

THE TEMPLE AND THE COMMUNITY IN QUMRAN AND THE NEW TESTAMENT by Bertil Gärtner. Pp. xii + 164. (Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 1). Cambridge: C.U.P., 25s.

The ministry of Jesus Christ took place while the temple at Jerusalem was still standing, and from time to time there are references to it, to its sacrifices, and to its priesthood, in the traditions of his teaching. When he cleansed the temple on the day after Palm Sunday, it was because it was profaned in his eyes. It may be a surprise to some readers to discover how well his action fits into the Jewish thought of the times. The temple and its institutions were the focal point of the striving after holiness of all Jews, even those of the dispersion. And consequently the language of the temple was used in a transferred sense in connection with the pursuit of holiness in general. The works of the Law can be described as spiritual sacrifices. The Pauline concept of the church as a spiritual temple follows easily from such usage.

Against this general background Dr Gärtner examines the teaching of the Qumran Sect revealed in the Dead Sea Scrolls. We are at once alerted that the question of the relation of Christianity to its Jewish antecedents is at stake. Temple and priesthood, calendar and sacrifices, are constantly mentioned in the texts. But it appears that the sectarians regarded the existing temple as profaned by an unlawful priesthood. It is probable, though not absolutely certain, that they refused to send sacrifices to the temple at Jerusalem. In any case they applied the language of the temple to themselves in a way that is strikingly similar to the New Testament. To mention only one example, we read in 1QS ix that 'the right offerings of the lips as a righteous sweet savour' are atoning sacrifices, and that 'the men of the community shall separate themselves and become a holy house for Aaron . . . a Holy of holies'. In fact they regarded themselves as the true temple, held in readiness for the time when evil

would be extirpated and a new temple era would be ushered in. It is not only turns of phrase, but this eschatological orientation of the community's self-consciousness, which are echoed in St Paul's letters and I Peter, and other New Testament passages, which refer to the spiritual temple.

Dr Gärtner is prepared to concede that there is more than coincidence in this, and that Qumran, which lies closer to the thought of the New Testament than any other element in the Jewish background, may have exerted an influence on the early church. But he recognizes a significant feature of Christian temple symbolism which has no parallel at Qumran, the ambivalence, or double polarity, of Christ and the church. The Pauline concept of the Body has no precedent. Moreover, he takes this factor back into the teaching of Jesus himself: 'I tell you, something greater than the temple is here' (Matt. xii. 6). And whereas the Qumran sect saw the 'mercy' which is better than sacrifice (Hos. vi. 6) in the keeping of the Law, the church follows Jesus himself in seeing it as the love of God 'breaking through the Law in the person of the Messiah, and revealing something new' (p. 116). This conclusion is in line with much other recent work on the relation of the Scrolls to Christianity. Presented here, in a well-documented book of fine scholarship, it inspires confidence.

This is the first of a new series of monographs to be published as supplements to the journal *New Testament Studies*. It is excellently produced and printed. This volume has certainly made a fine start to the series, which will command the attention of all serious students of the New Testament.

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