The Dead Sea Scrolls
and Original Christianity

O. Preston Robinson
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PREFACE

The author's interest in the Dead Sea Scrolls was aroused when, in 1954, he and Mrs. Robinson visited the Middle East, including Jordan and Israel. This was a news-gathering journey, but while in the area they became acquainted with this remarkable discovery and talked with some of the scholars engaged in classifying, decyphering, and translating the scrolls and the thousands of fragments discovered in the Dead Sea Caves.

In the fall of 1957 the author and his wife again had the opportunity of visiting the area. This time, due to an intense curiosity about the scrolls, they visited the area where the scrolls were discovered and examined some of the actual parchments, many of the fragments, the jars in which they had been preserved, and many other of the artifacts discovered in the caves and in the excavations at the Qumran Community.

Now that the major part of the intact scrolls have been translated, the real religious importance of the discovery is being realized. To the author, one of the most significant contributions of the scrolls is the light they throw on the Dead Sea Covenanters' beliefs and practices and the similarity of these concepts to original Christianity. The purpose of this book is to highlight a few of the areas where this similarity is most pronounced and to explain how the Covenanters may have obtained these concepts even before the birth of the Savior. The Dead Sea Scrolls, the author believes, provide another witness
of the antiquity of the gospel. They give further evidence that God's plan for his children is the same today, yesterday, and tomorrow.

The author expresses his sincerest appreciation to his lovely wife Christine who was by his side during both visits to the Holy Land and who has assisted and encouraged him in the preparation of this book. Thanks are also expressed to the author's associates at the Deseret News. To William B. Smart for his counsel and advice; particularly to Harold Lundstrom for his encouragement and invaluable assistance in editing, proof-reading, and indexing; and, above all, to Melvin C. Graham for his cooperative assistance without which the manuscript could not have been prepared. Appreciation is also expressed to Dr. Yigael Yadin and Eliav Simon of Israel and to George Halaby of Jordan.

The author hopes this little book will help to focus further light upon this important discovery and will serve as a springboard to some whose curiosity may be aroused and who, consequently, may wish to dig deeper into this archaeological treasure.
To my wife, Christine, a charming and wonderful companion.
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Chapter One

RECORDS FROM THE DUST

In the spring of 1947 a young Moslem boy, Muhammad Odh-Dhib (the wolf), literally stumbled into a dark cave on the shores of the Dead Sea. As his eyes adjusted to the dim light, he made what has since been described as the greatest old manuscript discovery of modern times. He found the now famous Dead Sea Scrolls.

This Bedouin youth’s wildest dreams could not have suggested even the slightest indication of the importance of his discovery. As he and his friend excitedly broke open one of the sealed scroll jars expecting to find hidden treasures, little did they realize that the evil-smelling, black-wrapped objects inside would eventually be worth far more than their weight in gold or in precious jewels. Nor could these boys, and the contraband group with which they were connected, have entertained the faintest idea of the religious turmoil and controversy their discovery would eventually arouse among the scholars and leaders of churches in and out of the Christian world!

Yet, these are the unpredictable results of what has since been acclaimed by Christian and Jewish scholars as one of the world’s greatest religious discoveries. The full impact of the discovery of the scrolls not far from where the Jordan River empties into the Dead Sea and close to the spot where Jesus was baptized, has yet fully to be felt.
The tremendous task of assembling and translating the scrolls and their thousands of fragments is now in full process. The study, analysis, and conclusions regarding the find will go on for years to come. Scholars who are feverishly working on the discovery believe that when the full import of the scrolls message is understood, this 1947 accidental discovery will wield a tremendous influence upon religious thinking all over the world.

**Story of Discovery**

The true story of how the scrolls were discovered is still a bit confused. The most plausible implications are that in the spring of 1947 a group of Bedouin contrabanders were encamped near the spring of Ain Feshka, a small watering hole near the Qumran Wadi at the northwest corner of the Dead Sea. The party was engaged in the illegal activity of moving goods from Jordan into Palestine without paying the established custom duties.

One of the boys of the group, Muhammad (the wolf), was responsible for the care of a small herd of goats. Apparently, one of the goats strayed. Muhammad reasoned that the animal could not be far away. When he could not locate it in the immediate vicinity, he thought perhaps it might have lost itself in one of the many caves and crevasses scattered so extensively over the face of the ravines and cliffs in the area.

In the process of exploring the caves, Muhammad threw stones into their openings, possibly hoping that the noise would frighten his lost goat and bring
it into view. In one of the caves, the stone produced an unusual tinkling sound. Fascinated, but also a bit frightened, Muhammad sought the assistance of a boy friend and then mustered sufficient courage to explore the caves.

Odd Jars Found

As their eyes became accustomed to the darkness, the boys at first could see only debris accumulated over the centuries. Then their gaze focused on several oddly shaped jars or vases, some intact and some broken. It was from these jars that they obtained seven irregularly shaped objects, wrapped in badly disintegrated cloth and covered with a black waxy-type substance, which emitted a bad stench.

Outside in daylight they hastened to examine what they had discovered. Undoubtedly, hoping that they would find valuable treasures, they hurriedly peeled the covering from one of the objects. Inside was a carefully rolled scroll, apparently composed of leather or some similar substance, on which were writings which they could not read. Not bothering to open the other objects, they carried their find to the camp site of the group with which they were associated.

There followed a long series of surreptitious attempts of the contraband group to gain profit from their discovery. They had no concept of what they had found, but they felt that the old writings might have some antiquity value. With this in mind they visited various of their trade associates in Jerusalem.
Purchase of the Scrolls

The scrolls and the story of their discovery were generally received with extreme skepticism. Finally, however, through a Syrian merchant named Kalil Iskander Shahin, they made contact with Athanasius Yeshue Samuel, the Syrian Orthodox Metropolitan at the Monastery of St. Mark in Old Jerusalem.

Metropolitan Samuel's background in history and his knowledge of the fact that no one had lived in the vicinity of Ain Feshka since early Christian days, prompted him to believe that the scrolls might have significant antiquity value. Although he could not read the inscribed characters, he believed them to be extremely old. After much bickering and some disappointments, the Metropolitan purchased four of the seven scrolls in the possession of the contrabanders at a price which is uncertain, but which has been estimated at not more than £48 or approximately $135.

The Sukenik Purchase

The other three scrolls of the contrabanders' find were not available to Metropolitan Samuel. They had already been sold to a Moslem dealer for an unknown price, but certainly a small one. They later were purchased by the late Dr. E. L. Sukenik, professor of archaeology at the Hebrew University. Dr. Sukenik was the first scholar to recognize the potential importance of the scrolls. He could read ancient Hebrew and immediately recognized one of the scrolls as being an ancient manuscript from the
Air view of the Dead Sea in the vicinity where the scrolls were found. (Photo by author)

Natural caves, not far from Jerusalem, similar to the ones in which the scrolls were discovered. (Photo by author)
Entrance to one of the scrolls caves at the Qumran wadi.

(Photo provided by Yigael Yadin)
writings of Isaiah. He also concluded that the scrolls must be at least 2,000 years old.¹

Dr. Sukenik first made contact with the discovery late in November, 1947. This was at the time that the United Nations, at Lake Success, was discussing a resolution which, on November 29, 1947, set the stage for the ending of the British mandate over Palestine and for the establishment of the Israel state, on May 14, 1948.

Dr. Sukenik learned of the scrolls through an Armenian dealer in antiquities. This friend had told him of the existence of the parchments and made arrangements for him to see them at a meeting place at the junction of two of the military zones that had been established by the British. The meeting took place at great personal danger to Dr. Sukenik, who was forced to traverse Arab territory at a time when bitter hatreds existed between the Arabs and the Jews and when hostilities were building up to the Palestinian War that broke out in all its fury in the following May.

Dr. Sukenik, in addition to acquiring three of the scrolls at a price estimated at approximately £2,000, also acquired two of the jars in which the original scrolls had been found.

Unsettled Political Condition

In Metropolitan Samuel’s attempt to arouse interest and establish the real value of his four scrolls, he encountered much difficulty. Many of his problems arose out of the serious, unsettled political

conditions that existed in the area at that time. On the basis of the United Nations Resolution, the British had set May 14, 1948, as the date they would withdraw their troops from Palestine and would relinquish their mandate over the area. On this date, Arabs and Jews already in serious dispute, exploded into bloody conflict. The ensuing Palestinian war cut off all communications between Jordan and Israel and, for the time being, made any further activity or negotiations in connection with the Dead Sea Scrolls impossible. As a matter of fact, in an effort to locate a place for safe keeping of the discovery, the four scrolls in Metropolitan Samuel's possession were eventually sent to the United States and deposited in a bank vault.

Nevertheless, the Metropolitan Samuel would not be discouraged. The more he talked with authorities about the scrolls, the more he was convinced that he had a priceless find that probably dated back to the time of or before Christ. When he was discussing the discovery with Mr. Tovias Wechsler, a Hebrew language authority in Jerusalem, Mr. Wechsler was reported to have observed:

"If that table, on which the manuscripts had been set, were a box, and you filled it to the top with pound notes, you couldn't even then manage the value of these scrolls if they are 2,000 years old as you say."\(^2\)

That this appraisal, although fantastic in 1947, was actually a modest one is evidenced by the fact that in 1954 at an auction in New York the four scrolls that had been sent to the United States for safekeeping were purchased by the Israeli Govern-

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ment for $250,000. Earlier, in 1952, another of the scrolls that had found its way into the library at the University of Toronto, Canada, was purchased by the same government for approximately $90,000.

A news item dated July 30, 1957, announced:

Israel's seven Dead Sea Scrolls, her archaeological pride and joy, were placed on public display today for the first time. The exhibit is a small walk-in vault in the basement of the Hebrew University's modernistic new administration building.

So, after ten years of devious and involved developments, the most intact of the Dead Sea manuscripts have been returned to Palestine where they were originally deposited some 2,000 years ago.
Chapter Two

WHAT WAS DISCOVERED

NEWS of the Dead Sea Scrolls discovery was slow to spread. As their age and contents became more definitely fixed, however, their great importance began to be realized.

Yet, it was not until novelist, poet, and playwright Edmund Wilson wrote a series of articles in The New Yorker in 1955 that the discovery gained popular knowledge. Mr. Wilson's articles attracted so much attention that he later published them in book form under the title, The Scrolls From the Dead Sea.¹

This book almost immediately became a best seller on the nonfiction list. Then followed a veritable avalanche of books and scholarly and popular reports covering the discovery, contents of the scrolls, and their implications and significance to religious history and literature.

When the discovery finally came into the hands of the scholars and as they began to gather, classify, and decipher the writings, they found that the Bedouin youth had stumbled onto an archaeological and biblical treasure. The seven relatively intact scrolls were found to contain the following:

1. The Book of Isaiah. This parchment, known as the "Isaiah Scroll," contains the full sixty-six

¹See reference, p. 6.
chapters of the biblical book of Isaiah. The scroll is composed of seventeen parchment sheets sewn together. It was written in Hebrew by more than one scribe. Apparently, it was in use for a long time by the sect that kept the records. The scroll shows evidence of wear and has many notations upon its margins.²

2. The Manual of Discipline. This is a book of rules, regulations, and procedures apparently followed by the Dead Sea sect that kept the records. The Manual of Discipline is a particularly important manuscript because from it is learned much of the beliefs and practices of the Dead Sea Covenanters, the name by which the sect has come to be known.³

3. A commentary on the Book of Habakkuk. This commentary throws interesting light upon the concepts of the members of the sect and how they interpreted the scriptures. Apparently, this scroll was used in the teaching processes or religious discussions of the group.

4. The "Lamech Apocalypse." This scroll was one of the four that was sent to the United States for safe keeping. While in this country, three of the four scrolls were unrolled and microfilmed. The Lamech Scroll, however, due to its bad state of deterioration, was not unrolled. Dr. John C. Trever, a fellow of the American Schools of Oriental Research, while examining this scroll, accidentally broke off a small piece of the parchment. On the inside of this small fragment, Dr. Trever found inscriptions in Aramic, which, when translated, proved to be a first person statement of Lamech, the father

²See Chapter Five.
³See Chapters Ten to Fifteen.
of Noah. Since an ancient Greek list of apocryphal books mentioned the *Book of Lamech* which never has been discovered, Dr. Trever assumed that this scroll might be this long searched-for apocryphal book. Consequently, this scroll was given the name,
The Lamech Scroll. A subsequent translation, however, proved this scroll actually to be an apocryphal Genesis.

These four scrolls were the ones purchased by the Syrian Metropolitan and sent to the United States for safe keeping. In June, 1954, they were purchased by Dr. Yigael Yadin for the Israeli Government in an auction in New York.

5. The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness. This scroll is completely new to religious literature. There is no mention of it nor is there any like it in either Hebrew or Christian records. It describes, in detail, an actual or anticipated war between the Children of Light, the followers of righteousness, and the Children of Darkness, those who follow Belial, or the devil.

6. The Thanksgiving Scroll. This is a record of psalms and hymns of thanksgiving that may have been used in the community in its communal praying or singing.

7. The Second Isaiah Scroll. The second scroll of the Book of Isaiah is less complete and in a worse state of deterioration than the first Isaiah Scroll. It, however, contains many of the chapters and fragments of most of the chapters of the Book of Isaiah.

