

The Relation of the Dead Sea Scrolls to Christianity

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Although there have been many interesting developments in Biblical archeology in the last few years, no other is quite as outstanding as the discovery and study of the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls.

Since that time evidence as to the genuineness of the scrolls has constantly been increasing until today most scholars are ready to admit that they came from the time of Christ and from the two centuries immediately preceding. The evidence for this is so extensive that it has become almost impossible to believe anything else. Although many scholars originally greeted their discovery with great scepticism, only one outstanding professor is still standing by his original position. This man, Professor Zeitlin, of the Dropsie College, gives frequent lectures in Philadelphia and New York attacking the genuineness of the discoveries. At the Twenty-fourth International Congress of Orientalists, held in Munich, in 1957, he spent over an hour presenting his claims that they are from the Middle Ages and 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.

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