

The New Israel
The Community of Matthew and the Community of Qumran

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[NB This now includes some differences from the version sent to Albert Fuchs for publication in *Studien zum neuen Testament in seiner Umwelt*. 28.8.99]

A recent study¹ has painted a convincing picture of the community which is reflected in the Gospel of Matthew as a beleaguered group of Christian Jews in the prosperous city of Antioch, perhaps the most flourishing port on the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean. It was a city which sported a large Jewish population, who were sternly unpopular and persecuted towards the end of the first Christian century, especially after the Fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in 70 AD. It was also the city where the followers of Jesus were numerous and noticeable enough to be first called 'Christians', and at one time the scene of an important explosion of disagreement between Peter and Paul about the value for Christians of observing the Jewish Law. The actual disagreement reported in Galatians 2 was about whether Christians who were also Jews could associate at table with gentile Christians who did not observe the Law. Paul saw that the consequences of a decision in this matter affected the whole status of gentile Christians, and so whether there must be two groups of Christians, one of whom would no doubt be considered inferior to the other. It was perhaps on this occasion that the full implications of his law-free gospel became clear to Paul. It certainly seems to have been in consequence of this explosion of disagreement that Paul split from Barnabas and John Mark, set off on his own and formed his own missionary team.

It is attractive to see Matthew's Gospel as the Gospel (one might almost say 'the bible') of the group from which Paul separated himself². Paul believed that Christ had fulfilled the Law once and for all, by taking the curse upon himself (Ga 3.13) or by being constituted the sacrifice for reconciliation (Rm 3.25); there was no further fulfilment of the Law to be done. By contrast, the Matthew group still had their eyes fixed on the Law. They believed that by being Christians and living according to the principles of the teaching of Jesus they were fulfilling the Law with a fuller and more perfect righteousness than the Jewish community in the midst of which they were living. Thus they formed a sect, according to the useful definition proposed by Joseph Blenkinsopp, 'A sect is not only a minority, and not only characterized by opposition to the norms accepted by the parent-body, but also claims in a more or less exclusive way to be what the parent-body claims to be'³. The claim to fulfill the aims of the parent-body more perfectly than the parent-body itself naturally brought on them the intensity of persecution which is reflected in the Gospel. To be a minority persecuted by a persecuted minority is not an enviable situation. It would explain the virulence of the denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, from 5.20 ('Unless your righteousness abounds more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven') to the sevenfold denunciation of chapter 23 ('Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites'⁴), the dislike of seeing them preening themselves on

¹David C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism* (Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1998).

²Cf. J. Andrew Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism* (Fortress Press, 1990), p. 113: Matthew 'has constructed a Sermon which serves as a kind of constitution for the community concerning their relationships and their internal life.'

³'Interpretation and the Tendency to Sectarianism' in E.P. Sanders (ed.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* (London, SCM Press, 1981), p.1.

⁴That characteristic Matthean figure, which Michael D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew* (London, SPCK, 1974, p. 79) characterizes as 'the offensive rhetorical question opening with an abusive vocative'.

street-corners (6.2, 5, 16), and the flogging in 'their' synagogues (10.17).

In many respects, apart from the matter of persecution, the situation of this community was similar to that of Qumran, so that it is fascinating to trace similar attitudes and beliefs betrayed by the gospel of Matthew and the Community Rule of Qumran⁵. For Matthew's community the indications come chiefly from the first chapter of the Sermon on the Mount and from the Community Discourse (chapters 5 and 18), while for the Qumran community much may be learned from the introduction to the Community Rule (1QS) alone.

The Introduction to the Rule

[The Master shall teach the sai]nts to live according to the Book of the Community Rule, that they may seek God with a whole heart and soul, and do what is good and right before him as he commanded by the hand of Moses and all his servants the prophets, that they may love all that he has chosen and hate all that he has rejected, that they may abstain from all evil and hold fast to all good, that they may practise truth, righteousness and justice upon earth and no longer stubbornly follow a sinful heart and lustful eyes, committing all manner of evil. He shall admit into the Covenant of Grace all those who have freely devoted themselves to the observance of God's precepts, that they may be joined to the counsel of God and may live perfectly before him in accordance with all that has been revealed concerning their appointed times, and that they may love all the sons of light, each according to his lot in God's design and hate all the sons of darkness, each according to his guilt in God's vengeance⁶.