The last three named scrolls were the ones purchased by Dr. Sukenik and retained in Israel. In 1954, they were joined with the first four named scrolls purchased in New York and became a part of the display now in the Hebrew University in New Jerusalem.

*See Chapter Sixteen.*
Copper Scrolls

Since the original discovery, two additional copper scrolls were discovered in 1952 in a nearby cave. These scrolls were so badly corroded and so brittle with age that, for several years, they defied unrolling and translation. Recently, however, the hollow area inside the scrolls was filled with plaster paris and, when this hardened, they were sawed into small sheets with a delicate instrument that actually could be maneuvered around the characters. These scrolls, which have not yet been completely deciphered, have proved, however, to be some sort of a record of the concealment of the community’s treasure—possibly religious and ceremonial artifacts. These artifacts apparently were hidden before the sect was forcibly scattered or destroyed.

This record, whose descriptive landmarks and clues to exact hiding places are now covered with some eighteen feet of sand, is estimated to list hidden treasures valued at over $200,000,000 in gold and $5,500,000 in silver, not inclusive of the value of priceless, rare, incenses described on the scrolls.

Many Additional Fragments

In addition to these more or less intact writings, the many caves that now have been explored in the area have produced fragments of other biblical and apocryphal works.

Thousands of parchment fragments have been recovered from every book of the Old Testament (with the exception of Esther), a number of additional biblical commentaries, and the long lost He-
Strip of the copper scroll from the Museum at Amman, held by Mrs. Robinson. (Photo by author)

A portion of the Manual of Discipline scroll showing state of deterioration. (Photo, permission of Yigael Yadin)
Two of the jars in which the scrolls were found in the caves at Qumran.

(Photo provided by Yigael Yadin)
brew and Aramaic originals of several familiar apocryphal and Pseudopigraphic works. In one cave alone the remains of no less than ninety different manuscripts were discovered. Judging from the number and variety of fragments discovered, it has been estimated that as many as two hundred scrolls had been deposited in the cave at one time.\(^5\) In other words the caves may have concealed a veritable library.

When the value of the discovery came to be known, the Dead Sea area swarmed with archaeologists, antiquity dealers, and just plain treasure hunters. Some two hundred sixty-seven caves now have been entered and, unfortunately, before the search was put under control, many valuable manuscripts and fragments of manuscripts were lost.

Chapter Three

THE AGE OF THE SCROLLS

IT IS difficult to establish accurately the age of any antiquity. Yet, it has now been definitely concluded that the scrolls and the parchment fragments were written earlier than A.D. 68 and probably as early as two or three hundred years before Christ. The almost universal conclusion of the great antiquity of the discovery has, of course, added tremendously to its interest and importance.

The Community Center

On top of one of the plateaus in the immediate vicinity of the caves there existed what was thought to be an old Roman ruin. As the significance of the scrolls discovery came to be realized, this old ruin began to be considered in a new and interesting light.

In 1949 Dr. Lancaster Harding, director of the Jordan Department of Antiquities, and Pere de Vaux, director of the Ecol Biblique in Jerusalem, Jordan, began a systematic excavation of the "Roman" ruin. As they dug down layer after layer, they discovered that what they thought had been an old fort, actually was, without doubt, the community center of the ascetic sect that lived in the area.

Between the ruin and the Dead Sea they discovered over a thousand graves. When some of these were opened, they found the skeletons of both men and women and some children. It was from
these excavations, from the relics found in the community center, plus the scientific analysis of the scriptures themselves, that has now established beyond reasonable doubt the approximate age of the manuscripts as well as the approximate period during which the area was occupied by the sect.

**Indicators of Age**

The most reliable indications of the age of the scrolls come from several sources. These are the coins discovered primarily in the excavations at the Community Center, the jars discovered in the caves and in which the intact scrolls were preserved, the linen wrappings of the scrolls themselves, and a study of the palaeography, or the writings on the scriptures themselves.

**Coins.**

Some 750 coins were discovered in the excavations at the Community site. These coins have been accurately identified as having been circulated during the period from the first century before Christ to the first century A.D. Actually, the newest coins discovered were struck in the years 8 and 9 B.C.

**Earthen Jars.**

The largest of the earthen jars discovered in the caves and in which the intact scrolls were stored way, were approximately 22 inches in height and some 8 or 10 inches in diameter at their largest point. Analysis of the design and structure of these jars indicates that they were most likely made earlier than the year A.D. 70.
Linen Cloth.

Careful analysis has also been made of the linen cloth with which the scrolls were wrapped. The carbon 14 process tests, made at the University of Chicago, indicate that these wrappings are somewhere between 1,717 and 2,117 years old.

Paleography.

The writings on the parchments, of course, have been compared with early Hebrew and Aramaic writings and with inscriptions on ancient tombs and on ossuaries. This study of palaeography indicates that these writings date back at least to the first century B.C. and not later than the first half of the first century A.D.

In addition to these more-or-less accurate age identifiers, a variety of antiquities have been discovered. These include potsherds, lamps, ink wells, writing tables, cooking utensils, and other artifacts found in the caves, in the cemetery, and at the community center. All of these have helped to date the period of occupancy at the Qumran Wadi site. Dr. Fritsch says, "Archaeological evidence has now definitely established that the caves, the communal center, and the cemetery all were integrally related parts of the Qumran Community which occupied this site for almost two hundred years."

It is concluded, therefore, that the period of occupation dates from at least 125 B.C. to A.D. 68. This latter date has been more or less definitely fixed by the fact that this was the time when the Roman legions entered Jerusalem to put down one of the

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Writing tables discovered during excavations at the Community Center. Displayed at the Palestine Archaeological Museum in Old Jerusalem, Jordan. Ink wells can be seen on top of the tables.
One of the jars in which scrolls were preserved, together with old coins and other artifacts. (Photo by author in Museum at Amman, Jordan)
Jewish revolts. It was at this time that Despasion set out with the Tenth Roman Legion from Caesarea to finish the conquest of Palestine. It is entirely possible that the Dead Sea Covenanters, knowing of the imminence of the Romans' arrival, hid their records and treasures and fled into the wilderness. It is also possible that at this time the community was attacked by the Romans and their members killed or driven into the desert.

Possible Earlier Occupancy

It is logically concluded by the scholars who are working on the translation of the Dead Sea Scrolls that the manuscripts were not all prepared at the same time. The manuscripts themselves give evidence that they were written at various times during a period that could easily reach back to as early as 300 B.C. Some of the archaeologists who have studied carefully the community site believe that the area could have been occupied as early as the eighth century before Christ.

The Josepbus Account

Closely connected with the age of the scrolls is the new interest the discovery focuses on the writings of the historian, Flavius Josepbus, who lived approximately during the years A.D. 37 to A.D. 95. He was a Jewish historian and military commander and a keen student and writer about the three Jewish sects, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes. After spending some three years in the desert with the hermit Banus, who probably was an Essene, Josepbus wrote in detail about this interesting sect.
The Essenes (meaning, holy ones), according to Josephus, inhabited this area prior to and during the life time of Christ. In his *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus described the beliefs and rituals of this sect as well as the effects of a severe earthquake which hit the area in the seventh year of Herod’s reign (31 B.C.) when Herod was at war with the Nabateans. The Community excavations disclose clearly the evidence of this earthquake which must have been a catastrophe in the lives of the inhabitants of the area. Archaeological evidences indicate that the Community was not inhabited for a number of years after this earthquake. This event provides further proof of the age and period during which the Community was occupied.
Chapter Four

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DISCOVERY

WHEN Metropolitan Samuel was struggling with such difficulty to arouse interest in the Dead Sea Scrolls, he took the scriptures to every recognized biblical and linguistic scholar he could locate. Many, although skeptical, observed that if the manuscripts were old, they could constitute the greatest religious find in history.

Now that it has been established beyond reasonable doubt that the writings are at least 2,000 years old or possibly older, the importance of the discovery is beginning to dawn on a startled archaeological and religious world.

Origin of the Old Testament

Up to the present time all that biblical scholars really know about the Old Testament comes from three sources. These are the Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, and the Jewish Masoretic texts.

The earliest Greek version of the Old Testament, known as the Alexandrian Septuagint, is a translation from Hebrew and Aramic, the original languages in which the Old Testament was written. The Septuagint translation was initiated by Alexander the Great and written by a school of seventy scholars at Alexandria over a period dating from approximately 300 B.C. to about 100 B.C.
The Septuagint

The original Septuagint manuscript, however, is no longer available. It is not definitely known what happened to this early Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures. It may have been destroyed during early persecutions of the Jews, or it may have perished when the great Library at Alexandria was destroyed by fire. All that are now available are copies of the Septuagint translation. These copies exist in the Vatican Library, in the British Museum, and in other great libraries throughout the world. These complete copies, however, date back no earlier than the fourth century A.D. There are some partial copies that originated as early as 150 B.C.

The Latin Vulgate and Masoretic Texts

The second source of our Old Testament Bible is St. Jerome's Latin Vulgate translated from various sources, both Hebrew and Greek, about A.D. 500. The oldest Jewish versions are the Masoretic texts written about A.D. 1009.

The Dead Sea scriptures, then, written in Hebrew and in Aramaic, are approximately 1,000 years older than any other known Jewish texts. If the ages of the scrolls have been accurately calculated, they are at least 500 years older than the full Greek or Latin texts. Their discovery, then, opens up new fields of research into the ancient languages and offers remarkable opportunities for determining the extent to which these languages may have changed over the centuries. Furthermore, they provide additional sources of proof of the age of other old
Significance of the Discovery

writings and of inscriptions found in various places through archaeological research.

For those biblical scholars particularly interested in Isaiah, the scrolls provide a rich, new field of study. Without reasonable doubt, the Isaiah scrolls from the Qumran caves, are the oldest copies of the writings of the great prophet. It is entirely possible that these copies were written within 600 years after the time that Isaiah lived, taught, and prophesied.¹

To the Mormon people, who have been counseled in the Book of Mormon by the Savior himself, to study carefully the teachings of Isaiah, the Dead Sea Isaiah scrolls should prove to be of great interest.

Scrolls Answer Questions

Considerable controversy exists among biblical scholars regarding various aspects of Isaiah's writings. It is wholly possible that the Isaiah scrolls may help to clarify some of the questions rising out of this controversy.

To the scholars, the Dead Sea Scrolls open vast new horizons for research in the Hebraic and Aramaic languages. The scrolls throw extremely valuable new light on Old Testament studies, enriching our knowledge of Hebrew lexicography. The scrolls answer vexing questions about the age of various Old Testament books. For example, The Dead Sea Covenanters' thanksgiving psalms were composed, it has been ascertained, not later than the second century B.C. Yet, they quote profusely from the Old Testament Psalms. This fact appears to ex-

¹See Chapter Five.
plode some interesting theories in respect to the age of the Bible Psalms.

The writings answer some perplexing questions regarding the Masoretic texts. The second Isaiah scroll is younger than the first Isaiah scroll. This scroll, or a copy of it, may have been the text from which the Masoretic was translated. If so, this would answer some questions regarding the differences in this translation as compared with the Greek and the Latin.

**Apocryphal Books**

The Dead Sea Covenanters *Manual of Discipline*, focuses a bright light upon the beliefs, religious organization, doctrines, and practices of this ancient pre-Christ religious community. One important aspect of this discovery, discussed in more detail later, is the "controversy" the *Manual of Discipline* has aroused in respect to specific beliefs and practices of original Christianity.

The discovery also has caused a revival of interest in certain apocryphal and pseudepigraphical works, some of which once were a part of the cannon of biblical literature. One of these books, for example, now being given extensive new study, is the "Shepherd of Hermas" that was a part of the Bible until it was relegated to apocryphal status by the Roman fathers circa A.D. 500. Another, is the Zadokite document.²

It is in these two "areas"—beliefs and practices of the sect and interest in apocryphal books—where controversy and excitement are now chiefly centered.
And these, interestingly enough, are of particular significance to members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and to all earnest students of original Christianity.

²See Chapter Eight.
Chapter Five

THE ISAIAH SCROLL

The discovery of the Isaiah records among the Dead Sea Scrolls has aroused a considerable amount of excitement among the scholars. There are two important reasons for this keen interest in the Covenanters' Isaiah. In the first place, considerable controversy exists among biblical scholars regarding how and when the writings of Isaiah were accumulated and compiled into the book in the Old Testament. There is even some difference of opinion as to whether or not the Prophet Isaiah wrote all the prophecies now contained in his book.

The second reason for the scholarly interest in the Dead Sea Isaiah is that this prophet is considered to be one of the greatest in Old Testament history. Jesus and His apostles, in the New Testament, quote more frequently from Isaiah than from any other Old Testament book.

To the Mormon people, Isaiah has a special significance. He is one of the great prophets who predicted, Mormons believe, that part of the house of Israel would be gathered on the American continent. He also wrote about a record that would come from "out of the dust" and described a vision about a book which could not be read because it was sealed. These prophesies, Mormons believe, were fulfilled in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Further-

1Isaiah 2:2-3, 4:2-4, 64:10.
2Isaiah 29:2-4, 11-14.
more, in the Book of Mormon the Savior himself exhorts all people to search Isaiah diligently for "great are the words" of this chosen prophet.  

The Isaiah Controversy

All earnest Bible scholars hope that the Dead Sea Scrolls might not only help to resolve the controversy regarding Isaiah, but also that the discovery might add new information about the writings of this important prophet.

