

TERMINOLOGICAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS*

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The Gospel of John has long been the subject of controversy concerning its authorship, provenance, and theological background. John differs from the other three gospels in subject matter, arrangement of events and theological emphasis, and it remains unclear whether the author of John used the other gospels as sources. John's thought, like that of the rest of the New Testament, can be called eschatological, looking always toward the "last day," on which salvation and judgment will finally be realized. But as one writer has observed, "whereas elsewhere in the NT the predominant eschatological contrast is that between the present age and the age to come—a temporal contrast—in John it is between two orders of existence, the temporal and the eternal" (Sanders 1962, 938). Accordingly, John's world tends to deal in contrasts; life versus death, spirit versus flesh, light versus darkness. This so-called "dualism" has been the concern of much of the scholarly literature of this century.

His concepts involve the conflict of two worlds and two series of antithetical powers. On the one side, there is the world of Christ, the Word, and the powers of life, light, truth, and love of the brother. On the other side, there are in opposition the prince of this world, death, darkness, falsehood, and hatred of the brother (Mowry 1954, 79).

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Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, most scholars held that Hebraic thought was monistic. Because this conception does not supply the proper paradigm for understanding the dualistic theology of John, many have sought to establish connections between the dualism of John and the ethical and ontological dualism as expressed in pagan literature; most notably the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the Mandeans, and Gnostic writings. The very earliest fragments of the New Testament are from the Gospel of John (one from the first half of the second century). None of the pagan literature upon which John supposedly depends can with certainty be dated earlier than the gospel, although it has been argued that the Gnostic writings depend upon an earlier tradition of which no evidence has survived.

Gnosticism

"Gnosticism" is a collective name for a number of widely varying sects which flourished in the second century A.D. and continued for several centuries more, surviving even to the present day in a small group of Iraqi peasants called Mandeans, or "knowers." A generic definition of Gnosticism is impossible, for Gnostic systems of thought are as numerous as they are obscure, but it may be loosely defined as "the doctrine of salvation through knowledge." Most Gnostic systems include a redeemer figure who descends to earth and then returns, having brought knowledge of an unknown God, and thus salvation, to a special class of followers. This concept is similar to that of John:

And this is eternal life, that they know Thee the only true
God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent (Jn. 17:3).

Bultmann (see 1957, 162-171) has attempted to reconstruct a "pre-Christian" Gnosticism which he believes could have influenced the author of John. The problem with any such theory has been the lack of extant Gnostic literature from the early centuries, and a reconstruction of Gnosticism from late sources, or from polemics directed against it by early Church theologians, is obviously unsatisfactory. In 1945, with the discovery of a Coptic Gnostic library near Nag Hammadi (the ancient site of Chenoboskeia) in Upper Egypt, the picture changed somewhat. Scholars are now able to compare the Gospel of John to the Nag Hammadi texts, a body of Christian Gnostic literature from the 2nd century. Some vague parallels indeed exist between these texts and John; but as Brown (1966, LIII)

puts it, "John would be out of place among the Gnostic works found at Chenoboskeia." It is clear to most scholars that Gnosticism, at least as we know it from the Nag Hammadi texts, is later than the Gospel of John, although it is certainly true that the earliest Gnostics used John in their teaching. The most striking similarities between John and the pagan literature are not in content, but in theological terminology. As Sanders observes:

[The *Corpus Hermeticum*, the Mandeans, and the Gnostics] all use more or less the same basic terminology, found also in John—"light" "life," "truth," "Logos," "knowing," and "believing"—and this is used as an argument for their influence upon John. But if John's use of this terminology can be adequately explained otherwise, from literature that can be dated with much greater probability to his period, then Hermetic, Mandaean, or Gnostic influence is much less likely, and, insofar as this literature preserves more ancient elements, these are to be used to illustrate the beliefs of the Hellenistic world to which John was addressed rather than those which actually influenced his thought. John is basically Jewish Christian, though designed (as were Paul's letters) to be understood by men brought up in a different tradition (Sanders 1962, 944).

The Dead Sea Scrolls

An alternative to the theories of Gnostic origin came less than two years after the discovery of the Nag Hammadi texts, when a young bedouin, searching for a lost goat on the west coast of the Dead Sea near Khirbet Qumran, entered a cave and found a number of jars containing the first of what have become known as the "Dead Sea Scrolls." Within a few months of their appearance, the claim was made that the scrolls were the writings of the Essenes (an obscure Jewish sect mentioned by Philo, Josephus, and Pliny the Elder), and that the site of Qumran was their main residence. This theory won many adherents, and it remains the scholarly consensus today. Speculation concerning the relationship of these "Essene" writings to the New Testament began early. In fact, with the advent of the Essene theory most scholars started to look to Essene sectarianism, rather than traditional rabbinic Judaism, for the roots of early Christianity.