Moses the legislator

The first point to strike the reader of Matthew's Gospel is that the Master's teaching is put forward as observance of the teaching of Moses. Underlying both is the suggestion of contrast to another way of life which is also claimed to be according to the teaching of Moses. For the Jew this is a way of claiming that such teaching is the fulfilment of the tradition. The Community at Qumran of course considered themselves to be the only true exponents of the traditions of Moses, having rejected and separated themselves off from the community centred on the Temple, on the grounds that common, mainstream Judaism did not validly accord with the true reading of the Law. This is the first criterion of a sect, the claim to fulfil the aims of a parent body more validly than the parent body itself. Just as the contrast between Matthew's own community and the justice of the scribes and Pharisees underlies so much of the teaching in Matthew, and especially the Sermon on the Mount, so the contrast insistently underlies the first paragraph of

⁵Useful background to this is given by J.H. Charlesworth, *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Doubleday, 1992), especially in the editor's first chapter, 'The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Historical Jesus', which lists major similarities and differences. The discussion remains however, somewhat loose, and there is certainly no discussion specifically of the situation reflected in Matthew.

⁶*The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, by Geza Vermes (Penguin, ⁴1995, p. 70)

the Community Rule between the members of the Community for whom the Master is legislating and ‘those that God has rejected’, the sons of darkness who ‘stubbornly follow a sinful heart and lustful eyes, committing all manner of evil’.

Throughout the Gospel of Matthew Jesus is presented insistently as the new Moses, who is to give the new Law, the true fulfilment of Moses. (On the other hand, Paul focusses on Abraham rather than Moses, claiming in Galatians and Romans that his law-free gospel makes Christians more truly the heirs of Abraham than are the law-observant Jews). Matthew’s second chapter is devoted to showing that Jesus’ first months echo Moses’ childhood. As Moses escaped the persecution of the Pharaoh, so Jesus escapes that of Herod, driven into exile and returning at the bidding of an angel (Mt 2.19 even quotes the Moses incident in Exod 4.19-20 to make the point clear). As Moses spent 40 days and 40 nights on the mountain in Exod 24.18, so Jesus spends 40 days and 40 nights in the desert (Mt 4.2). As Moses was taken up onto Mount Nebo to see the whole country of Canaan (Dt 34.1-4), so Jesus is taken up onto a very high mountain to see all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour (Mt 4.8). Thus when Jesus takes his seat on the mountain to promulgate his new Law in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5.1) it is unmistakably as Moses that he does so. His teaching there is not the abolition of the Law and the Prophets but their fulfilment (Mt 5.17-18). This is the heading, which, in the fashion of the rabbinic *ab wetoledoth* (‘father and descendants’ - a heading followed by instances) sets the tone for the six corrections or expansions or re-interpretations of the teaching of the Law which follow in Mt 5.21-48: ‘You have heard how it was said to our ancestors... but I say to you...’. This is only a more generous presentation of the prefatory remark in the Qumran Rule: ‘The Master shall teach the saints to do what is good and right before him as he commanded by the hand of Moses and all his servants the prophets’ Jesus has the same function in Matthew as the Master has in 1QS.

Justice and the Law

The purpose of the two sets of rulings is expressed in the same terms, the fulfilment of all justice. Both Jesus and the Master are teaching their disciples how they may, as the Rule says, ‘practise truth, righteousness and justice upon earth’. This is evidence in both writings of a predominant justice-directed orientation. Legal terminology is prominent in both sets of writings. Legal terms abound in Matthew’s presentation of the way of life for his community. Jesus justifies his paradoxical baptism into the community of repentance by John as their joint action of ‘fulfilling all justice’ (Mt 3.15). The two halves of the Beatitudes which form the initial characterisation of the members of the Matthean community are sewn together by the same purpose: so the fourth Beatitude blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, and the eighth those who are persecuted in the cause of justice. The whole purpose of the disciple’s conduct can be summed up, ‘Seek first the kingdom and its justice’ (Mt 6.33).