The Isaiah controversy centers primarily on when and by whom his writings and prophecies, as recorded in the Bible, were written and compiled. Some scholars believe that the book was not compiled by the Prophet himself. They are persuaded rather, that it was formed by combining many collections and even by including certain prophecies from other prophets.

They contend, further, that the compilation of the Book of Isaiah probably dates from the end of the third century B.C. Some parts, specifically Chapters 33 and 34, they say, may not have been added until after 128 B.C. On this question of the date of compilation, one scholar has written:

"Experimental evidences would go far to prove that Chapters 44 to 66 were not included in the book much before the close of the third century B.C."  

This same scholar claims that Chapters 1 to 35 probably were formed from a collection of earlier and smaller books.

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8Book of Mormon, III Nephi 23:1.
Other Bible scholars, however, do not agree with this point of view. They contend that Isaiah collected his own prophecies into one volume and prepared the book himself. For example, one prominent commentary states: "The chronological arrangement (of Isaiah) favors the opinion that Isaiah himself collected his prophecies into the volume." The authors of this book believe that the variations in style apparent in Isaiah, are due to the fact that the prophet adapted his style to changing times and situations.

Isaiah’s Contributions

Isaiah was indeed one of the great prophets in Old Testament history. He was the son of Amos and was called to be a prophet circa 738 B.C. From his writings, it is apparent that he was a man of great courage and conviction. His prophecies are precise, definite, and obviously divinely inspired. Many of the things he predicted were fulfilled soon after his prophecies were made. Other came true with a remarkable completeness hundreds of years after his death. Still others are yet to be fulfilled.

Isaiah wrote and prophesied extensively about the apostasy of the Hebrews and how and when they would stray from God’s teachings. He discussed and predicted Christ’s eventual reign upon the earth with such clarity that those Jews who believed their scriptures, were sure that their King and Savior would come. He also wrote about Christ’s atonement and resurrection, and predicted

*Citation: Commentary On the Whole Bible, by Jamieson, Fausset & Brown, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, page 428.

that the Savior would preach the gospel to those who had passed beyond this life. He predicted and described the gathering of the tribes of Israel and pointed out that this gathering would be in two places.

With these and many other wonderful scriptural contributions, it is no wonder that Isaiah occupies a firm position as one of religion's great prophets. Furthermore, it is not surprising that the recently-discovered records of his writings would be considered so important and valuable.

The Covenanters' Isaiah Scroll

The first Isaiah scroll, the one purchased with three others by the Syrian Metropolitan and sent to the United States for safe keeping, contains the full sixty-six chapters of the Biblical Isaiah. Although the scroll shows evidence of having had much use while in the library of the Covenanters, it is in relatively good condition. The scroll consists of some seventeen parchment sheets sewn together with fine thread. These sheets are of varying lengths and average approximately ten inches high. Together, they form a scroll some 23\(\frac{1}{4}\) feet long. The scroll was fully lined and had been covered by a cloth sheet for protection. This cloth, however, had been torn off apparently by the Bedouins when the scroll was discovered.

This Isaiah scroll had been extensively used by the Covenanters and had been torn many times and repaired. Hand and finger marks on the edges of

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the scroll give evidence that hundreds of readers had handled it.

The chapters as they now exist in the Biblical Isaiah, were indicated in most instances in the Dead Sea scripture by paragraph markings. The scroll's contents are basically similar to the Masoretic texts and to the version as it now appears in the King James Translation of the Bible.\(^\text{10}\)

The second Isaiah scroll, the one purchased by Dr. Sukenik and kept in Israel, is not as well preserved and is less complete than the first Isaiah scroll. There are some differences between the two scrolls but they are not basic.

**Age of the Isaiah Scroll**

As previously pointed out, the age of the Dead Sea Scrolls has not been definitely determined. Persuasive evidences exist, however, that these scrolls, and particularly the Isaiah parchment, date at least into the second century B.C.\(^\text{11}\) As further researches are made on these scrolls, a more definitive answer may be obtained in respect to the controversy as to when the Biblical Isaiah was compiled. If the entire book of Isaiah, as evidenced by the fact that the Dead Sea Covenanter had the entire book, existed in the early part of the second century B.C., the belief held by some scholars that Chapters 33 and 34 were not written until after 128 B.C., is likely erroneous.

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\(^{11}\)See, *The Date of the Isaiah Scroll*, by Solomon A. Birnbaum. American Schools of Oriental Research, Bulletin. See also, Chapter Three.
Variations With Biblical Isaiah

The Dead Sea Covenanters' Isaiah is remarkably similar to the Biblical Isaiah. Various scholarly comparisons have been made between the two texts with the conclusion that the variations are primarily only in spelling and in grammar.\(^\text{12}\) In answer to letters written to scholars inquiring about possible variations and about the availability of English translations of the Isaiah scroll, the author received the following answers:

"No English translation of the whole Isaiah scroll has been published. There have been many requests for one, but the differences between the traditional Hebrew text and the great Isaiah scroll are for the most part matters of grammar and spelling which would not show in a translation; the differences which really affect the meaning do not seem sufficiently numerous or important to warrant translating the whole text."\(^\text{13}\)

Another scholar who replied to the inquiry if any translation of the Isaiah scrolls from the Dead Sea find has been made into English, notes: "I do not know of any and do not think any is likely to be made, as the serious variations are not considerable. There have been many articles in learned journals discussing such variations as there are, but I do not think anyone will be likely to publish a complete translation of these texts."\(^\text{14}\)


\(^{13}\)Personal correspondence to the author from Millar Burrows, June 15, 1956.

\(^{14}\)Personal correspondence to the author from H. H. Rowley, the University of Manchester, England, June 16, 1956.
Whether or not English translations of the Dead Sea Isaiah will be made, remains to be seen. It is significant, however, that scholars have as yet found no important variations in the contents of these scrolls as compared with the Biblical Isaiah. This fact adds important testimony to the authenticity and accuracy of the version as it exists in the King James Translation of the Bible.
WHO WERE THE COVENANTERS?

The question of who the people were who lived in the Community on the shores of the Dead Sea and why and under what circumstances they sought this refuge, will probably never be fully answered. As indicated in a previous chapter, the best clue to their identity is probably given by Josephus.

Fortunately for students of Jewish and early Christian history, Flavius Josephus wrote extensively, and in detail, and his writings have been preserved. This great Jewish historian wrote about the Jewish War, Jewish Antiquities, the History of the Jews from the Creation of the World to the Beginning of the War with Rome, he did an autobiography, and also left miscellaneous treatises covering misrepresentations of the Jews and the antiquity of their history as compared with that of the Greeks.

Josephus, who lived approximately between the years A.D. 37 to A.D. 95, was a Jewish Pharisee. During these difficult years, apparently he was a military mediator between the Romans and the Jews. In the year 66, it is recorded that he went to Galilee in an effort to persuade some of the rebellious Jews to lay down their arms and return to Roman allegiance. He thus placed himself in the middle of the rebellion and excited the suspicion of his Jewish compatriots. Later, he returned to the Jewish side in the conflict
and helped to defend a stronghold in Galilee against the Romans.

When the Romans conquered the area, Josephus, was captured and was led before Vespasian. There, he was impressed to predict that Vespasian would one day become emperor. When this prediction came true, Josephus was freed, returned to Rome, awarded a pension, and made a Roman citizen. It was after he became a Roman citizen that he did most of his historical writing.

The Essenes

The sect, known as the Essenes or The Holy Ones, was described in varying details, not only by Josephus, but also by Philo and Pliny. Philo, sometimes called Philo Judaeus, was a Jewish philosopher who lived in Alexandria probably during the period of about 20 B.C. to around A.D. 45. He was a Hellenistic Jew who wrote a copious commentary on Genesis, a shorter exposition on Exodus, and a treatise on the Mosaic law for Gentiles. Philo's writings describe the Essene sect but do not go into detail about its beliefs and practices.

Pliny (the elder) lived approximately during the years A.D. 23 to A.D. 79. He was a Roman author who held a high position in the Roman army and navy and participated in the government of Spain. Pliny also wrote important treatises in which he mentioned the Essenes.

The most detailed description of this interesting sect, however, was written by Josephus. From his writings, it is possible to conclude that the Essenes probably established their order sometime during
the half-century before the Maccabaean Wars (168-142 B.C.) It is likely that they came into being in an attempt to resist the efforts then being made to Hellenize the Jews.

The Essenes were a religious body who kept themselves separated from other Jewish sects, who established Monastic habits, combined Hebraism with Asceticism, and who set up a communal order in the desert. It was during this period that the Greeks were exercising much influence on the Hebrews and were, undoubtedly, making many changes in the Greek texts of the Jewish scriptures in order to bring them into closer harmony with certain Greek beliefs that were being imposed on Jewish philosophy.

It is entirely possible, that the Essenes established themselves in defiance to this effort. They probably set up their ascetic order in an effort to preserve the original truths in the Jewish scriptures. In all likelihood they were an apostate group from the central Hebrew community.

The Essene Oaths

In his treatise on the Essenes, Josephus outlined in detail the nature of their order, their beliefs and practices, and certain "terrible oaths" that initiants were required to take before acceptance into the order. Among these "oaths" were that they would practice piety toward God, observe justice and keep faith with men, honor the sect leaders because no leader achieved office except by the will of God, would not, if they bore rule, abuse their authority, would live humbly, love truth and expose liars, re-
frain from stealing and from unholy gain, and would preserve the books of the sect and the names of the angels.

These and other detailed descriptions of the Essenes, as given by Josephus, provide remarkable similarities with the description of the beliefs and practices of the Dead Sea Covenantors as now available from the translation of their scriptures. From the writings of Philo, Pliny, and Josephus, it appears that at one time approximately as many as four thousand people were members of the Essene sect. In the recent excavations of the cemetery that lies between the community center and the shores of the Dead Sea, the number of graves discovered would indicate that probably several thousand members of the sect lived in the area at the same time.

It is from these similarities that it has been generally concluded that the Dead Sea Covenanters and the Essenes as described by these historians, were one and the same people.
Chapter Seven

THE QUMRAN COMMUNITY

After the antiquity and the value of the Dead Sea Scrolls had been ascertained, archaeologists turned their attention to attempting to learn who the people were who had kept the records.

On a plateau overlooking the Dead Sea, not far from the caves in which the scrolls were discovered, there existed what was thought to have been an old Roman fort. This old ruin known to the Arabs as Khirbet Kumran, was well marked on maps and had been visited by many students of antiquity as well as by tourists and travelers. No archaeological excavations, however, had been made at the site.

Khirbet Qumran

As new interest focused on the area, Dr. G. Lankester Harding, Director of the Jordan Government's Department of Antiquities together with another archaeologist, Pere de Vaux, Director of the Ecole Biblique in Jordan Jerusalem, began a systematic excavation of the old ruin. As they dug down, layer after layer, they soon discovered that the Khirbet was not a Roman Fort but rather, apparently, the Community Center that had been occupied by the sect which had kept and hidden the records.

This discovery excited additional activity in the area and promised to provide archaeological antiquities that would help the scholars obtain an
understanding of who the Covenanters were and how they lived. The excavations, as they proceeded, proved, in a remarkable way, to provide this hoped-for information.¹

What the Excavations Produced

As the excavations proceeded, all sorts of artifacts and antiquities were uncovered. These included coins, potsherds, cooking utensils, kitchenware, library (or writing) tables, and even old ink wells containing dried-up ink. These, as indicated in Chapter Three, have helped measurably to determine the age of the scrolls, and the period during which the Community Center was occupied. They also help to tell the story of the activities and community life of the Covenanters.

¹See, The Qumran Community by Charles T. Fritsch, The McMillan Co., N. Y.
The building itself was approximately 100x125 feet in size and contained a number of enclosures including what apparently were assembly rooms, a scriptorium, a kitchen, storerooms, and other utility areas. On the northwest corner of the building there apparently was a large tower, about 35x35 feet in size, in which were several floors containing several rooms. This tower could have been used for observation purposes and for defense from attacks coming in from Jericho or Jerusalem, as well as for living accommodations. It is believed, however, that most of the community members lived in dwellings around the center. If so, evidences of these abodes no longer exist.

In addition, as part of the community building, there were some well constructed and carefully plastered cisterns that were used for collecting and storing water. Some of these cisterns were constructed with steps leading down into their areas, and, apparently, these were used for baptismal or lustration purposes.²

*The Cemetery*

A short distance southeast of the Community Center, a cemetery containing a thousand or more graves was discovered. This discovery, too, has been made years ago, but it was thought that these graves might have been for the Roman soldiers who were believed to have occupied the "Fort." Many of these graves had been opened both recently and as long ago as the end of the last century. They were found to contain the skeletons of both men,

²See Chapter Thirteen.
women, and children. The bodies were buried with the heads toward the south. Very few personal belongings were buried with the bodies, merely a few pieces of pottery. Sufficient graves have now been opened to confirm the belief that all of the bodies were buried in this simple fashion. These burials are so different, both in the position of the bodies and in the personal belongings included in the simple tombs, as to indicate that these were not Arabs nor Moslem burials. Natives in the area, who were familiar with the nature of the graves, referred to them as "Tombs of Kuffar," unbelievers, or non-Moslems. The cemetery obviously did not belong to the Arabs, to the Jews, nor to the Christians, but apparently to the unusual sect that occupied the Qumran Community.

