

personally or in anything he had done or could do. The followers of the Teacher of Righteousness formed a closed group, which no one could join without years of probation and the taking of very strict vows. This is entirely different from the procedure followed in the establishment of Christianity, as even a superficial glance at the Book of Acts will clearly show.

Mr Allegro claims that the texts prove that the Teacher of Righteousness was crucified. However, this is purely an inference, and, in the opinion of most scholars, an unjustified inference. Nowhere do the texts say that he was put to death, merely that he was "gathered in", a phrase which could just as well refer to death from natural causes. Even if Mr Allegro's claim that the Teacher was crucified should eventually prove to be true, there is still no slightest evidence that he or anyone else attached any atoning significance to his death.

What a great number of differences between Christ and the Teacher of Righteousness! None of the distinctive points of Christianity are found in him at all.

It is true, of course, that some of the teachings of Jesus can be paralleled by statements in the scrolls. For that matter, many of them can be paralleled in the teaching of the Rabbis, known to us as the Talmud. Along with similarities are also found very considerable differences. Such parallels may in some cases enable us to understand His meaning better, but they do not in any way detract from His claims about Himself. He was the Son of God, come down to die for our sins. Through faith in him we can be saved. The beginning of Christianity was a miraculous interposition of God into human life, opening the way for lost humanity to find eternal life.

The Dead Sea Scrolls give wonderful evidence of the dependability of our Old Testament texts. They tell us some previously unknown facts about life in Palestine in the first century A.D. and before. But they neither add to nor detract from the unique achievements of the Son of God, who died that we might live.