Justice is essentially a legal concept, and further on in both sets of writing the same sort of legal approach is strongly in evidence in detail. In the Community Rule a strict and detailed system of reprimands, penalties and exclusions is laid out, with prescriptions of the judges and courts to be used in each case. Matthew does not have the same type of legislation (for reasons to which we will return), but he does have a different sort of legal language, a good deal of casuistry which immediately suggests a set of legal prescriptions, envisaging a whole series of different sets of circumstances and prescribing the action appropriate for each: ‘if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you...’ (5.23), ‘if a man looks at a woman lustfully...’ (5.28), ‘if anyone hits you on the right cheek...’ (5.39).

A Secret Revelation

This teaching is not simply run-of-the-mill tradition, but is special teaching, the result of a revelation. Such is the hint given in the introduction to the Rule, 'in accordance with all that has been revealed'. It becomes clearer later in the Rule, where it is said that the Master 'shall do the will of God according to all that has been revealed from age to age' (9.13). The teaching is not available to everyone, but is a new, restricted and secret teaching, specially revealed to this age and open only to members of the Community: 'he shall conceal the teaching of the Law from men of injustice, but shall impart true knowledge and righteous judgement to those who have chosen the Way... and shall instruct them in the mysteries of marvellous truth' (9.17-20). This constitutes a notable difference from the oral rulings of the rabbinic tradition, which were held to have been handed down (orally, to be sure) from the time and teaching of Moses himself. In the same way as 1QS Matthew shows that Jesus' teaching is a special revelation, and so not available to all. Jesus also can say 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to little children... No one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him' (11.25-27). After Matthew's first story-parable the covert nature of the revelation becomes even clearer, 'to you is granted to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not granted' (13.11)⁷.

Participation in a special revelation is, however, only one element in the strong *Zusammengehörigkeitsbewusstsein* which is an important element in each community. Both have cut themselves off from the parent body around them. Both are at odds with it, and feel threatened by it, although there is no sign that the Qumran community was actually persecuted. Each community has a strong sense of fraternal obligation to its members. The strength of fraternal feeling in Matthew may be gauged from the frequency of the transferred use of 'brother'. This presumably derives from the saying of Jesus about his true mother and brothers (Mark 3.31-35 and parallels), but it is applied to fellow-Christians elsewhere in the gospels almost exclusively by Matthew (5.22-24, 47; 7.3-5 [with parallel in Luke]; 18.15 [with parallel in Luke], 21, 35; 23.8). The casual and unexplained use shows that it was an appellation current in Matthew's readership. Similar instructions are clear also at Qumran: 'They shall love each man his brother as himself; they shall succour the poor, the needy and the stranger. A man shall seek his brother's well-being' (6.21). More striking is the parallel condemnation of verbal abuse, present in both, though stronger in Matthew. In the Qumran Rule 'whoever has gone about slandering his companion shall be excluded from the pure meal of the Congregation for one year and shall do penance' (6.18). In Matthew there is a triple condemnation of similar verbal abuse, and at least the ultimate penalty is more severe: 'Anyone who calls his brother "Fool" will answer for it in hell fire (5.22). The density of Matthean verbal characteristics leaves no doubt that this saying was formulated by Matthew.

⁷It is perhaps significant that Matthew here uses the plural of 'mysteries', departing from the Markan singular. Mark designated the single, whole eschatological mystery, due to be revealed at the end of time. By using the plural Matthew fragments this one mystery into its several components. It may be an important point of contact that the plural is used also in the Community Rule.