Initiation Into the Community

Much has been learned from the translation of the Dead Sea scriptures about the nature of the community, its requirements for initiation, and the life its members led. According to the Manual of Discipline, children were required to graduate from a ten-year-period of study before they could be considered for admission into the sect. During the time following the ten-year-study-period and before age twenty, they were put on probation and were observed and examined carefully. After ten years of study and at age twenty, they were eligible for application for membership.

All candidates were examined publicly primarily in respect to their knowledge, intellectual ability, and their moral character. Those who passed this pub-
lic examination went into a probationary period lasting for one year during which time they were further observed and examined. In the probationary state,
they could share in the community’s resources, but could not eat at the communal table.

After the probationary period they were further tested and then, following another probationary year, became full-fledged members of the group. At this time all personal property was put under the control and supervision of the overseers, or Mebaqquerim, who appeared to possess approximately the same authority and responsibility as a modern bishop.

Even after this arduous scrutiny, membership in the sect was not guaranteed. According to the Manual of Discipline, members could be expelled if they failed to live up to the requirements as established by majority vote of the community members. The sect had a well-established procedure of justice. Complaints of misbehavior came before a governing board where both the accused and the accuser were required to be present. If a member had a complaint against a brother, he must present it to the board on the very same day. Otherwise, he, himself would be considered to have sinned.

Decisions of the board were based upon majority rule, and these decisions were final. Only for serious offenses, however, were expelled members forever forbidden reunion with the group. For most offenses, a specified period of expulsion, followed by probationary periods, enabled repentent violators to return to the sect.

Attitude Toward Themselves

The community members considered themselves to be the "elect of God" and believed that their community was an ideal one founded on faithfulness
and devotion to God's commandments. They were not waiting for the law and the testaments; they believed that they had them in the scriptures if they would search them out. Furthermore, they believed their leaders were capable, as needed, of receiving divine guidance for the community.

As pointed out previously, they were dedicated to searching the scriptures and to purifying and restoring them to their original state. They believed that the Torah had been altered and perverted and thought of themselves as God's chosen people to correct these errors.

They put a high premium on knowledge and insisted that all members of the group meet frequently for study, consultation, and discussion. Each one of these groups, generally of ten, was headed by an expounder of the law who was able to answer questions from members of the group. They held annual conferences, or conventions, where they received instructions and inspiration from their leaders and from each other.

The Teacher of Righteousness

The Covenanters' scriptures refer frequently to a "Teacher of Righteousness" or a leader who, apparently, was the spiritual head of the sect. There has been much conjecture on the part of the scholars as to who this "Teacher of Righteousness" might have been. It is now generally concluded, however, that the title referred to an office rather than to a specific individual. In other words, there may have been several or many teachers of righteousness in succession.
This leader of the community was always a priest and was one who stood in communion with God and could receive divine instructions from him as needed for the welfare of the community. Although there is no direct proof in the Covenanters' scriptures themselves, it has been assumed by some of the scholars that this Teacher of Righteousness was one of the three priests who apparently stood at the head of the community.³

Belief in a Messiah

There is evidence in the Dead Sea Scrolls that the Covenanters believed in the advent of a Savior or Messiah. One of the Scroll fragments quotes the Old Testament where Moses predicts the advent of a Savior.⁴ They believed that he would usher in the golden age of righteousness and would come at a time when the scattered hosts of Israel had been gathered. This high priest and king would be one anointed by Aaron and Israel and with his coming the whole earth would be filled with knowledge.

Communal Order

As indicated above, the community operated completely on a communal basis. Full membership in the sect required that all personal property be put in custody of overseers. This property then was distributed to each member of the sect in accordance with his own personal needs and requirements. Apparently, no one lived in want. At least, no one lived

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³See Chapter Twelve. See also, Gaster, op. cit., page 26.
⁴Deuteronomy 18:15-18.
in more want than anyone else, and each had an equal share of the available property. The fact, according to translations of the copper scrolls, that the group before it was scattered was able to conceal in the caves large quantities of precious metals and other valuables worth many millions of dollars, indicates that the communal procedure must have resulted in a fairly prosperous economy.4

All members of the group ate at a common table which, as indicated in Chapter Thirteen, was conducted as a ritual not unlike a sacrament. Each member of the group was seated in accordance with his rank and a priest blessed the food.

In their community discussions, they followed a strict order of precedence in accordance with rank and made sure that every person who wanted to contribute to the discussion had the opportunity of doing so.

**Tithing**

Apparently, too, the Dead Sea Covenanters had some understanding of the law of tithing. In one of their hymns, *(Manual of Discipline, Column X)* the Covenanters sang:

> I shall hold it as one of the laws
> Engraven of old on the tablets
> To offer to God as my fruits—
> The praises of my tongue,
> And to cull for him as my tithes
> —the skilled music of my lips.5

Due to their communal existence, however, in all probability the law of tithing was not applied to their

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4 See page 12.
full-fledged members. They were, nevertheless, acquainted with the scriptures which advocate tithing as a religious requirement, and it is possible, of course, that applicants awaiting full membership may have been tithed.  

An interesting summary of one scholar's conclusions regarding the Qumran Community, is as follows:

"In conclusion, then, we may say that the Qumran sect was a monastic community whose members practised the common life according to strict regulations; it was a covenant community which lived according to the requirements of the new covenant; it was a sacramental community in that every phase of life was lived in accordance with the divine ordinances; it was a priestly community in that its life was directed by the priests, or sons of Zadok; it was a Bible-centered community, where the Scriptures were read and studied day and night, and where Biblical texts were continually copied by members of the group; and finally, it was an apocalyptic community, waiting expectantly for the quick overthrow of evil and the establishment of God's kingdom here on earth."

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7Fritsch, op. cit., page 75.
Chapter Eight

THE ZADOKITE DOCUMENT

The discovery and translation of the scrolls have reawakened keen interest in the so-called Zadokite Fragments. These old manuscripts were discovered in 1896 in a genizah in Cairo. A genizah is a Hebrew storage library for unused, or little used, books and manuscripts. This Zadokite document proved to be interesting to scholars because it describes the beliefs and practices of an unusual sect which, at one time, apparently had its headquarters in Damascus. For this reason, the group has been known as the Damascus Sect.

The Manual of Discipline of the Dead Sea Covenanters, now proves to be strikingly similar to the Zadokite document. Consequently, new interest has been aroused in this old record and many of the scholars working on the scrolls have written scholarly reports or books showing the relationships between the two documents.¹

A careful comparison of the Manual of Discipline and the Zadokite document leaves little doubt that these two records came from the same source. The Manual of Discipline speaks frequently of its priests being Sons of Zadok. The Zadokite document outlines in detail basically the same beliefs and communal procedures as described in the Manual of Discipline.

¹See, The Zadokite Fragments and the Dead Sea Scrolls, by H. H. Rowley. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1955 (also, most books on the Dead Sea Scrolls contain chapters on the Zadokite Fragments, see Bibliography, page 117.)
Sons of Zadok

The Old Testament establishes clearly that the Sons of Zadok were a group of priests who had a special recognition from the Lord. The Prophet Ezekiel describes these priests as keepers of the altar and as among the sons of Levi who were nearest to the Lord. He says that these priests were among those who kept faithful when the Children of Israel went astray and also when the Levites themselves drifted away from the teachings of the Lord.2

Both the Manual of Discipline and the Zadokite document refer frequently to the Sons of Zadok. Apparently, their presiding priests were from this lineage and were the spiritual leaders of the community.

The Levites

The priests of Zadok who, apparently, played such an important role in the community life of the Covenanters, were descendents of the tribe of Levi. Levi was the third son of Jacob and Leah and the father of one of the original tribes of Israel. According to Hebrew biblical history, Jahweh, himself, selected this particular tribe as priestly religious workers to serve him in place of the first born of the Israelites who had been destroyed during the plagues in Egypt. At the time of Aaron, brother of Moses and a descendent of Levi, these priests were assigned to him to assist in the performance of all duties connected with the Aaronic Priesthood but which were not required by law to be performed by the Aaronic

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2Ezekiel 40:46, 43:19, 44:15, 48:11.
priests themselves. It is quite likely that the Levitical Priesthood was an appendage to the Aaronic Priesthood and that the Levites were appointed unto Aaron and his sons to serve them and to assist them in the many functions involved in the work in the tabernacle. Aaron and his sons officiated in the priestly activities, and the Levites performed the lesser duties. It is also recorded that some forty-eight cities throughout Palestine were assigned to the Levites where they could live, apparently as a separate group, for the performance of their service duties. Their economic support came from tithes and priestly dues.³

The Levitical Priesthood is an hereditary authority fixed on the head of Aaron and his sons forever. It was in active operation down to Zachariah and was given by him to his son, John the Baptist.⁴

As pointed out in the Old Testament scriptures, eventually the Levites, along with the Children of Israel, went astray of the gospel teachings. The Sons of Zadok in this family, however, apparently stood firm.⁵ This is obviously the reason why they were held in such high esteem in the Covenanters' community and why they were granted their priestly responsibility and authority.

Modern References

Modern scriptures provide some additional information about the Levites. During the period when Moses led the Children of Israel from Egypt into the wilderness, they rebelled against his and

³See Numbers 18, 35:1-8; Deut. 18:2; Leviticus 27:31.
⁴See page 49.
⁵Ezekiel 44:15, 48:11.
the Lord's teachings and became unworthy to hold the Higher or Melchizedek Priesthood. The Higher Priesthood then was taken away from them and only the Lesser, or Aaromic priesthood, remained.⁶

The difference between the Aaromic and the Levitical Priesthood was apparently a matter of rank. It appears that the male members of the tribe of Levi who held the Aaromic Priesthood, were called to the office of presidency while those who held the Levitical Priesthood served in the organization but in lesser roles.

Offices in the Aaromic Priesthood consist of priests, teachers, and deacons. It is probable that in ancient times, during the sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness and later in their history, the sons of Aaron held the office of priest and the sons of Levi, but not of Aaron, held the offices of teachers and deacons. In the days of Moses, when the Levitical Priesthood was officially established, it appears that this type of organization was perfected. Moses described the differences between the responsibilities of these two segments of the priesthood when he wrote that those between the ages of twenty-five and fifty should wait upon the service of the tabernacle and the congregation while those fifty years of age and over should minister and preside in the tabernacle.⁷

In modern times, the Aaromic Priesthood has been restored. On May 15, 1829, John the Baptist conferred this priesthood on Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, and with it he bestowed the keys of the Lesser Priesthood. When this restoration occurred,

⁷Numbers 8:24-26.
the declaration was made that this priesthood should never, "be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness."8

In ancient times, offerings were in the form of burnt sacrifices on the altar. With the advent of the Savior, this type of sacrifice was terminated and in its place the Lord asks for a contrite spirit, a humble heart, and an acceptance of his gospel in righteousness. It would, therefore, seem probable that when the "sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness" it will be in the form of their full acceptance of the gospel.

The Covenanters and the Aaronic Priesthood

There is no direct proof in the Dead Sea scriptures, nor in the Zadokite document, that the Dead Sea Covenanters possessed the Aaronic Priesthood. There are, however, references in their scriptures to the "lesser" and the "greater."9 It is possible that their determined search of the scriptures had brought them the knowledge of the existence previously in the church of these two orders of priesthood. It is also entirely possible that they possessed the Aaronic Priesthood and that John the Baptist, as believed by many of the scholars, was a member of the sect.

Modern scriptures indicate that John the Baptist had the right to the Aaronic Priesthood through his lineage from Aaron and was ordained to this Priesthood by an angel of God.10 If the Covenanters

8D. & C. 13.
9See page 78. See also, Wilson, op. cit., page 38.
10D. & C. 84:27.
possessed the Aaronic Priesthood it is entirely possible that their priests of Zadok held the office of priest in this priesthood and that others who were sons of Levi, but not through the lineage of Zadok, held the other offices of teachers and deacons in the priesthood. This, however, is pure conjecture and is not supported with direct references in the records discovered in the caves near the Dead Sea.
Chapter Nine

THE COVENANTERS IN PALESTINE HISTORY

A BRIEF outline of the history of Palestine may shed some light on the conditions that may have been responsible for the establishment of the interesting sect on the shores of the Dead Sea. Some clue of the origin of the Essenes, or the Dead Sea Covenanters if they were one and the same group, may be gleaned from a brief look at the troubled history of the area.

Throughout recorded history, Palestine has been a battle ground on the part of a succession of would-be conquerors. Closely connected with this history of constant turmoil is the fact that three great religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, all claim this small area as the center of their birth and early development.¹

As a religious group, the Hebrews were first to lay claim to the area. It was about 2,000 B.C. when Abraham, to save his own life and under instructions from the Almighty, left Ur, an area that is now in southern Iraq, for an unknown destination in the North. After a brief stop in a place which he called Haran, Abraham journeyed up the fertile valley of the Euphrates, then turned west into the land of Canaan. This land previously had been settled by a race of Semetic shepherds whose descendents had spread over the entire land of Egypt.

