

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 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.

Let us examine the basis upon which these revolutionary statements are made. The Qumran sect held in high esteem an individual whom they called "the Teacher of Righteousness". It is reasonable to think that he must have been a man of ability and energy, whose ideas found expression in the organization and continuance of the Qumran sect. But nowhere do we find an orderly account of his life and achievements. His name is never given, nor is there any clear indication of the time at which he lived. Many attempts have been made to identify him with some person known from other sources, but none of these can be proven. These attempts select individuals scattered over a period of more than two hundred years. A few hints of the opposition that he faced are given, but these are rather vaguely stated. Almost every movement that has continued for any length of time has had a leader and founder, and Qumran was no exception. Christianity also has a leader, whose memory it reveres, and whose teachings it seeks to follow. Is there enough similarity to say that one was derived from the other? Those already noted could be found in almost every movement that ever existed.

Those who claim that the Qumran material destroys the basis of Christianity, insist that the outstanding ideas of Christianity, instead of representing actual facts, are simply taken over from the ideas of the Qumran sect. But one looks in vain in the Qumran material for the basic features of Christianity. Only an overactive imagination can find them there.

Dupont-Sommer declares 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". This is a tremendous statement, but what are the facts?

Christians believe that Jesus was God Himself, in-

carate in human form. He was miraculously born. He was tempted of Satan. He went about through Judæa and Galilee preaching. He was no ascetic, but took part in the happy occasions of life. He Himself said, "The Son of Man came eating and drinking" (Matt. 11:19). The New Testament declares that He performed great miracles of healing, even raising people from the dead. He claimed to be the Messiah, and declared that He would return on the clouds of heaven (Mark 14:62). He said that He would give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). He was seized, accused of blasphemy for declaring Himself to be God, crucified, and buried. On the third day He was raised from the dead. His disciples went all through the world declaring these facts, and asserting that all who would accept His atoning death as the propitiation for their sins could be saved, and that He would come to dwell in their hearts.

These are the outstanding things that were claimed by Jesus and taught about Him by His followers. This is "the Galilean teacher, as He is presented to us in the New Testament writings." Is he "an astonishing reincarnation of the Teacher of Righteousness"? Just how many of these features do we find in the Qumran pictures of that individual?

We find only this, that he was a teacher, who gathered disciples and established a sect, and that he was persecuted by those who disapproved of Him. This much could also be found in the history of almost every man who ever founded a sect.

In all the Qumran material that has yet been discovered and published, there is nowhere any statement that the Teacher of Righteousness was God, or that he claimed to be God, or that anyone else ever thought him to be God. There is no statement that he was born in any different way than other mortals. There is no reference to his having been tempted by the devil. It is