Reconciliation of Differences

Condemnation is not, however, the only reaction to fraternal failing. In each community there are some fine passages about delicate fraternal correction within the community. In the *Damascus Document*, for example, 'They shall rebuke each man his brother according to the commandment, and shall bear no rancour from one day to the next' (7.1⁸). Matthew has his equivalent to this in the use he makes of the parable of the Lost Sheep. While Luke presents the point of this parable as joy in heaven at the repentance and return of the sinner (Lk 15.3-7, followed by the parables of the Lost Coin and the Prodigal Son), for Matthew the point of the parable is the duty of fraternal care, the duty of the Christian to go in search of the Lost Sheep (Mt 18.10-13).

Fraternal reconciliation is perhaps the matter in which the detailed prescriptions for the two communities come closest together, with an exactitude which intriguingly suggests some shared tradition⁹. Each has a three-stage process: a private attempt at reconciliation, admonition before witnesses, report to the community.

Matthew 18.15-17: If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you: *whatever the misdemeanour, the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain the charge* [Dt 19.15]. But if he refuses to listen to these, report it to the community, and if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a gentile or a tax-collector.

1QS 5.25-6.1: They shall rebuke one another in truth, humility and charity. Let no man address his companion with anger or ill-temper or obduracy or with envy prompted by the spirit of wickedness. Let him not hate him because of his uncircumcised heart, but let him rebuke him the very same day lest he incur guilt because of him. And furthermore, let no man accuse his companion before the Congregation without having admonished him in the presence of witnesses.

The Rule of Qumran prescribes temporary or permanent expulsion from the community for a number of faults, both ritual and inter-personal. Some of the rulings prescribe swingeing penalties for fairly minor instances of lack of personal consideration or courtesy, again showing that standards were high in these matters. 'If he has failed to care for his companion, he shall do penance for three months' (7.6). 'Whoever has interrupted his companion whilst speaking, ten days' (7.10). 'If he has murmured against his companion unjustly, he shall do penance for six months' (7.18). Such severity may seem over-reaction, just as to many 'If your right eye should cause you to sin, tear it out and throw it away' (Mt 5.29) seems over-reaction. On the matter of an unreconciled grievance, however, Matthew is the sterner, insisting on expulsion from the community after the failure of the three progressive attempts at reconciliation, for the tax-

⁸Vermes, *op. cit.*, p.102

⁹Herbert Braun, *Qumran und das Neue Testament* (Tübingen, Mohr, 1966, p. 39) claims that there are no rabbinic parallels to this.

collector is the paradigm-case of one who is to be excluded from the community¹⁰.

It is striking that this and the case of verbal abuse of the brother are the only cases where expulsion is decreed in Matthew, in contrast to Qumran, where this penalty is far more widely invoked. It shows the overriding importance of fraternal unity in Matthew's community. Each set of legislation is designed to protect the community, but different values are held as paramount in the two communities. For Matthew confraternity is of overriding importance, whereas at Qumran there is also a close concern for formality and good order. In the Qumran Rule there are two sets of misdemeanours to which penalties are attached, the first being mostly misdemeanours against the community, the second more concerned with holiness and purity. Even the first list suggests a sense of dignity and order which goes with the careful stratification of the community. It begins with offences against the instructions of a senior brother and against a priest, before going on to such offences as lying, malice, going to sleep or spitting in the Assembly, indecency and murmuring against the authority of the community (6.25-7.25). The second list of offences is more nebulous, circling round such values as unfaithfulness to the spirit of holiness (8.20-9.12). Again and again in the documents of Qumran the importance of purity and holiness is stressed. The spirit is not far from the Holiness Code of Leviticus. There is a consciousness of being a priestly people which is altogether lacking in Matthew.

From the point of view of formality and good order it is tempting to suggest that the values of Matthew's community are those of a small or young community. Although it is considerably more developed than Mark's itinerant group, it has not yet encountered many internal or structural difficulties and can still rely on the charisma and inspiration of its founder. In the history of the Church and religious orders it has occurred again and again that only when the charismatic founder-figure disappears do rules become necessary, and a certain concern for hierarchy and dignity replace enthusiasm. Is it simply that the Qumran community is older and more disillusioned - perhaps even more middle-aged? Whether this is a sufficient explanation of the differences between the two communities under discussion must depend on an estimate of their respective concepts of their own community.