¹See, Israel and the Middle East by Harry B. Ellis, Ronald Press, New York, 1957.
Joseph in Egypt

At approximately 1700 B.C. twelve sons were born to Jacob (Israel), the grandson of Abraham. Jacob's favorite of these twelve sons, Joseph, was sold by his brothers and taken into Egypt. There under the Pharoah Hyksos, he rose to a position of power which made him literally the prime minister, and the second highest authority in Egypt. When a famine struck Canaan, Joseph's family, acting on his invitation, moved into Egypt and the Hebrews dwelt there for some 430 years.

Rulers eventually took office, however, who did not remember the blessings that Joseph had brought to Egypt, and the Hebrews were put under the yoke of captivity. This led to the exodus under Moses which is believed to have taken place between 1300 and 1250 B.C.

The Judges and the Kings

After Moses, Joshua took leadership of the Hebrews and restored them to their "promised land." He built them into a strong nation and a single state which captured all of the surrounding communities and areas, except Jerusalem. After Joshua, however, there was no single strong leader available to hold the tribes together. They then divided into a series of hostile, and semi-hostile, camps. Only the guidance of a group of Hebrew tribal leaders, the Judges, kept the dissident families from causing the destruction of the house of Israel. It was Samuel, the last of these great judges, who persuaded a reluctant Saul to become the first King of the Hebrews.
When Saul failed to prove to be as capable and dedicated as Samuel had hoped, Samuel secretly appointed David, Saul's general, as king. David, after Saul's death, reunited the tribes and pushed the kingdom to its fartherest boundaries. It was at this time that Jerusalem was first captured and became a part of the kingdom. David's reign ended at approximately 965 B.C.

David's son, Solomon, after his father's death, became king. He bent his efforts toward developing the territory both economically and culturally. Solomon prospected for and discovered valuable deposits of rich ore, negotiated for the timbers from Lebanon, and built great cities and temples. It was Solomon who built the first great temple at Jerusalem and who, for a while, was able to hold the country which now extended as far north as Damascus and to the Euphrates, south as far as the Gulf of Aqaba, west to the Mediterranean and east into Syria.

Eventually, however, due partly to the heavy taxes Solomon was forced to impose to support his program, the country was weakened. After his death, it split into the two factions of Judah, consisting chiefly of the Tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and Israel, i.e., the Ten Tribes.

*Assyrian Conquest*

A house divided against itself could not stand, and as the Jews and Israelites fought among themselves, other ambitious outsiders grasped the opportunity and moved into the area. In approximately the year 732 B.C., Tiglath-Pileser the III, the
Assyrian king, conquered the fringe areas of the kingdom. Later he moved his conquest into the heart of Palestine. By 721 B.C., Israel was completely under Assyrian domination. It was at this time that Sargon II, captured Samaria and carried some 27,000 Hebrews into captivity. This was the beginning of the great dispersion. The other half of the family, Judah, clung on to its land and to its customs for nearly a century and a half, but it was not a free people.

The Babylonians

Like all previous conquerors, the Assyrian power, after reaching an apex, began to decline. Near the year 660 B.C., the Babylonians, now the chief Eastern power, conquered the Assyrians and took over jurisdiction of Palestine. The Jewish leaders, thinking that they saw an opportunity for freedom and depending upon the help of the Egyptians, revolted against the Babylonians. They were, however, quickly subjugated by Nebuchadnezzar.

It was at this time that the family of Lehi, whose history is told in the Book of Mormon, acting under instructions and guidance from God, left Jerusalem, journeyed into the wilderness and eventually found its way to the American continent.

Nine years after their first revolt, the Jews again attempted to throw off their Babylonian yoke. After this second attempt, Nebuchadnezzar’s army mercilessly over-ran the area, destroyed city after city, and finally captured Jerusalem and the temple and leveled them to the ground.
Eventually, Babylon followed the pattern of previous conquerors and in 539 B.C., was overpowered by Cyrus the Great. For 200 years the Persians followed a policy of encouraging the building of national groups within their empire. During the Persian regime, Jerusalem's walls were rebuilt and, through the guidance of Ezra and Nehemia, the Jews regained a semblance of sovereignty and spiritual and temporal freedom.

Alexander the Great

In 334 B.C., Alexander the Great conquered the area for the Greeks bringing the Persian Empire to an end. Alexander, however, died young. When only 33 years old and before he could unite his new kingdom, he was stricken and died in Babylon.

Two of his generals, Seleucid and Ptolemy I, immediately seized separate parts of the kingdom and established themselves as independent rulers. The Seleucids founded their center in Syria and Phoenicia. The Ptolemys took rule of the country around Egypt. Between these two warring nations lay Judea, and for twenty-five years after Alexander's death the country was fought over time and again. The struggle finally ended when, in 198 B.C., the forces of Ptolemy V were overwhelmed and Judea was taken by the Seleucids of Antioch but not until both sides had become thoroughly weakened. There followed another short period of approximately thirty years during which time the Jews were left relatively free and allowed to live and worship without much interference from their conquerors.
Greek Influence

From the time of the conquest of Alexander the Great, the Greeks, however, were attempting to impose their ideas and philosophies upon the Jews. This Greek influence and pressure came to a climax during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes who was determined to crush, once and for all, Jewish customs, culture, and religion. In 167 B.C. he desecrated the temple in Jerusalem, by sacrificing a swine in it, and built altars to Greek gods throughout Palestine. During this long period of Greek domination and particularly under the rule of Epiphanes, many Jews had become thoroughly Hellenized. They wore Greek clothes, attended Greek plays and games, spoke the Greek language, and even forgot how to speak and read Hebrew or Aramaic. This was one basic reason why their scriptures were translated into Greek. The Septuagint\(^2\) version of the Old Testament was written at about this time, apparently with full Jewish cooperation and primarily because they needed this Greek translation in order to study their own scriptures.\(^5\)

Many of the Jewish leaders willingly cooperated with the Greeks. Others resisted and attempted to hold on to their customs and beliefs. One of these latter, a Jewish Priest named Mattathias, was ordered by the Greeks to make a sacrifice to pagan gods. Mattathias rebelled and killed a Seleucid officer. He, with his family, then fled into the desert. The family resisted capture and one of the sons, Judas Maccabeus, became a cunning and daring guerilla-type warrior.

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\(^2\)See page 20.

The Mattathias family attracted other groups of Jews who refused to accept the Hellenization which was being imposed on their church, on their culture, and on their communities. Soon the Maccabaeans, under Judas Maccabeus, grew strong enough to capture all of Jerusalem, except the citadel, and to reinstate Jewish worship in the temple.

*Rise of the Essenes*

A new division soon developed among the Jews. The Pharisees and the Sadducees, who had continuously quarreled between themselves, brought their bitter dispute into open hostility. The Pharisees were the ritualists who clung tenaciously to form and custom. The Sadducees were much less strict and were willing to accept as a part of their beliefs and practices certain foreign, and particularly Greek, customs.

It is probable, although it is not mentioned in the scriptures, that a third group also developed at approximately this time. Perhaps this group was an off-shoot from the Maccabaeans. In any event, religious historians refer to and describe the beliefs and customs of a sect which they called the Essenes and who, as outlined in a previous chapter, came into being at approximately this time. They devoted themselves to attempting to live the pure Hebrew religion and preserving the Hebrew scriptures in their original state.
Roman Rule

It was also during this time that Hyrcanus, a nephew of Judas Maccabeus, put Palestine under a rigid dictatorship. Later, his son, Alexander Jannaeus, through vicious and ruthless methods strengthened and solidified this rule.

After the death of Jannaeus, his two sons, Hyrcanus II, who was pro-Pharisee, and Aristobolus II, who was pro-Sadducee, fought each other for control of the area. Separately, they both appealed for help from Pompei, the Roman general then at Antioch. Pompei immediately saw his opportunity and seized Palestine for the Roman empire. Thus, Greek rule came to an end, and the Romans began their long period of domination. This Roman conquest, also, ended for the last time any semblance of independence for the Jewish state until some 2,000 years later, when in May, 1948, the sovereign state of Israel was created.

Under the Romans, Pompei and Caesar, the actual administration of Palestine was given to Antipater the Idumean. He successfully put down several anti-Roman revolts, and, in recognition of these successes, Caesar made him a Roman citizen and established him as Procurator of Judea. One of his sons, Phaesal, was made governor of Jerusalem, the other, Herod, became a governor of Galilee.

Just prior to the birth of the Savior, Herod, on appointment by Mark Anthony, was made king of Judea. Although a pagan, Herod respected the Jews' religion and, to gain their favor, rebuilt the
temple, at Jerusalem in a magnificent way and restored and extended the aqueducts. After Herod's death, his kingdom was divided among his three sons who, in A.D. 6, were removed from power by the Emperor Augustus.

During the period A.D. 6 to A.D. 40, which covered approximately the life-time of the Savior, the area was ruled by the Roman Procurators, the best known of which was Pontius Pilate. During this whole period, the Romans did not interfere much with Jewish religious affairs. They were satisfied mainly to collect taxes and to handle major disputes with which the local administrators could not cope.

Although there is nothing in history nor in the Dead Sea scriptures to prove such a conclusion, it is entirely probable that the Essenes, or Dead Sea Covenanters, originated during this troubled period which began with the Maccabean wars. Perhaps, when Mattathias fled into the desert, the central group of his followers who were determined to resist the invasion of Greek ethics and philosophy, became the nucleus out of which the sect grew. The evidences they left behind, as described in Chapter Three, would seem to support this theory.

In any event, it is fairly certain that the Dead Sea Covenanters lived during the first century and a half before Christ and were driven out of their community during one of the many Hebrew uprisings against the Romans, probably in the year A.D. 68.
Chapter Ten

THE RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY

During the past few years, many of the writings of the Dead Sea Covenanters have been translated into English. Since particularly, the publication, in 1956, of Theodore H. Gaster's book, The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation, the beliefs and practices of the Dead Sea Covenanters have become widely known. Out of this knowledge has developed "a religious controversy" which may prove to be the most important result of the discovery. Dr. Gaster makes special reference to this controversy in the Introduction of his book. He writes,

"The archaeologists tell us that the Dead Sea caves are hot and dark. The same might be said of the controversy which has raged around their contents."

The basic element of this controversy, which has threatened to rock the so-called "Christian World," is realization of the fact that the Dead Sea Covenanters held certain of the beliefs, had in effect part of the organization structure, and practised some of the rituals later introduced by Christ.

To those Christian churches who believe that Christianity was introduced for the first time upon the earth during the Savior's ministry, these facts

raise a serious problem in respect to Christ's origin-
ality. The Dead Sea Covenanters' *Manual of
Discipline* seems to prove that this ascetic order
was teaching and practising many doctrines that
later became known as Christian precepts. Those
churches which do not understand nor teach that
the gospel was on the earth before Christ's mortal
life have serious cause for concern over this dis-
covery.

*Areas of Similarity*

Some of the more significant beliefs and prac-
tices of the Dead Sea Covenanters that are simi-
lar to original Christianity and which are discussed
in detail in subsequent chapters, include the follow-
ing:

1. Their concept of God.
2. The organization of their Church.
3. Their ordinances and practices.
4. The importance they attached to knowledge
   and free agency
5. Their concept of original sin.
6. Their emphasis on the search for truth.

According to their writings, the Dead Sea Cove-
nanters held peculiarly "Christian" ideas and con-
cepts in these areas of their practices and beliefs.
In certain of these concepts, resemblance to Chris-
tian doctrine is clear and unmistakable. In others,
their writings disclose evidences of similarities that
are striking and impressive.

In any event, these similarities are responsible
for the heated controversy among the scholars who
are now or who have been working with the scrolls. The big problem is not whether these similarities exist. The question is how and where the Covenanters obtained these Christian concepts.

Although their sect pre-dates Christianity, the controversy lies in the argument as to whether they adopted these concepts after the birth and during the life of Christ, or if the Savior actually borrowed some of his teachings from the Covenanters. If the latter were true, certain of the scholars must conclude, then, that all of Christ’s teachings were not original and that some were borrowed from already existing sources. To certain Christian churches, this is a difficult conclusion. It would seem to question the originality of the Savior’s teachings.

Age of the Gospel

As previously pointed out, the scholars are generally agreed that the Dead Sea sect occupied its community at least as early as 175 years before Christ. Some scholars believe that these people may have been in the area long before that time. There is no evidence from their scriptures that any fundamental changes in their beliefs were made during the latter part of their existence on the shores of the Dead Sea, namely during the period of the Savior’s earth life. All evidences point to the conclusion that these people, from their beginnings, were dedicated in their determination to preserve the scriptures in their original state and to seek out and practise the commandments as laid down by the early prophets.
Consequently, the only plausible answer to the problems raised above, lie in the question of whether or not Christ's gospel existed upon the earth prior to his birth or whether or not both the beliefs of the Covenanters and the teachings of the Savior may have come from the same source. To these questions, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has definite answers.

The Gospel Older Than the World

Throughout his writings, the Apostle Paul makes it clear that the gospel is for everyone who has ever or who will ever live upon the earth. In his letter to the Romans, he declares, "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation unto everyone that believeth." In a subsequent letter, also to the Romans, Paul pointed out that God is no respector of persons.

If the gospel is for everybody, one must conclude that God's plan must have been ready and available at the beginning of man's existence upon the earth. Moreover, it would appear logical that the Creator of the world would have prepared a plan for his children even before their existence upon this earth.

