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"THE SCROLLS FROM THE DEAD SEA: THE RIDDLE UNRIDDLED"

By PROFESSOR G. R. DRIVER, M.C., M.A., F.B.A.

The following is a résumé of the talk given to the Society by Professor G. R. Driver, of Oxford University at a meeting held at the Rooms of the Royal Society, on Wednesday, June 19th, 1957. It is understood that a pamphlet on the subject will shortly be published by Blackwell's, of Oxford.

Admiral Sir Cecil Harcourt in the chair.

THE lecturer said that he had long been dissatisfied with the pre-Christian date assigned to the Scrolls from the Dead Sea and that recent discussions with Dr. Cecil Roth had confirmed his view that they were of post-Christian origin; finding themselves in substantial agreement he and Dr. Roth had decided to put forward their conclusions in a joint pamphlet which Sir Basil Blackwell hoped shortly to publish.

One of the documents referred to the captivity of the Jews in 586 B.C., and the archaeologists said that the monastery and cave at Qumran were destroyed by the Romans in the Jewish revolt which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Some period and some episode must then be found within these dates into which the composition and copying of the Scrolls could be fitted.

There are two serious objections to postulating a Seleucid or Maccabaean date for the Scrolls. First, a fragment of a commentary on Nahum makes the "Kittim," the external enemy of the group from whom the Scrolls came, follow the Greeks (*i.e.* Seleucids); they must therefore be the Romans. All the other evidence fits in with this view. Second, no suitable character for the Teacher of Righteousness has been found in the whole pre-Christian period. He must be a teacher with a considerable following backed by an extensive literature, he must be capable of leading a national revolt against a foreign enemy, and he must be harassed by internal enemies. None of the persons hitherto suggested fits the bill; all are little men, heroes of some trifling story, none of them of the calibre of the head of a great religious or political party or of a national leader.

The evidence must therefore be re-examined. The first type of evidence was Roman. Dr. Yadin had shown that the equipment and organization described in the War of the Sons of Light and Darkness was Roman, though he confined it too closely to the Republican period. The dagger which Josephus described as that carried by the Zealots c. A.D. 50 corresponded exactly with that borne by the Sons of Light; their trumpets and organization were those which Josephus himself, when commander in Galilee in A.D. 67, introduced amongst his levies. The Commentary on Habakkuk described the principal enemies as the "Kittim," a well-known term for the Romans; and the War spoke of the "Kittim of Asshur-Syria" and those in Egypt, in clear allusion to the Roman legions

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under Vespasian at Antioch and Titus in Egypt. The Commentary further speaks of the rapid succession of the rulers of the Kittim "by the counsel of a wicked house," which may well refer to A.D. 69, the year of the five emperors; it also describes how the Kittim sacrificed to their standards, which happened in Roman history only once, in A.D. 70 when the legions stormed Jerusalem, set up their standards in the precincts of the Temple and then sacrificed to them.

The second type of evidence comes from Jewish history, which tells of an episode exactly corresponding to the story which can be extracted from allusions in the Scrolls. In the summer of A.D. 66 Eleazar, a young man of priestly lineage who was then the Captain of the Temple, persuaded the people to withhold the customary sacrifices to the Emperor and *populus Romanus*, thus raising the standard of revolt. Immediately one Menahem, called a "sophist" or teacher of wisdom by the Jewish historian, came up with a band of followers from Masada by the Dead Sea, clad in royal robes ostensibly to worship in the Temple but really to claim the leadership of the revolt; for he came of a line of rebels against Rome. His grandfather in 46 B.C. and his father in 6-7 B.C. both had been executed for raising rebellions against the Imperial powers' claims to levy taxes; and the father, one Judah "who rose up . . . and drew away much people after him; he also perished" (Acts V 37), had founded a new group, the followers of the Fourth Philosophy, whose main tenets were an unconquerable passion for liberty and unwillingness to tolerate any other ruler but God. In A.D. 46-48 Judah's two brothers also had been crucified for stirring up an abortive rebellion. Menahem, who in A.D. 66 was then in his sixties, was not likely to let the young captain take the lead in rebellion against Rome; but Eleazar stirred up the people and drove out Menahem on to Mount Ophel, where he was murdered. Of his followers, his relative Eleazar (a different Eleazar) escaped to the Dead Sea and lived to lead the last desperate resistance at Masada, where he committed suicide in A.D. 73; the other, Absalom, was killed near the same spot. These events took place immediately after 3 Tishri, *i.e.* very near to the Day of Atonement, which falls on 10 Tishri. According to the Scrolls the Wicked Priest pursued "to swallow up" the Teacher of Righteousness on the day of "their" atonement, *i.e.* on the Day of Atonement of this group, who observed a calendar of 52 instead of 48 weeks and whose Day of Atonement therefore would probably not exactly coincide with that of the orthodox calendar; but not enough details are known of this divergent calendars to show if the two Days of Atonement did or did not coincide. The Scrolls further say that the "house (=followers) of Absalom" were silenced and did not help the Teacher at the critical moment, and that only those escaped who were of the "house of Judah," *i.e.* Eleazar the relative of Menahem, who was probably grandson of Menahem's father Judah the Galilaean, mentioned above. Menahem, like his father, is called a "sophist" or "teacher of wisdom" and his identification with the unnamed Teacher of Righteousness of the Scrolls leaps to the eye, supported as it is by the identification of Absalom and Hezekiah; the identification of the Wicked Priest with Eleazar, son of the High Priest and Captain of the Temple, follows from these identifica-

tions and is supported by a number of small points. For example, Josepheus says that Eleazar was a very rash young man when he stirred up the Revolt; the Scrolls say that the Wicked Priest's "heart became high" when he took office. That the Teacher of Righteousness was almost certainly a priest and that Josepheus does not describe Menahem as one is immaterial; he does not always describe persons who were priests as such and he mentions Menahem only in this section. Further Menahem seems to have been claiming priestly if not royal privilege in the Temple when he was driven out and murdered. The Scrolls, too, do not describe the Teacher of Righteousness as the Messiah; but parallel passages strongly suggest that the Teacher of Righteousness of the day, whether Menaham or any other member of the family holding that office, had Messianic claims. The Talmud, too, in discussing the name and period of the Messiah, gives as one possible claimant Menahem (grand)son of Hezekiah and says that his period will be "365 years according to the solar calendar," *i.e.* according to the Calendar of Jubilees and Enoch, which was also the calendar of the group from which the Scrolls emanated. Finally, even the secondary characters can be identified with reasonable probability in this same period. That in the lecturer's view some of the Scrolls, notably the Commentary on Habakkuk, must have been composed after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, does not seriously militate against the archaeologists' conclusion that Qumran was destroyed c. A.D. 68. There is no need to suppose that all, even if most, of the Scrolls were written there or that all were put away in the caves at the same time; some may have been added to the collection afterwards. The lecturer concluded by saying that what he had said was a bare outline of his and Dr. Roth's theory and that they hoped to show in their published pamphlet how even the smallest details, even actual phrases, agreed in the Hebrew and Greek accounts of the dramatic events.

The meeting closed with a sincere and enthusiastic vote of thanks to Professor Driver from all present, the Chairman stating that all would be looking forward with interest to the promised pamphlet.

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