Concepts of the Community

From a negative point of view there is great similarity between the concept of itself displayed by each of these communities, for each in some way considers itself to be the holy people, split off from the people once claimed to be holy and from their Temple.

For Matthew the chief designation, albeit an eschatological designation, of the community is the Kingdom of Heaven. This is of course Matthew's equivalent of Mark's 'Kingdom of God', using, with typical Jewish reverence, a circumlocution for the divine name, substituting the place of residence for the name itself¹¹. The firm indication of the key relationship of the Kingdom to

¹⁰G. Forkman, *The Limits of Religious Community: Expulsion from the Religious Community within Qumran, within Rabbinic Judaism and within Primitive Christianity* (Lund, Gleerup, 1972, p.124)

¹¹For similar English expressions one might compare, 'The Palace has expressed a wish that...' or 'Bonn's idea of Europe is...'

the community of the Sermon on the Mount is provided by the Beatitudes, where possession of the Kingdom is promised for those blessed in the first and the last Beatitudes. The tone of the whole Sermon is set by these carefully-crafted Beatitudes¹², and their tone is in turn set by this *inclusio*. The expression ‘Kingdom of Heaven’ occurs exactly seven times in the Sermon, and this sacred number may well be no coincidence. The centrality of the Kingdom is further shown by the construction of the whole Sermon on the pivot of the central prayer, ‘Your Kingdom come’¹³. To explain the pivotal importance of the concept it needs no proof here that God was regarded as King of Israel, and that Jesus proclaimed that Kingship of God in a new way. No more does it require proof that in the Old Testament the holiness of the people of Israel and of the Temple itself is constituted by the presence of God.

In 1QS the community of the Rule considers itself the true Israel, calling itself ‘the covenant of grace’, ‘the counsel of God’ or ‘the community of God’ (1.7, 9, 13), ‘the multitude of Israel who have pledged themselves in the community to return to the covenant’ (5.22)¹⁴. The covenant aspect is less prominent in Matthew, but the importance of the single passage in which it is explicitly mentioned makes up for lack of frequency of mention. The narrative of the institution of the eucharist has a quite unique position in the tradition. To begin with, it is virtually all that we are told of the pivotal last meal of Jesus with his disciples, a threadbare oft-repeated narrative which has (like a much-loved teddy-bear) lost all its circumstantial detail in the re-telling. Furthermore, its importance is shown by its reappearance in 1 Cor 11.23-25 as part of the tradition learnt by heart by Paul, handed down by him to his converts and learnt by heart by them also. It clearly formed the aetiological narrative which justified repeated celebrations of the eucharist, and as such, at the centre of the celebration of the community, would have bulked large in the thought of the community. The mention of ‘my blood of the covenant’ (Mt 26.28) in the all-important word of Jesus must, therefore, be considered highly significant. This single mention of ‘covenant’ must itself be understood in the light of the use of *evkkhlhsi,a* to designate the community, a word which occurs in the Gospels only in Matthew (16.18; 18.17). In the LXX Greek of the Bible this is the word commonly used to translate the *hwby lhq*, the ‘assembly of Yahweh’ or ‘assembly of Israel’ (Dt 23.2-9; 3 Kg 8.14-35). The interplay of these two expressions in Matthew gives the strong impression that the community understood itself in terms of the covenant community of Israel, despite the scarcity of the explicit term which occurs so frequently at Qumran.

In Matthew’s community the character of the community is derived from the presence of the risen Christ. This is stressed principally by an *inclusio* of the whole Gospel. In the first of Matthew’s all-important formula-quotations Jesus is given the name ‘*Emmanuel*, which is interpreted “God with us”’ (1.18), and in the final verse of the Gospel the risen Christ in his full power promises to be with his community ‘all days until the end of the age’ (28.20). How conscious the community were of this presence is shown by the saying at the heart of the

¹²See E. Puéch, ‘4Q525 et la péricope des Béatitudes en Ben Sira et Matthieu’ in *Revue biblique* 98 (1991), p. 80-106.