The scriptures provide strong evidence of this fact and even indicate that the gospel was available for man's acceptance or rejection, on the basis of his own free agency, even before the foundations of this world were laid. The scriptures also indicate that men's spirits lived in a pre-existent state. For example, the Bible points out that the Prophet Job

1Romans 1:16.
2Romans 2:11.
The Dead Sea Scrolls existed before the foundations of the earth were laid and "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."  

Why did the sons of God shout for joy? John the Revelator gives some indication of the reasons in his description of the war in heaven when Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and the devil and his angels were cast out of heaven.

It would seem apparent that if the dragon, or the devil, was exerting his influence in heaven that he would do so only if the possibility existed that his influence might be accepted or rejected by the hosts of heaven. This would indicate that they had their free choice to follow the devil or to follow God's teachings.

The Pearl of Great Price, one of the accepted scriptures of the Mormon Church, gives a clear picture of this struggle in heaven. In this book, both in the writings of Moses and in Abraham, these great prophets describe visions in which the Lord showed them the intelligences who, before the world was organized, had the opportunity of accepting a plan offered by Jesus and one presented by Lucifer, the devil. It was this conflict of gospel plans that precipitated the war in heaven which resulted in the devil and his hosts being cast out of heaven and which may have caused the angels to shout for joy.

Additional references in the Bible present convincing evidence that the gospel was preached to the spirits, or intelligences, before their life existed upon the earth. Jeremiah was ordained to be a prophet

8Job 38:4-7.  
5Pearl of Great Price. Moses, Ch. 4; Abraham, Ch. 3.
before he was born. To qualify as a prophet, Jeremiah must have shown evidence of strength of character through the exercise of his free agency, and he must have proved to the Lord that he would be worthy as a prophet. Jesus himself indicated that he had divine station and glory with his Father in Heaven before the world was formed. On many occasions he declared that he had been glorified before the formation of the world and that before coming to this earth, he had come from the Father to whom he would return. The Savior also said, "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

It is evident, too, that the Savior's apostles knew that pre-existent spirits could exercise free choice in respect to right and wrong. On one occasion they asked Jesus about a certain man who had been blind since birth. They desired to know whether or not he had sinned before his birth or if the sin had been committed by the parents. If he had sinned before his birth he must have had the opportunity to exercise his free agency.

**The Gospel Before Christ**

The scriptures, too, are replete with passages which indicate that the gospel, the same plan of salvation as introduced by the Savior, was available to those who sought for it in Old Testament times. Paul's writings give some of the clearest indications of this fact. In his epistle to the Hebrews, Paul

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*Jer. 1:5.*
*John 17:28.*
*John 17:5.*
*John 9:1-3.*
writes, "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets."\[10\]

If God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow, his instructions, too, to all of his children, would be the same. It is not reasonable to believe that God’s plan of salvation, as he gave it to "the fathers by the prophets" would be any different than his plan as brought to his children through his son, Jesus Christ.

In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul describes how the gospel was preached to Moses. He records that Moses was, "faithful in all his house."\[11\] We have no reason to believe that the gospel as preached to Moses would have been any different than the gospel as preached by Jesus and his disciples.

Paul also says that God made a covenant with Abraham and his people, "in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenants, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord."\[12\]

God’s covenants have always been made and will always be made with his people on condition that they live in accordance with his teachings in righteousness. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul records that the gospel was preached to Abraham. In this letter, he says, "forseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel, unto Abraham, saying—in me shall all nations be blessed."\[13\]

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10Heb. 1:1.
11Heb. 3:5.
12Hebrews 8:9.
13Galatians 3:8.
In his letter to the Romans, he further states that the time, "will come when all men will be judged by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."  

If all men, those who lived before as well as after the Savior, are to be judged by his teachings, a just God would surely make certain that they all have the opportunity to hear his gospel and to accept or reject it. Otherwise, how could they be judged? Paul further indicates the universality and antiquity of the gospel when he says, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."  

The Shepherd of Hermas  

In addition to the teachings of original Christianity, the Dead Sea scriptures have aroused a new interest in certain apocryphal books that once formed a part of the cannon of biblical scriptures. The Covenanterers apparently used some of these books in their teachings and researches. In any event, their writings contain several references to these books.  

One of the apocryphal books in which new interest has been excited, is the "Shepherd of Hermas." This is a book written approximately A.D. 139 to A.D. 154 and that was included in the cannon of scriptures until near the end of the fifth century when it was changed to non-cannonical status by the Council of the Roman Church. This book has been a source of controversy to the scholars because of the way it describes the Godhead (discussed at greater

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14 Romans 2:16.
15 I Cor. 15:19.
length in Chapter Eleven), and also because its author maintains that the church established by the Son of God, already had a long history upon the earth before Christ was sent, "to purify it and call it back to God's commandments." Some of the scholars working on the Dead Sea scriptures believed that the author of the "Shepherd of Hermas" may have been the son of a member of the Dead Sea Sect.

The Gospel in Modern Scriptures

Modern scriptures fully confirm the fact that the gospel is older than this earth and that it is designed for the salvation of all men. The plan of salvation was presented to all of God's children in the pre-existent state. Everyone had the opportunity there of accepting or rejecting it. The fact that mortal beings are here upon this earth is evidence that they did accept it with full knowledge that a veil would be drawn before their eyes so that during this earth life they could use their free agency when the gospel is presented to them.

Modern scriptures show that the gospel, the same plan of salvation as restored by the Savior, was preached to Adam and his posterity, to Noah, to Moses, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and has been proclaimed in varying degrees of fulness by all of the great prophets throughout Old Testament history.

Under these circumstances, it would seem perfectly possible that a group of dedicated searchers of the truth, even before the time of the Savior, might

16See, Wilson, op. cit., p. 75.
find some of the recorded truths that were preached by these ancient prophets. Under these circumstances, the Dead Sea Covenanters could easily have found many parts of the gospel and could have been inspired in their search for truth to have set up a church organization structure with some beliefs, concepts, and ordinances not too different from those later established by the Savior.

As regards the originality of Christ's Gospel, he has always been the author of it. Despite the concern of some Christian scholars, the Savior did not obtain his teachings from other sources. He could not have "borrowed" from himself.
Chapter Eleven

THE COVENANTERS' CONCEPT OF GOD

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.¹

ALTHOUGH the Covenanters did not leave a concise description of the God they worshiped, their writings give a rather clear picture of their concept of the Almighty. Unlike their Jewish brothers and contemporaries, whose Jahweh had come to be endowed with the qualities of vengence and self-absorption, they believed in a God of kindness and compassion. Their God was one who would destroy those who persisted in unrighteousness, but who was forgiving of all, even the sinners, who would turn to his truth.

Information about the Covenanters' concept of God is found chiefly in their hymns. For example, the first verse of their XVI Hymn reads,

Thou hast shed Thy holy spirit on righteous and wicked alike, and Thou wilt judge all men according to their deeds.

and in another verse of the same hymn;

For Thou are a God gracious and merciful, longsuffering and abounding in loving kindness and truth.

¹John 17:3.
forgiving transgression
and relenting of evil
unto them that love Thee and keep Thy com-
mandments.\(^2\)

From their hymns, we learn that the Covenanters' God was one who opens the ears of all who will hear, engraves truth on their hearts, schools all who seek after truth, shares his transcendental knowledge with all his children, and is directly accessible to all who desire to approach him by prayer in faith and in humility. He is a God who makes covenants with his children, is just, and is the author of all good things. He is the fountain of knowledge, the source of all power, and is filled with mercy and bounteous charity. From him come righteousness, strength, glory, and compassion. He is unchangeable and the judge of all living things.

The hymns tell us that the Covenanters' God has a plan for all of his children and rewards each according to his faithfulness. He is the selector of angels and assigns them to bear rule over all the universe. His anger toward the wicked is terrible, but toward the just, he is full of loving kindness. He teaches his children through the mouths of living prophets and urges all to join with him in everlasting covenants. He, knows the impulse of every act and the purpose of every speech. He is the father of all who accept his truth and abide by it.

Covenanters Understood Their God

The Dead Sea psalmists write of their God as though they understood him and accepted him as the veritable and loving father of their spirits. During

\(^2\)See Gaster, op. cit., page 194-196.
the time when the universality of God was generally accepted by the Jews, but when the idea of his fatherhood had not yet firmly taken root, the Covenanters saw their God as their father.

Moreover, they apparently thought of him as a glorified human being possessing human, though divine, characteristics and emotions. For example, in Hymn XI,

For I know that Thy mouth is truth,  
and in Thy hand is bounty,  
and in Thy thought all knowledge,  
and in Thy power all might,  
and that all glory is with Thee.

In Thine anger comes all judgments of affliction,  
but in Thy goodness pardon abounding;  
and Thy mercies are shed upon all  
who do Thy will.⁸

The Fatherhood and Personality of God

It is interesting that these early searchers after truth should have obtained a concept of the fatherhood of God. It is also significant, as evident from the above quotations, that their idea of the personality of the Father was similar to that taught by the Savior. They referred to his mouth and hands. They spoke of his thoughts and emotions in the human terms which they could understand. This was the way the Savior taught his disciples about his Father. He emphasized the fact that to know God was the essence of life eternal. He stated that he who had seen him, had seen the Father, they were so similar in personality and attributes.

⁸See, Gaster, op. cit., p. 177-178.
War Scroll before it was unrolled. (Photo used by permission of Yigael Yadin)

Hymn Scroll before it was unrolled. (Photo used by permission of Yigael Yadin)
The Covenanters' Concept of God

The Godhead

There is no direct evidence in the Dead Sea Scrolls, so far translated, that the Covenanters had a clear concept of the three personages in the Godhead. Frequent reference is made in their scriptures to God and to the Spirit of God, but there is no reference to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost as separate personages.

It is significant, however, that the "Shepherd of Hermas," which, as pointed out previously, is believed to have been written by a son of a member of the Dead Sea Sect, contains an interesting description of the nature of the Godhead.

This book refers to a Messiah and to a Holy Spirit who, with God the Father, function as a holy trinity. The father is the dominant God with the son and the Holy Spirit performing in special capacities.4

This concept would tie in more directly with the teachings of Jesus as outlined in Matthew. In his gospel, the baptism of Jesus is described. After the Savior was baptized by John, Matthew states, "He went straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo a voice from the heavens saying, 'This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.' "5

In this description, we see clearly that the three members of the Godhead are separate individuals.

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4See, p. 7.
5Matt. 3:16-17.
Jesus was in the water, the Holy Spirit, descended like a dove, and the voice of God was heard, coming out of heaven.

The Savior himself plainly distinguished between his own personality and the personality of the Holy Ghost. He said:

"Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

"And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Many other references are found both in the New and Old Testaments which give proof of the separateness of the three personages of the Godhead. Furthermore, from these and from modern revelations, it is evident that God is the Father of our spirits and that his son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost are separate personages in the Godhead who are one with the Father in their purpose and determination to help all men find salvation and exaltation in his kingdom.

It is to be fully expected that a dedicated group of searchers after truth, who had access even only to the Old Testament scriptures, could obtain an understandable concept of the Godhead. Their writ-

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The Covenanters' Concept of God

ings indicate, at least, that they believed they knew their God. In their XI Hymn, they sang:

Behold, for mine own part.
I have reached the inner vision
and through the spirit thou hast placed within me,
Come to know Thee, my God.  

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9Gaster, op. cit., page 182, 183.
Chapter Twelve

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

ONE of the most interesting similarities between the beliefs and practices of the Dead Sea Covenanters and original Christianity is found in the way they organized their Church. Their Manual of Discipline clearly sets forth the type of church organization which existed in their community. It consisted at the highest hierarchy of three priests and twelve laymen who actually administered the affairs of the church.

Section eight of the Manual describes the organization of the church as follows:

"In the formal congregation of the community there shall be twelve laymen and three priests schooled to perfection in all that has been revealed of the entire law. Their duty shall be to set the standard of the practice of truth, righteousness and justice, and for the exercise of charity and humility in human relations . . . "

The Manual further outlines that, in addition to these "General Authorities," there was a regular system of bishops, priests, teachers, and deacons.

This organization of their church is remarkably similar to the organization established by Jesus. During the period of his mortal existence, he assumed the responsibility of the presidency of his

1Gaster, op. cit., pages 35, 55.
The church. He selected twelve apostles to help him in his work and ordained them with his authority. He reminded them that he had selected them, rather than they had selected him. After his crucifixion, he appointed Peter, James, and John as the First Presidency of the church and instructed them to select additional apostles, so that the Quorum of the Twelve would be complete. These, too, were selected and set apart with authority for the work they were required to do. They then set about ordaining disciples to the Priesthood, both the Melchizedek and the Aaronic, and set them apart in their various offices of high priests, seventies, elders, priests, teachers, and deacons.

New Testament References

Ample references are found in the New Testament to provide proof of the establishment of this type of Church organization. For example, Luke describes the selection of the apostles as follows:

“And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

“And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: And of them he chose twelve, who also he named apostles;”

The office of High Priest is described by Paul in his letter to the Hebrews. For example, “For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God.” And in another place, “Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.”

Still again, "called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec."  

The calling of the Seventy is recorded by Luke, as follows:

"After these things the Lord appointed other Seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face to every city, and place, whither he himself would come."

_Elders_ were ordained in the church, as described in the Acts of the Apostles as follows:

"And when they had ordained them Elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting. They commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."