Before long it became widely assumed that John the Baptist who, like the members of the Qumran sect, lived in the wilderness (Luke

3:2) of Judea and was derived from a priestly family (Luke 1:5), "was a kind of Essene, and since Jesus was baptized by John and took over his mission, he too must have been closely related with this group" (Sanders 1962, 801). Some have even identified Jesus with the "Teacher of Righteousness," the wise leader of the Qumran sect, who, like Jesus, was persecuted. John Allegro, a member of the International Editing Team which is charged with editing and publishing the scrolls, is perhaps the most strenuous proponent of this theory. For Allegro (1984,191), the historical Jesus is nothing more than a "Christian myth," but "behind the Jesus of western religious tradition there did exist in history an Essene Teacher of Righteousness of a century before. He was a leader of men, but not a magician." According to Allegro (1984, 192), Christianity originated when one faction of the Jewish messianist community emerged triumphant and developed a cycle of stories which "purported to offer to the general reader the real-life history of a Jewish rabbi who, in three short years of a preaching ministry in a hostile Palestinian environment, succeeded in changing the world."

While most scholars would not accept Allegro's proposal, it is fair to say that the majority of those who have written on the subject believe, on the basis of evidence from the scrolls, that the Essenes had a profound influence on nascent Christianity. Dupont-Sommer (1961, 373) rejects the idea that the Teacher of Righteousness was identical with Jesus, but he stresses that "the documents from Qumran make it plain that the primitive Christian Church was rooted in the Jewish sect of the New Covenant, the Essene sect, to a degree none would have suspected, and that it borrowed from it a large part of its organization, rites, doctrines, 'patterns of thought' and its mystical and ethical ideals."

The effect of all this speculation on Johannine scholarship has been pervasive. Building on the Essene theory, some writers suggested that "what was interpreted as Gnosticism in the Gospel is really a dualism (light versus darkness), which we find current in Palestine at the time of Christ" (Murphy 1957, 66-67). Albright (1956,169-170) argues that "the books of the Essenes from the first century B.C. provide the closest approach to the Gospels (particularly St. John) and the Pauline epistles, so far as the conceptual background and terminology are concerned," when, on the other hand, there is now "less evidence than ever to support the claims of Gnostic influence" on the Gospel of John. Although there were a few early voices of moderation (e.g. Teeple 1960), many scholars

rushed to embrace this hypothesis, which conveniently replaced the even more tenuous Gnostic theories. According to a great many writers, the long-standing problem of the Gospel of John has now been solved. To put it another way, "the debate on the original background of the Gospel of John appears to be definitely closed" (Danielou 1958, 108-109). Essene sectarianism has replaced Gnosticism as the theory of choice for the theological background of John.

The evidence used to support the alleged link between John's Gospel (and his letters) and the Qumran writings is both linguistic and conceptual. Scholars have tried to point out similarities in both specific phrases and general concepts, and have ascribed a common background, based in Palestine, to the two bodies of literature. Some have even suggested that the relationship is one of literary dependency—that John had read one or more of the "Essene" documents and consciously used them in the writing of his gospel. While scholars are largely undecided as to the exact nature and extent of the connection, the focus has for the most part been on the Qumran document known as the "Manual of Discipline" or the "Community Rule."¹

This important and controversial scroll (henceforth referred to as 1QS) was found in Qumran Cave 1, and dates to the first half of the first century B.C. Fragments of the same work were found in Caves 4 and 5, a fact which seems to indicate that it was regularly copied. The text of the scroll itself, which is eleven columns long, is thought to describe the doctrine of the Qumran sect and the rules by which its daily life was governed. It opens with a list of what is expected of those who wish to join the sect, or "enter into the covenant" (1QS 1:20). The ceremony of initiation is then described, which is followed by priests invoking a blessing on "all that have cast their lot with God" (1QS 2:1-2) and the Levites invoking a curse on "all that have cast their lot with Belial" (1QS 2:4-5). A summary of the doctrine of the sect is given, followed by various statutes relating to life in the community, and a detailed penal code. The scroll ends with a hymn of thanksgiving.

Many parallels in thought have been cited between John and 1QS. Work has been done comparing the "dualism" of 1QS with that of John; Charlesworth's careful study (1972, 101) led him to conclude that "the dualistic opposition between light and darkness is not

¹ On the *Manual of Discipline*, see Wernberg-Moller 1957; Murphy-O'Conner 1969; Wernberg-Moller 1969; Pouilly 1976. For an English translation see Gaster 1976.

something each developed independently, but rather something that betokens John's dependence on the Rule." A more tangible connection concerns the alleged similarity of specific theological concepts. The fact that both writings contain references to "eternal life" (see appendix A) is cited by many scholars, as is the idea of "examination of spirit" (see appendix B) which is found in both texts. The sect's concept of creation by God's "knowledge" is similar to the Johannine idea of creation through the "Word" (see appendix C). In addition, both John and the scrolls declare that salvation is not of the "flesh" but through the "spirit" (see appendix D). But in the case of John and IQS, the parallels in thought are neither numerous nor impressive enough to conclude that the author of John was directly influenced by the sect's thinking. To be convincing, a theory that the author of John "borrowed" in some way from IQS must have at its base specific phrases and expressions which both texts have in common.

