CHAPTER TWO
THE IDENTITY OF “THE NEW COVENANT IN THE LAND OF DAMASCUS”: A NEW LITERARY ANALYSIS OF CD XIX–XX (PART II)

2.1 Introduction

Part I of our literary analysis of CD XIX–XX (Chapter 1) led to the conclusion that, contrary to common opinion, CD XIX,5b–25a (with VII,9–VIII,12) is a literarily coherent and unified section. The whole section is a warning, based on themes from Lev 26, against those who turn aside from the covenant. It makes an appropriate ending, along with the blessings on covenant obedience in CD XIX,1–2a and XIX,26b–31a (=VII,4b–6a and VIII,14–18a), to the admonition of D. We noted at the end of Part I of the analysis that VII,9–VIII,18b (with XIX,5b–32a) deals with eschatological judgment, whereas VIII,18c–19 (=XIX,32b–33a) begins a new stage in the development of the document, treating of judgment within the community. It is our task now to analyze this new stage of material. Our primary goal in this second part of our analysis will be to elucidate the relationship between XIX,33b–35b, with its important statement about the “new covenant,” and the rest of CD XIX–XX. That in turn will allow us to identify the “new covenant” with precision. We shall begin, however, with CD VIII,18c–19 (=XIX,32b–33a), which will show how the new stage of material treating of judgment within the community has been added to the original admonition.

CD VIII,18c–19 (cf. XIX,32b–33a) says: “And like this judgment for all who despise the commandments of God and forsake them and turn aside in the stubbornness of their hearts.” The first questions to be asked about this line are what the “judgment” foreseen for this category of people is, and to what it is “like.” In Chapter 1 we saw that the judgment rendered against the “builders of the wall” (and, in the B text, against “those who follow them”) in VIII,18/XIX,31–32 was a gloss added by a Qumran redactor corresponding to the gloss of VIII,13/XIX,25c–26a. By means of the latter gloss he attributed the errors of the “builders of the wall” (=mainstream Jewish society) to the
influence of the Man of the Lie, a connection that was not directly historical. After he added this gloss, he found it appropriate also to add a condemnation of the “builders of the wall” in VIII, 18b/XIX, 31b–32a (the builders now understood to be part of the congregation of the Man of the Lie), following the judgments rendered on those unfaithful to the covenant in VIII, 1b–2a/XIX, 13c–15a and on the faithful in VIII, 16–17/XIX, 29–31a. Thereby the Qumran redactor transformed the “builders of the wall” from members of mainstream society into apostates from the (Qumran or pre-Qumran) covenant. As we shall see, what comes next in VIII, 20–21 and XIX, 33b–35b is further condemnations of apostates from the Qumran community. It follows that what we have in VIII, 18c–19/XIX, 32b–33a is a redactional link made by a Qumran redactor as a transition from the eschatological judgment pronounced upon apostates (and upon the faithful) in VII, 9–VIII, 18b/XIX, 5b–32a to the temporal judgment pronounced by and in the (Qumran) community in VIII, 20–21 and XIX, 33b–35b (as well as parts of CD XX).

But the judgment pronounced in VIII, 18c–19/XIX, 32b–33a is still eschatological. The judgment language of VIII, 18b/XIX, 31b–32a, to which the judgment pronounced in VIII, 18c–19/XIX, 32b–33a is said to be “like,” is similar to I, 21–II, 1, which comes in a (probably also redactional) passage on the traitors of the (Qumran) covenant. Therefore we may conclude that the judgment on the “builders of the wall” is God’s wrath, which will “lay them waste” as traitors (cf. II, 1). The transition between the eschatological and temporal judgment, effected (in the B text) by the ב of XIX, 33b, implies that those who suffer the temporal punishment of expulsion from the Qumran community will also suffer eschatological judgment at the hands of God.

This line (VIII, 18c–19/XIX, 32b–33a) is very similar to XX, 8b–10a. Both lines begin, “and like this judgment for all who despise” (וַיהוּ לָלֶבָּן הַמַּעֲשָׂ להֶם), followed by a word introduced by ב. In VIII, 18c–19/XIX, 32b–33a the ב introduces the direct object, “the commandments of God,” while in XX, 8b–10a it introduces the words “the former and the latter” (both terms in the plural). It is not certain what the “former and the latter” are. There are two possibilities. It may be that the word “former” refers to the ordinances of the parent movement of the Qumran community, while “the latter” refers to the directives of the Teacher himself (cf. 1QS IX, 10; CD XX, 31). It is also possible, however, that on analogy to CD IV, 6–8 the “former” are the