THE MODEL OF THE PRIESTLY BLESSING IN 1QS

BY

J. A. LOADER

Pretoria

It is well-known that the Priestly Blessing of Numbers 6:24-26 features clearly in 1Q S II 2-4). It is also well-known that the passage from which this usage of the biblical blessing comes, teems with allusions to the Hebrew Bible2), and, furthermore, that the passage contains many motifs of interest for those who wish to draw comparisons with pseudepigraphical literature and the New Testament3). Now I do not propose to enter into such discussions in this paper. As far as I know, the symmetry of our present text has not yet been worked out, and I think this calls for attention.

We know of various cases where a so-called free use is made of the Priestly Blessing, viz. in Jub. 12:29 and several times in 1Q S b. But these are cases where words and motifs from the Priestly Blessing are borrowed and used rather loosely. Therefore I do not think that we may speak of texts modelled on the biblical blessing. The case is quite different in 1Q S. Here we find a passage actually modelled on the Priestly Blessing in a carefully structured way. Not only are certain words and motifs taken from the Bible, but also the structure of the biblical model is taken over. It is, of course, typical of Qumran to take over words and phrases from the Bible and then embellish and alter them in new contexts, thereby interpreting these biblical words in terms of Qumran’s own views. This can be seen at its clearest in the pšārīm—as can be expected—but also in the other documents. I think one of the best examples, certainly one of the most extensive instances, is to be found in 1Q S II 2 ff.

2) E.g. Deut. 21:5 for the priests who pronounce blessing and Deut. 27:14 ff. for the Levites who pronounce curses as well as the assembly who respond with ‘‘amen’’.
3) Cf. the cited works of WERNBERG-MÖLLER and LEANEY on, for instance, the everlasting fire in line 8 (1 Enoch 103:8; Test. Jud. 25:3; Test. Zeb. 10:3; Mt. 18:8, 25:41; Mk. 9:43) and many more.
In the following sketch, the biblical text is given (A), then the blessing of lines 2-4 (B), and the curse of lines 5-9 (C). Then follows a table containing the main words of each element in the blessings and curses (D).

In the biblical passage we have six cola neatly grouped in pairs. The second of each pair combines with its predecessor by way of the copulative \textit{waw}. Only the first of each pair contains the divine name, which is taken up by the third person singular masculine in every following colon. The second person singular masculine is