The Dead Sea Scrolls Reconsidered

Before moving on to a more detailed examination of the relationship of John to IQS, we should mention a recent development which may effect Johannine scholarship considerably in the future. Norman Golb, Professor of Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic Studies at the University of Chicago, has recently challenged the scholarly consensus that the scrolls were written by the Essenes, and that the site of Qumran was their home (see Golb 1980; 1985). Prior to the outbreak of "Qumran fever" in the late '40s and early '50s, the site of Qumran was considered to be a fortress of the Judean wilderness, occupied by a military garrison. The ruins consist of a kitchen, storage areas for grain, stables, large water cisterns, a watchtower, and remnants of a fortification system. After the first scrolls were discovered in Qumran Cave 1, the cisterns were reinterpreted as ritual baths, and scholars theorized the existence of a scriptorium on the now destroyed second floor (on the basis of three inkwells and two or three tables discovered in the room below). Were it not for the assumption that Qumran was the site of an Essene monastery, the conclusion that this room was a scriptorium would never have been reached, for it is not supported by the archaeological evidence.

In addition, Golb points out that "during the past decade Israeli archaeologists have detected in the now-ruined fortresses and encampments of Judea a system of concentric defenses of Jerusalem Khirbet Qumran is designated there as a fortress of the fifth

concentric circle" (Golb 1985, 76). This, together with the fact that a Roman road heading directly to the capital has been discovered just north of the site, leads to the conclusion that the structure at Qumran was not designed as an isolated desert retreat for a sectarian Jewish group, but "a fortress of strategic importance in the Judean wilderness and, judging by the indications of military attack on it in approximately A.D. 69 or 70, it was still a fortress at that time" (ibid.). This is the very time when the Essenes were supposedly inhabiting the site. If the site was indeed a fortress, as seems to be the case, then we are left with two possibilities: either the Essene monks (who, according to Philo, had no interest in weapons or war) were part of an armed militia, charged with manning a fortress, or *the inhabitants of Qumran were not the Essenes*. And if Qumran was not the residence of the Essenes, then there is no reason to suppose that the variety of texts which we collectively call the Dead Sea Scrolls (and which never mention the Essenes by name) belonged to them.

In fact, with the exception of the inkwells, no scribal materials or manuscript fragments of any kind have been found at the Qumran ruins. Further, no documentary evidence of the community was found in the caves, which simply contain scribal copies of various literary works but—with one minor exception—not a single autograph text. In sharp contrast to this, subsequent searches in the caves at Wadi Murabba'at and Nahal Hever yielded a horde of documentary texts, including personal and administrative letters. These ancient manuscripts, among which were also literary texts, were hidden in caves for protection during the period of the Second Revolt. Unlike the Qumran caches, they include genuine autograph texts, numerous personal names, and place-names of the Judean Desert. Clearly, Jews living in the Judean desert took care to protect personal and administrative documents as well as literary works. In Golb's words:

... if the scrolls were originally located at the Qumran settlement, and if they were all gathered up in haste from the so-called scriptorium and elsewhere at the site when the Essenes learned of the Romans' approach, how could original documents such as letters and legal deeds have been so meticulously excluded from storage in the caves? Is it reasonable to believe that those leading the "motherhouse" of the Essenes (as Qumran has been called by responsible scholars) would have left the deeds and records of the sect, accumulated over

perhaps a hundred years or more, to perish totally in the ruins while taking care to hide hundreds of literary scrolls? (Golb 1985, 75)

Golb argues brilliantly that the Essene theory resulted primarily from the order in which the archaeological finds were made. If the order of the discoveries had been reversed (with Qumran Cave 1 and the Manual of Discipline, which contains several ideas reminiscent of—but not identical to—Essenism, being found last), then the Qumran-Essene theory would never have developed. Once the Essene theory took hold, the new evidence of subsequent discoveries was regularly rejected or contorted to defend that theory. This pattern culminated, and found its ultimate absurdity, with the rejection of the Copper Scroll. The Copper Scroll, found in Qumran Cave 3, is a text in two parts which was written with great difficulty on expensive copper. It records 64 caches of treasure and manuscripts hidden throughout the Judean desert. Why would the Essenes have been so interested in treasure, and, assuming that they were, how could monks have acquired so much wealth? Scholars, hard-pressed to reconcile this scroll with the Qumran-Essene theory, have dismissed the scroll as a work of fiction, a collection of legends, or, as de Vaux is reputed to have said, the "whimsical product of a deranged mind" (Golb 1985, 79). Yet a recent dissertation by David Wilmot of the University of Chicago has demonstrated that the hiding places mentioned in the Copper Scroll are not obscure legends, but the locations of actual caches in the Judean desert.

