

BOOK REVIEWS

PAUL AND QUMRAN. STUDIES IN NEW TESTAMENT EXEGESIS. Edited by Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, O.P. Chapman, 1968; 254 pp.

Jerome Murphy-O'Connor has brought together into a single volume the most important articles that have been written on the links between St. Paul and the thought of the Dead Sea Scrolls. This volume, together with Stendahl's *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, should bring every reader in touch with what is being said by responsible scholars on the subject of the influence of Qumran on Christian thought.

Not that there is any close unity of opinion. As always in such sensitive areas, some scholars prefer to emphasise the differences, others the similarities. P. Benoit, in the opening essay, maintains that where Qumran has apparently influenced New Testament thought, 'the themes which are borrowed are secondary and do not form the essence of the Christian message'. Moreover, 'when they are used, they are profoundly transformed, precisely because they are put in the service of a new and original reality'. K. G. Kuhn, on the other hand, who is responsible for opening up some of the most significant lodes in the Qumran material, such as its Iranian connections and the understanding it gives of the Last Supper, says in his study of the Epistle to the Ephesians: 'It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the relationship of the language and style of the Epistle to that of the Qumran texts can hardly be explained except on the basis of a continuity of tradition'. Only the Christology differentiates the two traditions.

Kuhn's examination of Ephesians is of the greatest interest. He first looks at its distinctive style. Its heavy syntax, with 'loosely-connected tapeworm sentences' studded with an abundance of words like 'all'; nouns linked by genitive constructions: these features are now paralleled for the first time by the Qumran style, which provides a close precedent. Anyone who is familiar with the scrambled syntax of the sectarian writings cannot fail to recognise in Ephesians precisely the same manner of expressing thoughts.

There are close links also in the paraenetical section of the Epistle. The three capital sins, fornication, greed, impurity (5:3) echo the three 'nets of Belial' of CD iv 15f and *Test. Levi* 14:5-8, fornication, gain, and defilement of the Holy Place. The fact that the three sins are subsumed under the heading of idolatry (Eph. 5:5) is also an Essene view. Similarly, the light-darkness dualism of Eph. 5:9 corresponds to the ethical dualism of Qumran, not the substantial dualism of Gnostic systems.

The snatch of hymn in Eph. 5:14 ('Awake, thou that sleepest . . .') is also to be re-interpreted against the Qumran background of repentance from the sleep of sin and entrance into a salvation-community where the appearance of God to the sinner is like the rising of the sun. The hymn is now seen as a summons to conversion from a sinful way of life, rather than as a summons to a Gnostic type of illumination, as formerly thought.

The investigation into Ephesians is extended further in the same volume by Franz Mussner. Qumran and the Epistle have a remarkably similar use of the word 'mystery'; share a conception of the community having a spiritual bond with the inhabitants of heaven, and as being a temple and a city; think of salvation in the same terms; and share technical terms like 'to make nigh' and 'unitedness'. Like Kuhn, Mussner stresses that the Christology of the Epistle is quite original.

It appears that Ephesians is undergoing a critical about-face in the same way as the Johannine Gospel and Epistles. Far from being the product of a Hellenised, close-to-Gnostic modification of Christianity, its ideas and terminology are now seen to be familiar in a pre-Christian Palestinian form of Judaism. The consequences of this for the history of development of Christian ideas will be enormous.

Other essays in the volume deal with the fact that the Teacher of Righteousness now seems to have preceded Paul as a teacher of justification through grace (Walter Grundmann); a further study of the term 'mystery' in Pauline writings (Joseph Coppens); an examination of the 'meteor fallen from the heaven of Qumran into Paul's epistle' (II Cor. 6:14-7; 1) (Joachim Gnilka); a treatment of the problem of the angels in I Cor. 11:10 (Joseph Fitzmyer) and the courts of the Church of Corinth (Mathias Delcor). The combined impact of these studies is to set Christian thought even more firmly against the background of contemporary Jewish mystical sects.

As with any new source of religious parallels, it is possible to counteract an excessive caution by a facile assumption that everything can be accounted for in terms of the new material. But one has only to set the New Testament side by side with the Scrolls to see that this is certainly not the case. The New Testament deals with a new event: the Scrolls with a laborious attempt to renew the Old Covenant on its own terms. The Qumranian speaks of his election to wisdom and understanding, but still looks forward to the coming of the Messiah and the release from the agonised struggle against sin which he is at present undergoing. The Christian has found the Messiah, he no longer needs to struggle, and his illumination is rather from the light of Christ than from any

esoteric knowledge of mysteries. It is in terms of these new elements, rather than by questioning the fact of the continuity itself, that resistance to exaggerated claims ought to be made.