¹³U. Luz, *Matthew 1-7* (T&T Clark, 1989), p. 212

¹⁴Charlesworth, *op. cit.*, points out that the Kingdom of God is a concept which barely occurs at Qumran, the closest approximations being 1 QM 6.6; 12.7.

discourse on the community, 'Where two or three meet in my name, there am I among them' (18.20). Just as God was considered to be at the heart of the people of Israel as the source of its power, holiness and authority, so is Christ at the heart of his community. The authoritative community designated 'my community' in Matthew's additions to the scene of Caesarea Philippi (Mt 16.18, cf. 18.17) succeeds to the place of God's community of Israel. The presence of Christ is the source of its binding authority, conferred both on the Rock on which it is founded and on the decisions of the community itself (16.19; 18.18), so that 'whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven'.

In the same way in the Qumran Rule decisions are authoritative and binding: 'every decision concerning doctrine, property and justice shall be determined by them' (5.4). However, whereas the sanctity and authority of the Matthean community are expressed in terms of the presence of the risen Christ, the sanctity of the Qumran community is expressed in terms of the Temple, the dwelling-place of God in the midst of his people. The community has taken the place of the Temple which they rejected, and so can use of themselves the terminology used of the Temple, 'an everlasting plantation, a house of holiness for Israel... a precious cornerstone... a most holy dwelling' (8.5-9, reinforced by numerous other passages, e.g. 11QTemple 29.2-10; 4QFlor 1-2¹⁵).

It is not surprising that there is a good deal of overlap of imagery, since both communities draw so heavily on biblical images. Thus each uses the image of a rock¹⁶, both for the community, built solidly to withstand floods (Mt 7.24-27) or assault (1QH 9.29, Vermes, *op. cit.*, p. 218), and for the solidity of the person who is rock-like as a foundation (Peter in Matthew, the psalmist in 1QH 7.8, Vermes, *op. cit.*, p. 211). Matthew as well as Qumran draws on the psalmic image of the cornerstone (Mt 21.43), and on an unfavourable comparison to the Temple: 'something greater than the Temple is here' (Mt 12.6).

The Structures of the Community

Beneath this similarity of imagery and basic conception for the two communities, there lies, however, a considerable difference in their actual structures. The Matthean community is egalitarian, the Qumran community highly stratified. For the Matthean community the principle is emphatically stated in 23.8-10: 'You must not allow yourselves to be called Rabbi, since you have only one Master, and you are all brothers. You must call no one on earth your father, since you have only one Father and he is in heaven. Nor must you allow yourselves to be called teachers, for you have only one Teacher, the Christ.' This emphasis on the one Master and Teacher is such that, despite the powers given to Peter, there is no sign of any figure actually exercising authority in the Matthean community. Is Peter only the spokesman in whose name the powers are given to the community? But then how are these powers to be exercised? The only possible claimant for this comes in the passage on lack of reconciliation, when the Christian is ordered to 'come to terms with your opponent in good time while you are still on the way to the court with him, or he may hand you over to the judge and the judge to the officer' (5.25). But it

¹⁵Vermes, *op. cit.*, pp. 161, 353 respectively.

¹⁶Cf. Otto Betz, 'Felsenmann und Felsengemeinde', in *ZNW* 48 (1957), p. 49-77

is unclear whether this ‘judge’ and ‘officer’ are within or outside the community. They may well belong to the secular arm, especially since Paul also regards it as a failure by a Christian to allow a case to reach secular courts (1 Cor 6.5). Mention of the ‘sanhedrin’ could possibly imply some sort of Christian court (Mt 5.22). It can scarcely mean the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem. The term ‘sanhedrins’ does occur in Mt 10.17 of institutions responsible for persecuting Christians; these must indicate some sort of local assembly. If some Jewish court is envisaged at Mt 5.22, this would presumably be intended to increase the horror of the failure of Christian fellowship: ‘if you fail to be reconciled with your brother, you will be handed over to the persecutor’. However, some sort of community meeting must be envisaged as the final resort in the process of reconciliation prescribed in 18.8, and for the exercise of the power of binding and loosing in 18.19. But the Matthean community may lack any standing authority structure or body constituted for settling disputes, just as the Pauline community at Corinth seems to have done. Instructions such as the prohibition of oaths in favour of a simple statement (5.33-37) suggests that any court should be unnecessary.