There is another explanation for the Copper Scroll, and for the hundreds of other scrolls and scroll fragments found in the region. After the fall of Galilee to the Romans in A.D. 67, the fall of Jerusalem seemed inevitable, and "under these circumstances the inhabitants of Jerusalem would have had little choice but to hide their objects of wealth and precious scrolls" (Golb 1985, 80). Therefore, when word came to Jerusalem of the fall of Galilee, the most precious writings of the inhabitants of Jerusalem would have been taken down to the Judean desert and hidden in caves, with the help of local inhabitants such as the soldiers of the Qumran garrison. This would account for the Copper Scroll, the varied nature of the other scrolls, and the fact that the pottery in the caves matched that of the Qumran ruins.

If this is the correct interpretation, then our understanding of the Dead Sea Scrolls will need to be radically revised. A non-Essenic origin of the scrolls would explain the many internal inconsistencies

found within the scrolls when considered as a coherent unit, and would also explain the problems with statements found in contemporary sources; for instance, Pliny says that the Essenes were celibate, yet the skeletons of women were found at their "monastery," and no mention of this important aspect of their faith is made in the Manual of Discipline. As for the Manual of Discipline itself, in recent years a number of scholars have noted "anti-Essenic" tendencies in this document, which never specifically refers to the Essenes. Or perhaps, as a few have suggested, the Manual of Discipline does not represent the code of an actual sect at all, and it should be placed under the category of apocalyptic works.

And what would all of this do to the Essenes⁷ supposed impact on the new religion of Christianity? For years, scholars have been using the "Essene" scrolls, which number about 800, to prove that the sect was much more widespread and influential than had been previously believed. If the conventional interpretation is wrong, and these scrolls were not produced by the Essenes, then these writings are not the literature of a single, influential sect, but of the various theological factions found in Jerusalem in the 1st century A.D. All statements made in the past about the "inevitable" influence of "so pervasive a sect" as the Essenes on the primitive Christian Church would have to be modified. And the more extreme theories, which declare John the Baptist, Jesus, and John all to have been strongly influenced by Essene thought, or to have actually been Essenes themselves, would be rendered ridiculous. Understandably most scholars are reluctant to abandon the Qumran-Essene hypothesis. Without it, some of the most complicated and speculative theories in the history of biblical scholarship would fall like a house of cards.

Terminological Connections

All of this once again raises the question of the theological background of the Gospel of John, and its connection to the Manual of Discipline. This is not the place for an exhaustive textual comparison of John and 1QS, although several such studies have been done,² most arguing that the relationship between John and 1QS is one of literary dependency, and that the author was writing under the direct influence of Essene thought. The evidence usually adduced to prove that more is involved here than just a common cultural background are certain phrases and expressions common to

² Two notable studies include Teeple 1960 and Braun 1966, 97-138.

both John and 1QS. We will simply examine some of the parallels most often cited by scholars to prove such a dependency, and ask if, in the light of recent developments, such a theory can continue to stand.

"the spirit of truth" / "spirit of truth"
to pneuma tēs alētheias / rwh 'mt
(see appendix E)

Qumranian dualism sees the world as being in the grip of two opposing spirits, each created by God; the spirit of truth, and the spirit of wickedness or perversity. God has set them "in equal parts until the end of time," with contrary purposes: "abomination of truth is the work of iniquity; abomination of iniquity is the way of truth" (1QS 4:16-17). The spirit of truth seems to be identical with the "holy spirit," the "prince of light" and the "angel of truth." The spirit of perversity, on the other hand, seems to be Belial, the "prince of darkness." God has further divided mankind into two distinct and opposing groups, the "sons of light" and the "sons of darkness" (1QS 1:9-10), headed by the two opposing spirits (1QS 3:20-21). Man could "walk in the direction" of either of these spirits, which are constantly struggling in his heart (1QS 3:17-19; 4:23-24).

When comparing the language of 1QS with that of John, we find a striking similarity with one notable difference. The phrase "spirit of truth" is found in both sets of literature, and is not specifically found in the Old Testament, a source which both traditions had in common. But while John refers to the "spirit of truth," which will "guide you into all the truth" (Jn. 16:13), there is no parallel to the "spirit of perversity" of 1QS. If the author of John were dependent on 1QS, certainly one would expect his gospel, which has such strong dualistic overtones, to provide an opposing force to an agent as important as the "spirit of truth." Charlesworth (1972, 99) has suggested that the answer involves a modification of the "rigid dualism" found in the scrolls. In Jn. 12:31, Jesus asserts that "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out" Charlesworth believes that "the world" performs the same function in John as the "spirit of perversity" does in 1QS, and that John "knew and deliberately toned down" the rigid dualism of the Essenes by showing that the evil ruler was in the process of being cast out.

