would see a resemblance between the Wicked Priest and Paul and between the Righteous Teacher and Jesus. This was done by J. L. Teicher of Cambridge. However, it seems certain, as Schonfield has said, that Teicher is "right off the rails in support of his own theory that the New Covenant Party represents the Judaeo-Christians, and that the Teacher of Righteousness is Jesus and the Wicked Priest is Paul."²⁷ The dating of the *Habakkuk* scroll is far from clear and it may belong to Hasmonaeon or Roman times.²⁸ There is no proof for Teicher's theory, intriguing though it may be. Furthermore, it could only apply to Paul *before* his conversion in his role as a persecutor of the Church.

23. See S. Sandmell, "Parallelomania," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXXI (1961), 1-13.

24. Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, II. viii. 4; Philo, *Quod omnis probus liber*, XII. 76.

25. Gal. 1:18; 2 Cor. 11:32; Acts 9:2, 22:6, and 26:12.

26. These two themes are also found in the *Hymns of Thanksgiving*, the *War of the Sons of Light with the Sons of Darkness*, and the *Manual of Discipline*.

27. H. J. Schonfield, *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Barnes, 1957), p. 94.

28. M. Black, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins*, p. 13.

We have previously noted that R. Bultmann identifies the Early Church with the Essenes through the Sect of the Nazarenes. In Acts 24:5 Paul is referred to as a "ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes." We are also told that Paul was a Pharisee (Phil. 3: 5; Acts 23: 6, 26: 5). O. Cullmann thinks that Primitive Christianity had its roots outside official Judaism but unlike Bultmann he sees the esoteric offshoot in the "Hellenists" (Acts 6: 1, 9: 29, 11: 20).²⁹ Matthew Black in his recent study of Christian origins makes a third identification. He sees the link between the Primitive Church and Qumran Judaism not in the Nazarenes, as did Bultmann, or in the Hellenists, as did Cullmann, but in the Hebraists or local Aramaic-speaking Jews of which the sect of the Nazarenes was a part. It is this group which, according to Black, provides the bridge with Qumran. He thinks that they may represent "the survival into New Testament times of the old pre-Ezra type of Hebrew religion."³⁰ In this connection it is interesting to note the Nazirite vow which Paul undertook at the suggestion of the elders at Jerusalem (Acts 21: 18-27). His purpose was to convince the Jews of his adherence to the Mosaic Law. However, the length of the vow (seven days) differs from the requirement of the Mishnah (thirty days).³¹

Paul's celibacy also finds a parallel in Essene practice. Josephus informs us that there were two orders of Essenes, those who took the vows of celibacy and those who did not.³² Paul's views on marriage in 1 Cor. 7: 25ff. perhaps reflect a contact with Qumran. Of particular interest in this respect is his use of the word *parthenoi* in 1 Cor. 7: 25ff., where it has usually been taken to refer to unmarried women. A study of the usage of the word in the Qumran writings and in Paul reveals that a far better sense is elicited if *parthenoi* is taken to mean celibate Christians *both men and women*. This view is further supported by the reference to *parthenoi* in Rev. 14: 4.³³ Paul himself, like the monks at Qumran, may have been a *parthenos* in this technical sense.

One of the central thoughts of the Qumran writings is the idea that man is dependent on God for all the good he does and that he cannot perform any good things of himself. In the *Manual of Discipline XI* we read:

For mankind has no way,
and man is unable to establish his steps
since justification is with God
and perfection of way is out of His hand.
All things come to pass by His knowledge;
He establishes all things by His design
and without Him nothing is done.³⁴

29. O. Cullman, "The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXIV (1955), 213ff. See also J. Daniélou, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Primitive Christianity*, pp. 91, 92.

30. *Op. cit.*, p. 74.

31. *Nazir*, 3.

32. *Bellum Judaicum*, 11. viii. 2, 13.

33. For a full discussion, see M. Black, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins*, pp. 83ff.

34. G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Pelican Books), p. 93.

These thoughts are echoed in Paul's words in 2 Cor. 3:5: "There is no question of our being qualified in ourselves: we cannot claim anything as our own. Such qualification as we have comes from God."

A further area of agreement between Paul and Qumran is in the doctrine of predestination. There is a striking parallel between the thought of Thanksgiving Psalm XV. 15-21 and Romans 9:

Thou alone it is
that hath created the righteous,
preparing him from the womb
for the time of Thy good pleasure,
to heed Thy covenant
and walk in Thy ways . . .

The wicked also hast Thou created
for the time of Thy good pleasure,
reserving them from the womb
for the day of slaughter,
because they walk in the way of the bad
and spurn Thy covenant . . .