The Qumran Rule, by contrast, is full of instructions about seniority and about various structures so complicated that their inter-relationship is not entirely clear. It would make sense if the Matthean egalitarianism was in direct reaction to such structures. The Rule is almost pathologically preoccupied with order, each member having his special place, which was determined at entry by ‘the sons of Aaron’ and could be advanced or retarded each year (5.25). ‘Each man shall sit in his place, the priests shall sit first and the elders second and all the rest of the people according to their rank’ (6.9) for the sacred meal and for discussion of the Law. The Guardian of the community is mentioned, whose duty it is to examine newcomers (6.14) and also the Bursar of the community (6.20), and a further group of twelve men and three priests ‘perfectly versed in all that is revealed of the Law, whose works shall be truth, righteousness, justice, loving-kindness and humility’. It is their duty to preserve the faith in the land (8.1-3). Meetings of the assembly of the community are sufficiently lengthy and boring for it to be necessary to legislate against spitting, lying down to sleep and (like bored choirboys asking to go to the toilet?) leaving the same meeting three times (7.11-15). To judge from the detailed list of penalties, much of its business must have been taken up with apportionment of these. In two smaller fragments of the Community Rule (4Q258 and 259¹⁷) there is mention also of ‘the Master’, mentions which justify the insertion of this title in the deficient first line of 1QS.

Two Fundamental Differences: 1. The Time Awaited

The most fundamental difference between these two eschatological communities is, of course, that for the Matthean community Christ has come, whereas the Qumran community was still waiting for the One who was to Come. This chasm is, however, less vast than might be thought, for the Matthean community remains an eschatological community looking forward to fulfilment. The proclamation both of John the Baptist and of Jesus begins ‘The Kingdom of heaven is close at hand’ or ‘has come near’. Without taking sides in the thorny problem of the exact meaning of this phrase, we may accept that in some sense Matthew sees Jesus’ proclamation as the fulfilment. It is impossible to read the eschatological sayings throughout the Gospel without realising that Matthew sees the accomplishment as occurring already in some

¹⁷Vermes, *op. cit.*, pp. 90 and 94 respectively

sense in Jesus. He clarifies the saying in Mark 9.1 'There are some of those standing here who will not see death until they have seen the kingdom of God come in power' by changing the final phrase to 'the son of man coming in his kingdom' (16.28). At the entry into Jerusalem he omits Mark's mention of the future coming of the kingdom to concentrate all on Jesus, 'Hosanna to the son of David' (21.9). At the trial scene he again clarifies, '*From now* you will see the son of man seated at the right hand of the Power' (26.64). In some sense, then, the decisive moment of the kingdom has occurred in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Indeed, perhaps the central message of the parables is that the community itself already constitutes the kingdom, still to be harvested but already planted and growing.

Equally clearly, however, there is still much to be achieved. The righteousness demanded throughout the Sermon on the Mount is seen as a fulfilment yet to be achieved. The promises and warnings of the Matthean parables look forward to a future event, the rebirth or the triumphant coming (*palingenesia* or *parousia*). So there is undeniably a tension between the present and the future fulfilment. The heart and centre of the Sermon is the Lord's Prayer with its first three equiparous petitions, 'Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven'. The third of these petitions is lacking in Luke's version of the prayer and its last five words are a typical and frequent Matthean formula (5.18; 11.25; 16.19; 18.18; 24.35; 28.18). This suggests that Matthew has added the petition here as he added it to the prayer of the Agony in the Garden (26.42), thus showing both the importance for the kingdom of the fulfilment of the will of God and the importance of Jesus as a model for the behaviour of the Christian. The accomplishment of the will of God constitutes the coming of the kingdom, or the fulfilment of the kingship of God, after the model of Jesus.