What Charlesworth does not mention is the passage from one of John's letters (1 Jn. 4:6): "We are of God. Whoever knows God listens to us, and he who is not of God does not listen to us. By this

we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (Gk. "*plane*"). The term "*plane*" can also mean "deceit," and Albright (1956, 168) believed the phrase to be a direct translation from the Hebrew phrase used in 1QS. Certainly the phrase could indicate some sort of a terminological link between the two Johannine works and 1QS, a phrase which, at first glance, seems to indicate a common "spirit-spirit" dualism. Cross, however, has rightly observed that the Johannine dualism finds a different form of expression; in Johannine literature the "spirit" is clearly *the spirit of God or of Christ* (1 Jn. 4:13 "he has given us of His own Spirit"), whereas in 1QS the spirit of truth is at a "greater distance" from God, and seems to be a hypostatized angelic entity (Cross 1961, 213). If the "spirits" in 1QS are identical with the "angels" in 1QS, then the link between John and 1QS would clearly be more terminological than conceptual.

Boismard, however, has acknowledged this problem and taken an entirely different approach to the Qumran passages and the passage from John's first letter. According to Boismard, the "spirit of truth and the spirit of perversity" in 1QS are *not* identical with the two angels (or princes) mentioned in 1QS 3:20-24. He claims that the passage about angels is an "insertion," and that the spirits "correspond to the rabbinic concept of the two 'inclinations,' which lead a man to good or evil" (Boismard 1972, 162). By understanding the "spirits" in 1 John in a similar manner, Boismard seeks to harmonize the two concepts on a level quite different from that of ontological dualism. If true, the link between the two works would be both terminological and conceptual, and it would indeed provide evidence (however slim) for an influence of the theology of 1QS on the author of John. Boismard's explanation, however, is much too speculative. His attempt at emending the text of 1QS by claiming that 1QS 3:20-24 is an "insertion" is motivated only by his prior assumption that the theology of John is "closely dependent" on the theology of Qumran, and not by the force of any internal textual evidence.

While the exact phrase "spirit of truth" is not found in the Old Testament, the idea which underlies it, that of a holy, truth-inspiring "Spirit," which God "pours out" on His followers, is found throughout early Jewish thought. Consider the following passage:

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2).

In addition, the equivalent of the spirit of "perversity" or "error" is

also found in the Old Testament. In this case the spirit seems to be, as in 1QS, a being distinct from God:

Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, saying, "I will entice him." And the Lord said to him, "By what means?" And he said, "I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets" (1 Kings 22:21-22).

Thus the concept of the two spirits is found within the Old Testament, and it should not surprise us that a similar idea should appear in a later piece of Jewish literature, or in a New Testament gospel.

The preponderance of the data does not support the claim that John's "spirit of truth" is identical with that of 1QS. In 1QS the "spirits" are distinct angelic creatures; in John the spirit of truth is not an angel created by and distinct from God, but the spirit of God or Christ Himself. While the terminology used in both sets of literature is similar, the theology underlying it is incompatible. The concept clearly has its origin in the Old Testament, a source used extensively by both John and 1QS, and the terms as used in John cannot be taken as evidence of dependency on 1QS.

"the Holy Spirit" / "the holy spirit"
to pneuma to hagion / rwh qwds^v
(see appendix F)

The concept of the "holy spirit" in Qumran literature is a complicated one, and the term is used in a number of different contexts. God reveals His will to the prophets by His "holy spirit" (1QS 8:16), and will cleanse the spirit of perversity from man by the "holy spirit" (1QS 4:20-21). In the Damascus Document (found in Caves 4,5 and 6) men, too, seem to possess a "holy spirit," and are blamed for rendering "unclean the holy spirit within them" (CD 5:11), although no such usage of the word appears in 1QS.

In Johannine literature, the term "Holy Spirit" occurs only twice, and it seems to be identified with the Paraclete (Jn. 14:26). Most of the commentators mention the parallel with the "holy spirit" found in 1QS, and use it to support their theory of literary dependency. But since the Paraclete appears nowhere in the Qumran literature, the common use of "holy spirit" would seem to be a mere matter of terminology, with no conceptual links. Leaney, however, has admitted this difficulty, and tries to show that the identification of the Paraclete with the Holy Spirit of Pauline theology was a later addition to the Gospel of John. Leaney suspects that John 14:26, which

renames the Paraclete as "*to pneuma to hagion*," originally did not contain "*to hagion*," and therefore should actually read "the Paraclete, the spirit whom my Father will send in my name—"The "*to pneuma*" would therefore merely be an expression consistent with a belief in a number of different spirits (Leaney 1972, 49). The idea of the Holy Spirit as expressed in Paul would therefore be alien to the author of John, and the term as he uses it would have originated elsewhere. Leaney traces it to the Qumran literature; John's "spirit" or "Paraclete," whom God is about to send in His name, is therefore a personal being, something like an angel. The sect represented by 1QS would have no trouble with such a concept. According to Leaney, the "holy spirit" is, in Johannine terms, nothing other than the Paraclete and the Spirit of Truth. Likewise in Qumran terms, the "holy spirit" is identical with the Spirit of Truth (Leaney 1972, 53).