—BARBARA THIERING

THE TREE OF LIGHT, A STUDY OF THE MENORAH, L. Yarden. (Cornell University Press; 162 pp.; Australian Price \$16.00.)

Yarden's account of the development of the Menorah, the seven branched candelabrum, is not only good reading but is also a visual experience. It is a good example of the way in which a carefully researched scholarly text can benefit from well-chosen photographs and sketches. Nearly one half of the volume (80 pp.) is illustrative material, and, whilst some of the photographs are pleonastic (e.g., figs. 147-172, 175-186), for the most part they save a deal of description and have an intrinsic interest of their own. The illustrations turn an interesting but concise survey of the literature relating to the menorah from a periodical article, albeit of exceptional length, into a useful monograph. They make it possible for the author to emphasise certain arguments, clarify points which have been the subject of controversy and to add new material of his own in a way that would otherwise have been impossible in a text of this length.

In seven brief but generally well-documented chapters the author traces in a reverse sequence the origin of the seven branched candelabrum, considers its symbolism, form, distribution (as far as China) and even the fate of individual menorot. He shows beyond reasonable doubt that the menorah was of pre-exilic provenance, as the Torah indicates, and traces its development as a stylization of the tree of life which is sometimes identified with the cosmic tree, the axis, or world pillar of the ancient Near Eastern world. It may come as a surprise to some to learn that the cross and the Menorah are forms of the same 'tree'.

Yarden's work relies heavily on that of predecessors in that he has marshalled evidence from a wide field of scholarship and thus he tends to state the conclusions reached by others somewhat baldly without repeating the stages in the argument. This technique is satisfactory in view of the range of material to be dealt with in most cases: however, there are times when he is led into a situation where he presents neither argument nor thesis but a series of disconnected points that rely for their relationship on a missing stage of reasoning or on an unproven hypothesis in a cited source. Two examples of this 'pointilism' are found

seriatim on page 37. The first deals with the anointing of Israelite rulers and appears in the text to be disconnected with what precedes or with the reference following, that is to Solomon's 'Crown' as mentioned in the Song of Songs.

The author's concise style can be tantalizing when he deals with some of the classic problems of the ancient world. For example, he considers the fate of the menorah of Herod's temple, that is the menorah depicted on the arch of Titus, and traces it with reasonable precision to the seventh century A.D. and then briefly indicates that it might have been in Constantinople until the thirteenth century A.D. Whilst there can be no certainty as to its subsequent fate it would have been most acceptable for the author to have permitted himself a word of speculation to the extent of indicating who were the Crusaders who looted the Byzantine palace in 1204 A.D. and the possibility, however remote, of the menorah turning up again in a Mediterranean shipwreck. Again, all too briefly he considers the possibility that the menorah on the arch of Titus was not *the* temple menorah which may have been among temple treasures hidden to keep them from falling into the hands of the Romans (the possible evidence of the Copper Scroll of the Dead Sea Scrolls) but a substitute of lesser importance. In this context he fails to consider the possible evidence of the incised menorah found in the current round of excavations on the temple site in Jerusalem, though he does include a photograph. This incised menorah differs from the one on Titus' arch. (Cf. the *Israel Exploration Journal*, vol. 20, No. 1-2, 1970, pp. 4, 5.)

There are other problems which he ignores or deals with in the most cavalier fashion. Whilst Yarden mentions, briefly, the eight branched candelabrum, the Chanukah lamp, as having a general kinship to the seven branched temple candelabrum he does not explore this relationship, rather referring the reader to a series of articles on the origin of the festival. Moreover, a drastic omission, is his failure to examine why the stylization of the tree of life took the form of seven branches, except to note that it is a "Number connected with the Mesopotamian mysticism of seven common to several ancient religions" (p. 37). (It should be added that he does consider the post facto interpretation given to seven in relation to the planets.) Even if this is the author's way of indicating that there is no traceable logic in the number of branches the subject is surely worthy of a broader note.

Despite these criticisms, the book is a pleasant afternoon's reading and a worthwhile addition to the library.

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