All them that hate Thee hast Thou prepared
to wreak great judgments upon them
in the sight of all Thy creatures,
to serve as a sign and a token for ever,
to make known to all men Thy glory and strength.³⁵

Both Paul and the writers of the Scrolls speak of the "mysteries of God." The monks of Qumran believed that God had given insight to the Righteous Teacher "to whom God made known all the mysteries of the words of His servants the prophets" (VII. 4-5). And again in the *Hymns* VII. 12 we read:

I thank Thee, O Lord,
for Thou has enlightened me through Thy truth.
In Thy marvellous mysteries,
and in Thy loving kindness to a man of vanity.
and in the greatness of Thy mercy to a perverse heart
Thou hast granted me knowledge.³⁶

In Eph. 3:3 (assuming the Pauline authorship) Paul parallels these thoughts "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery: (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)."

The theologians of Qumran viewed life as a struggle between the forces of evil and the forces of good. Man is free to choose but once having made the decision he is ruled by the power to which he has surrendered himself. This reminds us of Paul's saying in Rom. 7:18-19: "For I know in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present; but how

35. T. H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956), p. 192.

36. Vermes' translation.

to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not that I do."

A comparison of the eschatological language used by the Qumran writers and Paul also suggests that they may have had contact with each other. In the *Hymn Scroll* the imagery is paralleled in Paul. For example, terminology drawn from childbirth (H. III. 1-18) is reminiscent of Paul in Rom. 2:20, 8:22; 1 Cor. 3:1; Gal. 1:15, 4:19. The symbol of a ship being tossed about by a hurricane is reminiscent of Eph. 4:14, "... tossed by the waves and whirled about by every fresh gust of teaching. . . ." The Qumran imagery of an earthquake echoes Paul's language in 2 Thess. 2:2, "That ye be not soon shaken in mind. . . ." The Qumran dramatization of the Last Judgment is paralleled in 2 Cor. 2: 17-4: 6. Another parallel is the struggle between Light and Darkness. One of the Cave Scrolls bears the title "The War of the Sons of Light with the Sons of Darkness." Similarly Paul speaks of "throwing off the deeds of darkness and putting on our armour as soldiers of the light" (Rom. 13:12) and asks the question, "Can light consort with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6: 14). The great conflagration at the End is predicted in the Qumran *Hymns* (III. 29ff.) and the *Wars of the Sons of Light with the Sons of Darkness* (XIV. 17), and is reminiscent of 2 Thess. 1:7ff. The Scrolls see the future community of God as the true temple of God (*Manual of Discipline*, VIII. 5ff.), much as Paul does in 1 Cor. 3:16-17 and Eph. 2:20-22.

Altogether there are more than fifty parallels of Pauline sayings in the Dead Sea Scrolls.³⁷ But this may not prove anything more than that Paul and the writers of the Scrolls drew their material from the well of ideas common to all the Jewish sects of the time, viz., the Old Testament and the Intertestamental Apocrypha.³⁸ It is also quite possible that there existed a collection of *Testimonia* which was used by both the monks of Qumran and Christian writers.³⁹ But what about the parallels which do not come from a common Biblical text? How are we to account for them? Professor K. G. Kuhn of Heidelberg refers to what he terms *Traditionszusammenhang*, by which he means the reservoir of postbiblical tradition from which the Qumran writers and Paul both drew.⁴⁰ This hypothesis accounts for the parallels not found in the Old Testament and is a much better explanation than the theory of personal contact between Paul and Qumran.

New Testament scholars have been accused of neglecting the Scrolls.⁴¹

37. T. H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures . . .*, pp. 348ff.

38. Paul usually quotes from the LXX version of the Old Testament but sometimes translates directly from the Hebrew (e.g. Rom. 9:7, 11:4, 12:19; 1 Cor. 3:19). At other times he uses a version unknown to us but similar to that used by the writers of the Scrolls.

39. J. M. Allegro, "Further Messianic Reference in Qumran Literature," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXV (1956), 174-88.

40. K. G. Kuhn, "Der Epheserbrief im Lichte der Qumrantexte," *New Testament Studies*, VII (1960), 334-6.

41. E. Wilson, *The Scrolls from the Dead Sea* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1955), p. 99; A. Powell Davies, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Mentor), pp. 82ff.

The allegation is false. Since nearly all the Scrolls were written in Hebrew and paralleled many of the books in the Old Testament it was natural that they should first be investigated by Old Testament scholars. But New Testament scholars have not been far behind in discovering if and where the Scrolls throw light on New Testament origins. Initially some wild exaggerations were advanced but now that the first fires have burnt down we can view the evidence through more critical eyes.

Our enquiry must lead to the conclusion that whether Paul actually did have contact with the men of the Scrolls either at Damascus or at Qumran cannot be determined. It remains an interesting possibility, but beyond that we cannot go. Certainly since the discovery of the Scrolls the suggestion first made by Klausner that Paul had contact with some sect at Damascus not unlike the Essenes has been somewhat strengthened. A study of the Scrolls reveals that Paul's affinities are probably closer to Qumran than to Jerusalem. But the case for his association with the Essenes in the wilderness monastery at Qumran does not so much break down as go by default. The mystery remains. Unless new archaeological finds produce definite proof we cannot say that Paul visited the monks of Qumran during his three years in Damascus and Arabia. There is simply no case to take before the jury.