This theory is much too "ingenious" to be true. The one piece of "evidence" on which it hinges calls, once again, for the alteration of an ancient text (Jn. 14:26), and Leaney does not account for passages in the Damascus Document (CD 5:11; 7:4) which indicate that even men can have a holy spirit. The position that the term "Holy Spirit" supports the case for literary dependency is further eroded by the fact that the identical term occurs in the OT (e.g. Isaiah 63:10), a source common to both John and the writer of 1QS. On such dubious evidence, the similarity in terminology cannot be said to reflect a similarity in theological orientation. Much as in the case with "the spirits of truth and perversity," the terminology appears to be the same but the concepts represented by it differ.

"sons of light" / "sons of light"

huiioi phōtos / bny 'wr

(see appendix G)

A much more striking parallel is the expression "sons of light," part of the light-darkness metaphor found throughout both Qumran literature and the Gospel of John. The dualism of Qumran, with its ethical and ontological implications, is continually developed along the lines of a light-versus-darkness metaphor. The "prince of light" rules over the "sons of light," who "walk in the ways of light." The "angel of darkness" rules over the "sons of darkness," who "walk in the ways of darkness." Those who join the community must pledge to "love all the sons of light," and to "hate all the sons of darkness" (1QS 1:9). These "sons of light" were in fact the members

of the sect themselves, and those who would join them for the final battle. They were those who had made their vows of entry into the Covenant, the elect who were ruled by the "prince of light" and guided by the "spirit of truth" in the ways of light. The "angel of darkness" was bent on causing the "sons of light" to stumble, but the "angel of truth" was "always there to help the sons of light" (1QS 3:24-25). In the final battle of the chosen against the un-chosen, the War Scroll attests that "the company of the divine and the congregation of the human shall engage side by side in combat and carnage, the Sons of Light doing battle against the Sons of Darkness with a show of godlike might" resulting in a redemption which will last forever (1QM1).

A similar light-versus-darkness motif is found in the Gospel of John, and is introduced in the prologue, which tells us that "in Him [the Word] was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (Jn. 1:4-5). But the "dualism" of John is not as cosmic as the prologue might lead us to believe. The leader of the "sons of light" in John is the "Logos" who "became flesh." *Jesus Himself* is the light, and the "sons of light" are simply those who believe in the light (Jn. 12:36). In fact, "to all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God" (Jn. 1:12). There is no parallel to the "sons of darkness" of 1QS; on the other side are those who "love darkness," those whose "deeds are evil" (Jn. 3:19). They oppose the light because "every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed" (Jn. 3:20).

Thus in John, the darkness was not created by God in the way that God "created the spirits of light and darkness" in Qumran thought (1QS 3:25). John's darkness seems merely to be evil people, those who, like the Pharisees, did not receive the light (Jn. 9:41). The world, which is the source of darkness, was created by God (Jn. 1:10), and is the object of His love—so much so that "He gave His only Son" (Jn. 3:16). Most passages indicate that in John the "sons of light" are not, as in 1QS, a predetermined elect—rather, Christ is the "Savior of the world" (Jn. 4:42) and those who are in darkness have the potential to receive the light. There are not two groups of men, those from "above" and those from "below" (as in 1QS 3:15ff.), but only Jesus above, and the division is caused by man's individual response to Jesus. John's "dualism" is therefore more ethical than it is cosmic; the "above," which is characterized by light, life, truth and spirit, and the "below," which is characterized by darkness, death,

error and flesh, signify, not two levels of existence, but the men on earth who have either accepted or rejected the revelation of Jesus Christ. The light and the darkness are not equal and opposing metaphysical forces, as they are in the scrolls.

Joining the sect described in 1QS was not an act of free choice, but something undertaken by one predestined to be a son of light (see: Charlesworth 1972, 79). In contrast, the Johannine "sons of light" and those "who walk in darkness" are not foreordained; no absolute determinism exists here as in 1QS. We can only conclude that, if the author of John borrowed the terminology of 1QS, he certainly did not accept the cosmic and ethical implications of its theology. And the likelihood of a merely terminological link is diminished by the fact that the phrase "sons of light" appears elsewhere in the New Testament (1 Thessalonians 5:5); clearly it was not unique to the Qumran texts. The "sons of light" parallel therefore does not provide evidence for a case of literary dependency.

"walk in the darkness" / "to walk in all the ways of darkness"

peripatēse en tē skotia / llkt bkwl drky hws"k

(see appendix H)

This expression continues the light-versus-darkness metaphor. In 1QS, those who are ruled by the prince of light "walk in the ways of light," while those ruled by the angel of darkness "walk in the ways of darkness" (1QS 3:20-21). To "walk but in the ways of darkness and in the prudence of evil" belongs to those who follow the "spirit of perversity" (1QS 4:11). In 1QS the darkness is a clear, opposing, metaphysical force, consisting of the predetermined "sons of iniquity" led by the "angel of darkness."

In John, he who follows Jesus "will not walk in darkness" (Jn. 8:12). The light (Jesus) is to be with them a little longer, and Jesus warns His disciples to "walk while you have the light, lest the darkness overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes" (Jn. 12:35). In Johannine theology, the darkness seems to be rejection of the truth, for "if we say that we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth.." (1 Jn. 1:6-7).