In the Rule of Qumran, on the other hand, there is no such sense of the eschaton already achieved. This is perhaps one reason for the absence of the concept of the Kingdom of God (see note 14 above). The purpose of the community is expressed as 'to go into the wilderness to prepare there his way', with the same verse of Isaiah that formed the centre of the Baptist's proclamation (1QS 8.15). Much has, of course, been made of the sacred meal mentioned in another document (1QSa 2.15-21; Vermes, *op.cit.*, p.121), which is held in expectation of the coming of the Messiah or Messiahs, but there is no indication in the Community Rule that at the time of its writing the meal had this important significance. Nevertheless, the eschatological purpose of the community is beyond doubt.

Paradoxically, another important distinction between the two communities surfaces especially with regard to the Meal¹⁸. In the Qumran Rule it is stressed again and again that the Meal is for the pure and the holy. Despite - or perhaps because of - the list of faults and the rigorous exclusions which result from them, the community is the community of the pure. Matthew's community is no such thing. The coming of the Messiah has not worked an instant purification. The parables of the dragnet, the wheat and the tares and the messianic wedding-feast are evidence of awareness of a community composed of pure and impure alike. The Christian meal, whose aetiological story is given at the start of the Passion Narrative, is itself 'for the forgiveness of sin' (26.28). For the Christian, too, there is a long way to go, and perhaps from a more realistic starting-point.

¹⁸James D.G. Dunn, in his essay 'Jesus, Table-Fellowship and Qumran' in J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Doubleday, 1992), underlines Neusner's findings about the importance of table-fellowship throughout Judaism at this time.

Two Fundamental Differences: 2. Attitude to Outsiders

An important difference between the two documents consists in the attitude shown to those who are not members of the sect. Each of them defines itself carefully with regard to outsiders. The Matthean community is clearly persecuted by those around, and particularly by the Jewish community from whom they have separated themselves. Nevertheless, it is the Qumran sect which is the more hostile to outsiders. At Qumran the fear of the opposition manifests itself in hate and in a burning desire for the destruction of the 'sons of darkness'. This is amply and luridly attested in the scroll of the War Rule (1QM). Even in the introduction to the Rule there is the provision to 'hate all the sons of darkness, each according to his guilt in God's vengeance'. Matthew's community has the confidence to be outward-turning, and sees it as a mission to make disciples of all nations, winning the opposition over to its own side. The Qumran community sees it as a goal to annihilate the opposition in their state of opposition.

The final correction in the Sermon on the Mount, the correction of 'You will love your neighbour and hate your enemy' (5.43), has long puzzled scholars. All the other corrections take a sentence of scripture as their starting-point, but nowhere in scripture is there a command to hate your enemy¹⁹. Now it can be seen that hate for the enemy at Qumran could well be the tradition which is the starting-point of Matthew's correction. It was, of course, non-scriptural, but seems to have been taken with the seriousness due to an interpretation of scripture: 'Everlasting hatred in a spirit of secrecy for the men of perdition!' (1QS 9.21). '(The light of thy greatness) shall be like a fire burning in the dark places of perdition; it shall burn the sinners in the perdition of hell' (1QM 14.19). Is this final correction in Matthew aimed directly at the Qumran tradition?

By contrast, in the Sermon on the Mount it is implied that the teaching is eventually destined through the disciples for a wider circle, since followers are called 'salt of the earth' and 'light of the world' (5.13-14). This surely implies that the savour of the salt and the illumination of the light will be passed on to others. The importance of this missionary outreach becomes fully apparent in the final scene of the Gospel, and precisely in these same Jewish terms. Again on the mountain, like Moses, the risen Lord instructs them to make disciples of all nations, and to 'teach them to observe all the commands I have given you' (28.19-20).

¹⁹Cf. Thomas Söding, 'Feindeshass und Bruderliebe', in *Revue de Qumran* 16 (1995), 601-619.