The officers in the Aaronic, or Lesser, Priesthood are described by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. Bishops and deacons he discusses, in I Timothy.

A careful reading of the New Testament leaves no doubt as to the type of church organization established by Jesus. It is also clear in respect to the various offices in the Greater and Lesser Priesthoods.

It is an interesting fact that in the _Hymns_ and in the _Manual of Discipline_ from the Dead Sea Scrolls, reference is made to the "greater" and "lesser." Although the scholars and translators who have been and who are now working on the scrolls seem to have no concept as to the meaning of these terms, other materials in the scrolls indicate

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3Heb. 5:1, 6, 10.
5Acts 14:23.
that the Covenanter knew a good deal about the Aaronic, or Lesser Priesthood, and were probably informed about the Greater, or Melchizedek Priesthood.

Organization of the Church in Modern Times

The organization of the Church as restored in these latter days is the same as that established by the Savior and undoubtedly similar to the organization that existed during previous times when the fulness of the gospel was upon the earth. As similarly outlined in the Covenanter's Manual of Discipline, the organization consists of a First Presidency of three chosen high priests and of twelve apostles specially selected and ordained to that office. In addition, the anciently established offices of high priest, seventy, and elder constitute the Melchizedek Priesthood. In the Aaronic, or Lesser Priesthood, are the offices of priest, teacher, and deacon. The office of bishop, is an administrative one filled by a specially selected and ordained bearer of the priesthood. Ordinarily, this officer must hold the Melchizedek Priesthood. However, if it can be established that he is a direct descendant of Aaron, he can hold the office of bishop, if so selected and ordained, without bearing the Melchizedek Priesthood. This is as it has always been in God's church since the time when Aaron was selected and ordained to assist Moses in his important work.

Again, it is not surprising to thoughtful students of the scriptures to learn that the Dead Sea Cove-

\(^7\text{See D. & C. Sec. 76:22-24; D. & C. 115:4; D. & C. 84:6-17, 18-28; III Nephi 27:1-8.}\)
nanters understood and put into effect this church organization. In view of the fact that John the Baptist, who, it is believed, was associated with the Dead Sea Covenan ters, came out of the wilderness preaching and baptizing with authority, it is entirely believable that the Dead Sea Sect may have possessed the Aaronic Priesthood. The authority of John’s baptism was not questioned. It was he who baptized the Savior “to fulfill all righteousness.”

**Order and Precedence**

Members of the sect practised a strict order of personal precedence in their communial meetings and in their relationships with each other. Those holding the highest authority were to sit down and be served first, the rest in their proper order. In the *Manual of Discipline*, it is recorded:

“This is the rule covering public sessions.

“The priests are to occupy the first place. The elders come second; and the rest of the people are to take their places according to their respective ranks . . . everyone is to have an opportunity of rendering his opinion in the common council. No one, however, is to interrupt while his neighbor is speaking, or to speak until the latter has finished. Furthermore, no one is to speak in advance of his prescribed rank.”

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*Manual of Discipline, Section VI. Gaster, *op. cit.*, page 50.*
THE SECTS' ORDINANCES AND PRACTICES

The Dead Sea scriptures, particularly the Manual of Discipline, shed interesting light on the ordinances practised by the Covenanters and on their doctrines and beliefs. It is in these areas, particularly, that this group of people show evidence of having had access to the teachings of the original gospel. The more significant of these ordinances and practices, are as follows:

Baptism

It is generally admitted by the scholars that the Qumran Sect practised baptism by immersion. Dr. Charles T. Fritsch, in his book, The Qumran Community, points out that his several visits to the caves and to the community ruin had convinced him that the complicated water system which has been excavated, "played a larger roll in the community than the satisfaction of ordinary, daily needs." Dr. Fritsch concludes that the "only plausible answer" is that they were used for "baptismal or lustration rites." In support of this conclusion he quotes the following from the Manual of Discipline:

"He may not enter into the water to touch the purity of the holy men, for they will not be cleansed unless they have turned from their wickedness, for uncleanness is in all the transgressors of his word."
And—

"The sinner cannot purify himself by atonement nor cleanse himself with water of impurity (i.e., water which takes away impurity), nor sanctify himself with seas or rivers, nor cleanse himself with any water of washing."

There are many additional quotations which might be given from the Manual of Discipline as convincing evidence of the practice of baptism by immersion and of the accepted belief among the Covenanters that the waters would not wash away an individual's sin unless he, himself, thoroughly repented. Dr. Fritsch concludes, "Outward lustrations are no substitute for inward purity of heart. The Holy Spirit, and not water, cleanses the man of his iniquities. The outward washing with water is only a symbol of the inward cleansing of the man's heart by the Spirit."

Baptism As Taught by Jesus and His Disciples

The New Testament is clear and emphatic in establishing baptism as an essential part of original Christianity. Jesus, himself, was baptized by John in order to "fulfill all righteousness." 1

Furthermore, it is evident from the scriptures that Jesus, when he taught baptism, always taught that it must be performed by immersion. When Nicodemus, a wealthy man and a ruler of the Jews, came to him for instructions, the Savior said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

1Fritsch, op. cit., p. 69.
2Matt. 3:13-17. See also, John 3:5.
Excavations at the Qumran Community. Dead Sea in the distance. (Photo from *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, by J. M. Allegro—Penguin Books)

A portion of an old scroll. (From the Palestine Archaeological Museum)
Steps leading into one of the baptismal fonts or cisterns. Destroyed steps show effects of earthquake. (Photo from Palestine Archaeological Museum)

Some fragments of the scrolls now in Museum at Amman, Jordan. (Photo by author)
Nicodemus was confused by this statement and could not understand how a man could be born again. Jesus then explained, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."³

If a man is born of water it would seem obvious that he would be immersed in the water and come up out of the water, even as Jesus did when he was baptized by John.

All careful students of the Bible agree that in the original church, baptism was always performed by immersion. The word baptism, itself, means to be immersed.

Throughout the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, baptism is taught with clarity. In fact, as his last instruction to his apostles, Jesus told them to go forth and preach the gospel, baptising all who believed. He said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."⁴

Modern scriptures fully confirm the essentiality of baptism which must be performed as taught by the Savior and with the authority of the priesthood.⁵ So important is this ordinance, that the Lord in his all-seeing wisdom has provided a method whereby those who do not have the opportunity of being baptized in this life may, if they so desire, accept the ordinance which may be performed by proxy for

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³John 3:3, 5.
⁴Mark 16:15-16.
⁵See, Book of Mormon, II Nephi 9:23, 24; 31:5, 9, 17; III Nephi 11:33, 34; 27:16-20; Pearl of Great Price, Moses 6:51-58; Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 20:37.
them in the manner prescribed by the Savior. It was this ordinance to be performed vicariously to which Paul referred when he said,

"Else what shall they do, which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?"  

In this statement, Paul was referring to a practice which was well known to the Corinthians. They were acquainted with the ordinance of baptism for the dead, and Paul called their attention to this practice to prove his point on the resurrection.

Communal Meals

In addition to baptism by immersion, the sect conducted its communal meals as a sort of sacrament. The Manual outlines this procedure as follows: "They shall eat communally, and bless communally, and take council communally."

And—

"And it shall be when they arrange the table to eat, or the wine to drink, the priest shall stretch forth his hand first to bless with the first-fruits of the bread and the wine."

Although this quotation from the Manual of Discipline provides no direct proof that the Covenanters had any concept of the sacrament, still it is interesting that they followed the procedure, as described above, in the conduct of their communal meals. It is true that the Savior's sacrifice was predicated in the Old Testament. Under the circum-

6I Cor. 15-29.  
7Manual of Discipline, Section VI. Gaster, op. cit., page 49.
stances, it is not entirely improbable that these people, in searching for and finding in the scriptures the truths of the gospel, may have anticipated the Savior's sacrifice and conducted their communal meals as a symbol of this great event.

The Sacrament in Original Christianity

The Savior, himself, instituted the sacrament as a means whereby his disciples would remember him and covenant to keep his commandments. In the Gospels it is recorded, that, Jesus, after taking the cup and giving thanks and giving it to them, said, "Drink ye all of it: For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." The sacrament is further described and referred to in the other Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles. Paul, also refers to the Lord's supper in his first letter to the Corinthians.

8Matt. 26:27, 28.
10I Cor. 11:20.
Chapter Fourteen

KNOWLEDGE AND FREE AGENCY

The members of the sect put a heavy emphasis on the importance of knowledge, wisdom, and free agency. They believed that God was the source of all knowledge and that it was the responsibility of every member to gain as much knowledge and wisdom as possible. A man must be judged, not on the basis of his material possessions, but rather by his righteousness and the extent of his knowledge and wisdom.

Standards of Judgment

In respect to the importance of knowledge, their scriptures record:

“Everyone is to be judged by the standard of his spirituality. Intercourse with him to be determined by the purity of his deeds, and consort with him by the degree of his intelligence. This alone is to determine the degree to which a man is to be loved or hated.”

Furthermore—

“Whenever there are ten men who have formally enrolled in the community, there is not to be absent from them one who can interpret the law . . . for this
is the time when the way is being prepared in the wilderness, and it behooves them to understand all that is happening."

1Manual of Discipline, Sec. IX. Gaster, op. cit., page 59. See also Book of Mormon, II Nephi 2:21.
The Doctrine of Free Agency

The Dead Sea Covenanter believed explicitly in a doctrine of free agency or, as their concept has since been called, "The Doctrine of the Two Ways." This belief is clearly described in Sections III and IV of the Manual of Discipline as follows,

"All that is and ever was comes from a God of Knowledge . . .

"Now, this God created man to rule the world and appointed for him two spirits after whose direction he was to walk until the final inquisition. They are the spirits of truth and of perversity.

Light and Darkness

"The origin of truth lies in the fountain of light, and that of perversity in the well-spring of darkness. All who practise righteousness are under the domination of the Prince of Lights and walk in the ways of light; whereas all who practise perversity are under the domination of the Angel of Darkness and walk in the ways of darkness. . . . For God has appointed these two things (truth and perversity) to obtain in equal measure until the final age."

The Manual continues with a description of the evils which will strike those who follow the ways of darkness and the blessings that are poured out upon those who seek the ways of light. One of the attributes of those who seek light is "a zeal for righteous government."\(^2\)

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\(^2\)Gaster, op. cit., page 43.
The Two Ways

This belief of the two ways held by the Dead Sea Covenanters is both new and unusual for the time and area. The doctrine was not one held by Judaism nor by any of the religions in the area with the possible exception of a small group in Syria.

The idea that man should have his own free choice and choose right or wrong in accordance with his own best judgment is one of the most definite concepts held by the Dead Sea Sect. These people believed explicitly that a just God would reward everyone in accordance with his deeds. This point of view is clearly expressed in many sections of their scriptures. For example, this concept is beautifully recorded in one of their hymns,

On all that keep thy charge
thou bestowest grace abounding
and mercies never failing;
but upon all things that defy thee
thou bringest perdition eternal.

So, if mortal men
keep faith with thee,
behold, thou crownest their heads
with a glory everlasting
and compassest their works
with perennial joy;\

Free Agency and Original Christianity

The doctrine of free agency is a fundamental part of original Christianity. Throughout Christ's life, he taught his gospel through persuasion and without compulsion. His disciples were instructed to preach the gospel to all who would hear and to

\(^3\)Hymn, XIII. Gaster, op. cit., pages 185, 186.
show compassion upon those who rejected their teachings. All men were invited to accept the truth and to allow it to bring peace and joy into their lives. No one was forced. Even those who obstructed the spread of the truth were not judged by those who taught it. Rather, Christ’s disciples were taught to plead with their Father in heaven to forgive the unrighteous and all who unknowingly rejected the light. Even while he was being crucified, the Savior glorified this concept when he asked his Father to “forgive them: For they know not what they do.”

The concept of free choice was introduced in the beginning upon the earth. When Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden, he was told that of every tree in the garden he could freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he should not eat. If he did so, he would surely die. Yet, he was given his free choice.

The prophets and teachers in the Old Testament taught this doctrine. The Ten Commandments were given, not with compulsion but through exhortation and with a promise. Moses declared that the Lord had set before His people a blessing and a curse, “a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you this day: and a curse if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other Gods which ye have not known.”

Free Agency in Modern Scriptures

One of the clearest explanations of the doctrine of free agency is found in the Pearl of Great Price.

8Deut. 12:27, 28.
In this book, Moses clarified the statement in Genesis thus, "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but, remember that I forbid it." The Lord told Abraham, as recorded in the same book, "and we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them:

"And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon: And they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate: And they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads forever and ever."

The plan of salvation offered by Jesus Christ before the world was formed and which caused the Sons of the Morning to shout for joy, included this concept of free agency. Lucifer's plan was one of compulsion and dictatorship. Since that time, even before the organization of the world, these two forces and concepts have struggled against each other.

Jesus' plan, the plan of the gospel, was given to Adam and to his posterity and was re-established several times upon the earth through the instrumentality of the ancient prophets. This was the plan that Jesus himself restored when he came upon the earth at the Meridian of Time and established his gospel. It is the plan which was restored by Joseph Smith after the glorious vision in which he saw the Father and the Son and in which he was instructed

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to remain faithful, with the promise that he would be the instrument in God's hands to re-establish his gospel.