While the expression "to walk in darkness" is common to both sets of literature, the theology behind them is again quite different. Just as with the phrase "sons of light," neither the cosmic nor the ethical implications can be harmonized. Those who "walk in darkness" in 1QS are a predetermined, equal and opposing force to the "sons of

light," while in John they are those men who choose not to receive the light brought by Jesus, and who therefore "do not live according to the truth." The assumption of literary dependency is further weakened by the fact that the light-versus darkness metaphor is found throughout the Old Testament, and the specific phrase to "walk in darkness" appears several times therein (Psalms 82:5; Isaiah 9:2;50:10).

"the light of life" / "in the light of life"
to phōs tēs zōēs / b'wr hhyym
(see appendix I)

This expression is a peculiar one, and it has been used extensively by those wishing to establish that the author of John was dependent on 1QS. In the theology of 1QS, the "spiritual apprehension of God's truth" concerning the ways of man results in the expiation of iniquities, and men are then able to "gaze upon the true light of life" (1QS 3:7). The phrase is not clearly defined, but perhaps means here the Divine truth concerning the meaning and purpose of life. In John, Jesus says, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (Jn. 8:12). Perhaps the meaning of "the light of life" in this passage is approximately the same here; the teaching of Jesus dispels ignorance of the Divine purpose and the way to salvation. Teeple (1960, 16), however, suggests that in both sources the phrase is associated with immortality, and supports his view by recalling its use in the Old Testament: "For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, yea, my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of life" (Psalm 56:13). Whatever the meaning of the phrase, the fact that it occurs in the Psalms, a source available to the author of John and quoted by him (e.g. Psalm 69:9 - Jn. 2:17), invalidates the assumption that he borrowed the phrase from 1QS.

"the works of God" / "works of God"
ta erga tou theou / m' 'sy' I
(see appendix J)

In 1QS, an apprehension of God's works and a reliance on His mercy come to men "through communion with the spirit of truth" (1QS 4:4). Considered in this context, God's works are essentially a desired object of knowledge, and in Qumran literature its meaning is similar to that of the phrase as used in ancient Jewish literature generally. But in John, the people ask Jesus, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" Jesus answers, "This is the work of God,

that you believe in Him whom He has sent" (Jn. 6:28-29). In this passage, the works of God seem to be something that God wills men to do, His will being that they believe in His Son—again pointing out that individual redemption is possible. In another passage from John, the "works of God" evidently refer to the miracle of the healing of the blind man (Jn. 9:2-3). The phrase appears many times in the Old Testament (e.g. Job 37:14; Psalms 46:8; Ecclesiastes 11:5). The use of the phrase in John is not typical of that in 1QS or of other ancient Jewish literature, and there is absolutely no reason to suppose that John's use of "the works of God" is an example of literary dependency.

Conclusion

The parallels examined in this paper, which constitute the evidence most often used to support the theory of John's dependency, are not striking enough to prove that the author of John read the Manual of Discipline or was influenced by its ideas in any way. With a single exception—the "spirit of truth"—all of the six parallels in terminology discussed above can be found either in the Old Testament (with which the author of John was very familiar) or elsewhere in the New Testament. And undoubtedly the phrase "spirit of truth" has its origin in the concept of the "truth-inspiring" spirit of God found throughout the Old Testament. But, while nearly all of John's terminology can be found within traditional biblical texts, most of the commentators are set on proving an "Essenic" origin, and they rarely mention the biblical parallels which both sets of literature had in common.

As for parallels in John to "Essenic" thought patterns, there are so few that most writers choose instead to concentrate on mere terminology for proof of John's dependency. Even if the Manual of Discipline is a genuine work of the Essenes, and the Essenes were a widespread and very influential group, the textual evidence for its influence on John is too scant to be regarded as anything more than a highly speculative theory. The terms are the same but their meaning is different; there are linguistic parallels, but few parallels in thought. The sect represented by 1QS was still firmly attached to the Law of Moses, while the author of John, as a Christian, was devoted to Jesus and His teachings. Despite their common use of the Old Testament, these two texts represent a very different theology. And why would a gospel writer intentionally borrow the terminology of a sect but none of its theology?

Due to the nearsightedness of those who have written on the subject, we seem to have learned little about the conceptual background of the Gospel of John since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. My intention is not to suggest a new theory for the background of John, but merely to point out the deficiency of the current Essene hypothesis. At present, John must be seen against the wider backdrop of Jewish and primitive Christian thought as it existed in the first century A.D., and not as the product of an obscure sectarian influence. My hope is that in the coming years the excesses of "Qumran fever" in many areas of New Testament research will be recognized. To be sure, Jesus did not teach, and John did not write, in a cultural vacuum; they had to express their very new ideas in a language which people would understand and feel comfortable with. The undeniable similarity in terminology can be explained simply by the fact that it was current in the time and area in which the gospel writer lived. The terms and phrases common to both John and the scrolls were either part of the general theological vocabulary, or the gospel writer used them intentionally for evangelistic purposes.

