

THE IMPACT OF THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS, by A. N. Gilkes; Macmillan, 15s.

CHRIST AND THE TEACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, by Jean Carmignac; Helicon, 25s.

The title of the first of these two books is a reminder that the Dead Sea Scrolls first aroused wide interest because of the sensational manner in which they were presented to the general public. It was implied that these discoveries, which everyone affirmed to be of first-rate importance for the study of the Bible and of New Testament times, called in question the foundations of Christianity and the Church's faith in Jesus Christ. Although such ideas have been constantly rejected by competent scholars during the last ten years, there must be many people who have lingering doubts. Surely the views of Dupont-Sommer and Allegro, themselves scholars who have worked on the texts, would not have been put forward if there had not been something in them? Mr Gilkes has done what everyone would like to be able to do. He has studied the question for himself, seeing the discoveries, discussing them with the scholars, and reading a great deal of the literature on the subject. The result is a book which is readable and well balanced, and exactly right for those who want to get a good idea of what it is all about. One chapter is devoted to a careful scrutiny of the theories of Dupont-Sommer and Allegro, which he shows to be massive imaginative constructions resting on hints and scraps of information too light to bear their weight.

*Christ and the Teacher of Righteousness* is a book of about the same length (160 pages), also designed for the general reader, but restricted to the theme of this one chapter of the other book. Fr Carmignac's method is to give ample quotations from Dupont-Sommer, and to a lesser extent from Allegro, and then to lay beside them translations of the actual texts of the Scrolls, and so to let the facts speak for themselves. The author is an acknowledged expert on the subject, and his opinion carries weight. The attempts to see in the Teacher of Righteousness of the Qumran literature the original on whom the early Christians modelled their teaching about Jesus, or to regard him as the pattern which Jesus consciously followed, or even to identify him with Jesus himself (Teicher's view), are shown to be groundless. On the other hand a most appealing portrait of the Teacher himself emerges in the course of the argument. Fr Carmignac holds—though this cannot be proved—that the Teacher was the author of the Thanksgiving Hymns, and he includes extensive translations of them. They contain passages of great beauty and spiritual depth, revealing a noble character, devoted to the service of God, holding fast through bitter persecution. Although it appears that he was not the actual founder of the Qumran Sect, he may have been active about 150 B.C., and undoubtedly gave the members of the Sect an inspiration and an ideal for which they ever looked back to him in gratitude.

In a book which sets out to refute other men's theories there is always the

danger of overstating the opposite case. There are a few places where Fr Carmignac may be thought to have done this. He does not always distinguish between primitive strands of the New Testament and the later elements which come closer to the full development of Christian doctrine. It is true that the Scrolls do not give any indication of the doctrines of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, and Redemption. But Jesus himself did not teach these as dogmatic propositions, though they are to be inferred from the New Testament teaching as a whole. For the purposes of comparison of Christ and the Teacher of Righteousness, it would have improved his case if he had shown that even the most rigorous criticism of the Gospel records still reveals a fundamental opposition to the doctrinal tendency of the Scrolls. For instance, the teaching of Jesus about the Holy Spirit is consistent with the ideas of late Judaism, stemming from the Old Testament conception of the Spirit of the Lord. On the other hand, the Scrolls tend to equate the Spirit with an angelic being, which never happens in the New Testament. Arguing against the claim that the Teacher was expected to reappear 'at the end of days', he asserts that *yoreh sedeq* in the crucial passage (Damascus Document VI 11) is not equivalent to *morch sedeq* = teacher of righteousness. This may be so, but it does not preclude the fact that the Sect probably expected a righteousness teacher in the last days. It is probably better to hold, with Gaster, that they thought of *another* person who would fulfil this function. If so, he would presumably be the Prophet, who, according to the Manual of Discipline, will come with the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel. In any case there is no question of a return or second coming of the original Teacher.

The controversy concerning the Teacher of Righteousness has been a conflict between scholars, which has attracted public attention. It is natural for the layman to suppose that the Christian scholars have a vested interest in resisting the impact of the Scrolls on the foundations of the faith. What both these books do in their different ways is to show that in this issue the boot is on the other foot. No reproach can be levelled against the integrity of those scholars who find nothing in the Scrolls which undermines the Christian faith, but rather welcome them as shedding a flood of light upon the Jewish matrix in which Christianity was formed.

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THE MEANING OF EVIL, by Charles Journet, translated by Michael Barry; Geoffrey Chapman, 30s.

Of all the problems which overlap the borders between the domains of philosophy and theology, there can hardly be one which is so venerable and yet of such contemporary importance as the whole topic of evil and why and how an infinitely wise and powerful creator can permit it. If it is a venerable question, going back in Christian theology to before St Augustine, it is also a highly topical point, constituting an obvious stumbling-block for many a present-day enquirer. In view of the amount of recent writing from an agnostic standpoint