

claims that they are from the Middle Ages and are worthless as far as giving evidence of the time of Christ is concerned. However, hardly another outstanding scholar agrees with him. The scholarly world has largely passed him by.

As we noted in the previous article, the Dead Sea Scrolls are of great interest for the striking evidence that they give of the remarkable accuracy with which the text of the Old Testament has been preserved during the many centuries in which it was copied and recopied. This is bound to increase the confidence in the Hebrew Bible of many who formerly were inclined to scepticism regarding the accuracy of its transmission.

Yet, most unfortunately, more people have heard of the Dead Sea Scrolls because of false inferences that have been drawn from them, than because of their true significance. An American journalist, Edmund Wilson, has written a romantic story of the finding of the scrolls, and has proceeded to draw from the non-Biblical scrolls all sorts of utterly unwarranted conclusions, detrimental to Christianity, and these have been widely publicized.

Wilson's book has been translated into many languages. Wilson says: "The monastery of the Essenes, more than Bethlehem or Nazareth, is the cradle of Christianity." An English scholar, J. M. Allegro, has declared over the radio that Christian ideas about Christ were derived from the Qumran sect's ideas of their own teacher, who, he says, they thought of as "persecuted and crucified, and expected to rise again as the priestly Messiah". A French scholar, Professor Dupont-Sommer, says that "the Galilean Teacher, as he is presented to us in the New Testament writings, appears in many respects as an astonishing re-incarnation of the Teacher of Righteousness." A Swedish journalist has concluded as follows: "Christianity has come into existence in a completely natural way, as a Jewish sect. It is not necessary to believe in the miracle that God has interfered by a special act of mercy in order to save humanity." Such sweeping statements make one wonder what has been discovered, that has so destroyed the foundations of Christianity.

The answer is, nothing. The statements quoted represent the imaginations of their authors. Perhaps they are the result of wishful thinking. Ninety per cent of the serious scholars who have studied the Dead Sea Scrolls will readily agree that no evidence has been found that warrants such statements.