The methods of literary criticism are important tools, useful for improving our understanding of the various books of the Bible and how they were written. But it should be used with restraint, and theory must never be stated as fact. Wildly speculative theories based on shreds of evidence serve only to cloud the understanding. As hard as it may be for some scholars to admit, sometimes "I don't know" is the best answer. If John differs from the other gospel writers in his outlook, scholars should be willing to admit that, at this point, we just don't know why. ■

APPENDIX: PARALLEL ALIGNMENT OF SELECTED PASSAGES*

A.	A.
Jn. 3:14-16 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have <i>eternal life</i> .' For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have <i>eternal life</i> .	1QS 4:6-7 And the guerdon of all that walk in [truth's] ways is health and abundant well-being, with long life and fruition of seed along with eternal blessings and everlasting joy in the <i>life everlasting</i>

*Translations of the New Testament are from the Revised Standard Version, as found in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971). Unless otherwise noted, translations of 1QS are from Gaster 1976. Italics are mine.

B.

1 Jn. 4:1-3 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but *test the spirits* to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this will you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God.

C.

Jn. 1:2-3 He [the Word] was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

D.

Jn. 3:5-6 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

E.

Jn. 16:13 When the *Spirit of truth* comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

1 Jn. 4:6 We are of God. Whoever knows God listens to us, and he who is not of God does not listen to us. By this we know the *spirit of truth and the spirit of error*.

B.

1QS 5:23-24 They shall *examine their spirit* and their deeds year by year to promote each according to his understanding and the perfection of his ways or to retard him according to his swerving (trans. Vermes 1956).

C.

1QS 11:11 By His knowledge do all things exist, by this purpose He establishes every being, and apart from Him shall nothing be done (trans. Vermes 1956).

D.

1QS 4:20-22 Then, too, God will purge all the acts of man in the crucible of His truth, and refine for Himself all the fabric of man, destroying every spirit of perversity from within his flesh and cleansing him by the holy spirit from all the effects of wickedness. Like waters of purification He will sprinkle upon him the spirit of truth, to cleanse him of all the abominations of falsehood and of all pollution through the spirit of filth....

E.

1QS 4:23-24 Perversity shall be no more, and all the works of deceit shall be put to shame. Thus far, the *spirits of truth and perversity* have been struggling in the heart of man. Men have walked in both wisdom and folly.

1QS 3:17-19 Now, this God created man to rule the world, and appointed for him two spirits after whose direction he was to walk until the final Inquisition. They are the *spirits of truth and of perversity*.

F.

Jn. 1:33 "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the *Holy Spirit*."

Jn. 14:26 "But the Counselor, the *Holy Spirit*, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."

G.

Jn. 12:35-36 Jesus said to them, "The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, lest the darkness overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become *sons of light*."

H.

Jn. 8:12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not *walk in darkness*, but will have the light of life."

Jn. 12:35 Jesus said to them, "The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, lest the darkness overtake you; he who *walks in the darkness* does not know where he goes.

1 Jn. 1:6-7 If we say that we have fellowship with him while we *walk in darkness*, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we

F.

1QS 4:20-21 [God will destroy] every spirit of perversity from within his flesh [and cleanse] him by the *holy spirit* from all the effects of wickedness.

G.

1QS 1:9-10 [Everyone who wishes to join the community must pledge] to love all the *children of light* (bny 'wr), each according to his stake in the formal community of God; and to hate all the *children of darkness*. . . .

1QS 3:24-25 All of the spirits that attend upon [the Angel of Darkness] are bent on causing the *sons of light* to stumble. Howbeit, the God of Israel and the Angel of His truth are always there to help the *sons of light*.

1QS 3:13 To the teacher. Let him instruct and teach all the *sons of light* concerning the orders of men (trans. Vermes 1956). . . .

H.

1QS 3:20-21 All who practice righteousness are under the domination of the Prince of Lights, and *walk in ways of light*; whereas all who practice perversity are under the domination of the Angel of Darkness and *walk in ways of darkness*.

1QS 4:11 [To the spirit of iniquity belong] stiffness of neck and hardening of the heart to *walk hut in the ways of darkness* and in the prudence of evil (trans. Vermes 1956).

walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

I.

Jn. 8:12 Again Jesus spoke to them saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the *light of life*."

J-

Jn. 6:28-29 Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the *works of God*?" Jesus answered them, "This is the *work of God*, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

Jn. 9:2-3 And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the *works of God* might be made manifest in him."

I.

1QS 3:6-7 For it is only through the spiritual apprehension of God's truth that man's ways can be properly directed. Only thus can all his iniquities be shriven so that he can gaze upon the true *light of life*.

J.

1QS 4:2-6 ... the implanting in his heart of... that sense of the Divine Power that is based at once on an apprehension of *God's works* and a reliance on His plenteous mercy ... these are the things that come to men in this world through communion with the spirit of truth.

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