The Dead Sea Covenanters, seeking for the truth and striving to purify the scriptures, could conceivably learn of this concept and put it into effect in their community. That they did so, is evidenced throughout their scriptures which now, so fortunately, are available to the world.
Chapter Fifteen

THE COVENANTERS' CONCEPT OF SIN

The Dead Sea Covenanters had an interesting concept of sin, the nature of original sin, and the personality of the devil. These beliefs closely parallel the concepts as taught in original Christianity. It is highly probable that they could only have been obtained from the original source, the gospel itself.

Sin Is Individual

The Covenanters believed that sin is the individual and not the inherited lot of man. Sin, they believed, is brought upon man by his own acts, therefore, only through his own individual efforts can he remove it from his life. Some direct quotations from the Manual of Discipline, as recorded in the previous chapter, bring interesting light upon this concept of individual sin. For example:

"... God created man to rule the world, and appointed for him two spirits after whose direction he was to walk until the final inquisition. They are the spirits of truth and of perversity."

"It is God that created these spirits of light and darkness and made them the basis of every act, the instigators of every deed and the directors of every thought."

\footnote{Manual of Discipline, Section III. Gaster, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 43}
“This is the way those spirits operate in the world. The enlightenment of man’s heart, the making straight before him all the ways of righteousness and truth, the planting in his heart of fear for the judgments of God, of a spirit of humility, of patience, of abundant compassion, of perpetual goodness, of insight, of perception, . . . of a spirit of knowledge . . . of a zeal for righteous government, of a hallowed mind, . . . of abounding love, . . . of a self-respecting purity, . . . of a modesty of behavior, . . . a general prudence and an ability to hide within oneself the secrets of what one knows—these are the things that come to men in this world through communion with the spirit of truth.”

“But to the spirit of perversity belong greed, remissness in right doing, wickedness and falsehood, pride and presumption, deception and guile, cruelty and abundant insolence, shortness of temper and profusion of folly, arrogant passion, abominable acts in the spirit of leudness, filthy ways in the thraldom of chastity, a blasphemous tongue, blindness of eyes, dullness of ears, stiffness of neck and hardness of heart.”

All of these characteristics, both good and bad, are dependent upon individual thoughts and actions. Although the good and the bad are constantly present to persuade and tempt, each person makes his own decision. To quote further from the Manual of Discipline:

“‘It is in these ways that men needs must walk and it is in these two divisions, according as a man inherits something of each, that all human acts are di-

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2Manual of Discipline, Section III. Gaster, op. cit., p. 44, 45.
vided throughout all the ages of eternity. For God has appointed these two things to obtain in equal measure until the final age.

"Between the two categories he has set an eternal emnity. The ways of perversity are an abomination to truth, while all the ways of truth are an abomina-
tion to perversity; and there is a constant jealous rivalry between their two regimes."

"He has made men heirs to them that they might know good and evil. But when the time of inquisi-
tion comes, he will determine the fate of every living being in accordance with which of the two spirits he has chosen to follow."

These excerpts from the Manual of Discipline, clearly indicate that according to the Covenanters, sin and righteousness are individual matters left to the free choice of all.

Original Sin

The idea that man was the inheritor of original sin from his first parents, a sin which he could not himself throw off, was not a part of the concept of the Covenanters. Members of the Dead Sea Sect had no concept of this idea of original sin. They believed rather, that every man is blessed at birth with a fund of divine knowledge and that evil or wrong doing is a result of deviation from this great gift. Furthermore, there is no evidence in Dead Sea scrip-
tures of a belief in a communion in the sense of the Eucharist where the bread and the wine are regarded by some churches as the Savior's actual flesh and

*Ibid., Section III. Gaster, op. cit., p. 45.*
blood and that because of this, their consumption might have a redeeming power. Although they seemed to practise a form of communion in their communal meals, if so, they partook of the bread and the wine as symbols and in remembrance of their covenants.

**The Angel of Darkness**

The Covenanters concept, too, that *Belial* or the devil, was an *angel of darkness* is also extremely interesting. As quoted in the previous chapter, their *Manual of Discipline* records:

"All who practise righteousness are under the domination of the Prince of Lights, and walk in the way of light: Whereas all who practise perversity are under the domination of the *Angel of Darkness* and walk in the ways of darkness. Through the Angel of Darkness, however, even those who practise righteousness are made liable to error . . . all of the spirits that attend on him are bent on causing the sons of light to stumble."

The Covenanters' teachings and beliefs indicate that they considered Lucifer as a fallen angel and as an individual being. Also, it is apparent from their writings, that they believed Lucifer, or the Angel of Darkness, is accompanied by a host of spirits, also probably fallen angels, who help him in his nefarious work. It is they, under his direction, who tempt mens' souls and lead them toward iniquity and perdition. He, and his spirits, are ever present to "cause the sons of light to stumble."

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5*Ibid.*, Section III. Gaster, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
tempt to bring about the fall of man they employ every possible devious device.

The Apostle James had this to say on this subject:

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: For when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.

"Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."⁶

The beliefs held by the Covenanters in respect to sin, and the nature of the devil and his angels, is fully supported in the scriptures. The Apostle Peter refers to the angels, who with the devil, sinned and were cast down to hell.⁷

In the Epistle of Jude, reference is made to the "angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation."⁸ John the Revelator, also, described the war in heaven and records how Satan was cast out.⁹

Concept of Sin in Modern Scriptures

Modern scriptures are also replete with information on this interesting and important subject. In II

⁷II Peter 2:4.
⁸Jude 6.
⁹Rev. 12:7-12.
Nephi of the Book of Mormon, it is recorded that an angel of God had fallen and that this angel fell and became the devil.\textsuperscript{10}

The Doctrine and Covenants, too, gives some specific information on this subject. This book describes how a third of the hosts of heaven was led away by Lucifer and became the spirits which tempt men to do evil. It is also recorded that an angel once in the presence of God was thrust down.\textsuperscript{11}

The clearest description of this incident, however, is recorded in the Pearl of Great Price. Moses, in his writings, said that the Lord spoke unto him saying:

"That Satan, whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the beginning, and he came before me, saying—Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and will redeem all mankind, that one shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor.

"But, behold my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning, said unto me—Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever.

"Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which, I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down; and he became Satan, yea even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men,

\textsuperscript{10}\text{II Nephi 2:17-18 and 9:8-9.}
\textsuperscript{11}\text{D. & C. 29:36-38; 76:25-28.}
and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice."\textsuperscript{12}

The Articles of Faith of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints give a clear exposition of the Church's concept of original sin. The Second Article states,

"We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression."

Through the exercise of simple faith and through tireless and dedicated work, the Dead Sea Covenanters learned much about the gospel. Their concepts of sin as an individual responsibility and of the doctrine of free agency were remarkably similar to those taught by Christ as well as by the Old Testament prophets who had access to the gospel. It is evident from the Covenanters' writings that they had a clear idea of the concept of grace and works. Through God's great gift, if they remained faithful to his teachings, they would be resurrected and returned to live in his presence. To attain glory in this state, however, they must \textit{work} as though everything depended upon themselves and \textit{pray} as though everything depended upon the Lord.

The Covenanters had no misconceptions about the extent to which their individual actions would determine their individual blessings. They had no misunderstanding about the purpose of baptism and the part it plays in the remission of sins. They knew that only through sincere repentance and by restitution of right for wrong would their sins be forgiven. Baptism was merely a symbol of this repentance and alone would not remit their sins. Rather, they must

\textsuperscript{12}Pearl of Great Price, Moses 4:1-4.
accept this essential ceremony with contriteness of spirit and full repentance in their hearts. Under these circumstances, alone, would their sins be forgiven.

Truly, through their dedicated search and humble determination to find the truth, they had discovered much of it which they put into effect in their community.
Chapter Sixteen

THE ABRAHAM STORY IN THE SCROLLS

Because of a determination to seek for the truth wherever it can be found, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have been deeply interested in the discovery and translation of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

As pointed out in Chapter One, the original find in the Dead Sea Caves consisted of seven somewhat intact scrolls in varying degrees of disintegration. Three of these seven scrolls were purchased by Elazar Sukenik, professor of archaeology, Hebrew University, and were retained in Israel. The other four scrolls were purchased by the Syrian Metropolitan, of the Monastery of St. Mark in the old city of Jerusalem. When the Palestinian War broke out in the area in 1948, these scrolls, in the hands of the Arabs, were sent to the United States for safe keeping.
Scrolls Sold in New York

Later, in 1954, the four scrolls in America were offered for sale in an advertisement which appeared in the June 1, 1954, issue of the Wall Street Journal. Through intermediaries, they were subsequently purchased for $250,000 by Yigael Yadin, son of Professor Sukenik, and were returned to Israel where, together with the other three scrolls already in the country, they are now in safe keeping in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

One of the four scrolls purchased in the United States, the so-called "Lamech Scroll," had not until recently been unrolled or translated. It was in such a bad state of deterioration that the Americans were afraid to attempt to unroll it.

As described in Chapter Two, Dr. John C. Trever, a fellow of the American School of Oriental Research, while examining the scroll, accidentally broke off a small piece of the parchment. On the inside of this small fragment, Dr. Trever found inscriptions in Aramaic which, when translated, proved to be a first person statement of Lamech, the father of Noah. Since an ancient Greek list of apocryphal books mentioned the "Book of Lamech" which never has been discovered, Dr. Trever assumed that this scroll might be the long searched-for apocryphal book.

When the four scrolls purchased in America were sent to Israel, attempts were soon made to unroll and translate the so-called "Lamech Scroll." Recently, this was accomplished, and the scroll has now been partially translated by Yigael Yadin. Dr. Yadin discovered that the scroll was not the record
of Lamech, but actually was an apocryphal Genesis. In it, appears the story of Abraham which interestingly, confirms the account of Abraham as found in the Pearl of Great Price.¹

**Abraham's Trip into Egypt**

The story of Abraham's trip into Egypt has long disturbed Bible scholars. The Biblical account, found in Genesis, Chapter 12, tells how, due to a famine in Canaan, Abraham took his wife, Sarah, and went into Egypt. The story recounts that, when he was near the country, Abraham became concerned lest the Egyptians kill him and take his wife. Therefore, according to the Bible account, Abraham told his wife,

"Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee."²

The Biblical account continues with the story describing how Abraham and Sarah went into Egypt and how Sarah was taken by Pharaoh into his house under the misconception that she was Abraham's sister.

Biblical scholars have been extremely critical of Abraham for this action. For example, Dr. Adam Clarke, in his *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, says:

"If he (Abram) appear to be her husband, his death he supposes to be certain; if she pass for his sister, he will be well used on her account. He will

not tell a lie, but is tempted to prevaricate by suppressing a part of the truth. Here is a weakness, however we may be inclined to pity and excuse it, we should never imitate. It is recorded with its own condemnation. He (Abram) should have risked all rather than have prevaricated . . . here his faith was deficient. He still credited the general promise (the Lord's) and acted on that faith in reference to it; but he did not use his faith in reference to intervening circumstances, to which it was equally applicable. . . . Had Abram and Sarai simply passed for what they were, they had incurred no danger: For God, who had obliged them to go to Egypt had prepared the way for them."

**Bible Commentaries**

J. R. Dummelow, in his *Bible Commentary* says,

"The patriarch on this occasion appears in very unfavorable light. Admitting the great dangers which threatened him at the hands of a licentious despot, admitting also that among Easterns, duplicity is admired rather than scorned, the readiness he showed to risk his wife's honor in order to secure his own safety, and his lack of trust in God's protection, are inexcusable."

In their *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown make this observation in respect to Abraham's action:

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"The counsel of Abraham (to Sarai) was true in words, but it was a deception, intended to give an impression that she was no more than his sister. His conduct was culpable and inconsistent with his character as a servant of God: It showed a reliance on worldly policy more than a trust in the promise; and he not only sinned himself, but tempted Sarai to sin also."\(^5\)

James Hastings, in his *Dictionary of the Bible* makes a similar observation and is highly critical of Abraham's "deception."

The difficulty with these scholars' interpretations, of course, is that they base their indictments of Abraham on the incomplete Bible history. The reason for their confusion is obvious. From their studies, they know that Abraham is an elect of God. They see him as a man of great faith and remarkable obedience. Consequently, they are confused and disillusioned when they find him succumbing to this human weakness.

*The Pearl of Great Price Account*

The Pearl of Great Price gives a true picture of this story. This great book states that Abraham was following explicitly the instruction of the Lord in doing what he did, and, in a remarkable way, the Dead Sea Scrolls confirm this point of view.

The Pearl of Great Price account of the Abraham story, reads: "And it came to pass when I was come near to enter into Egypt, the Lord said unto

me, behold, Sarai, thy wife is a very fair woman to look upon;

"Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see her, they will say—she is his wife; and they will kill you, but they will save her alive; therefore see that ye do it on this wise:

"Let her say unto the Egyptians, she is thy sister, and thy soul shall live."1

Abraham, the obedient servant that he was, followed to the letter the Lord's counsel. In doing so, he committed no sin. Rather, his humble obedience, even in this great test, proves him to be a choice spirit.

Abraham—A Choice Spirit

Latter-day scriptures record that Abraham was one of the great spirits before the formation of this world. He was specifically selected by the Almighty for the significant role he played as the literal father of all the children of Israel and for the great work he did in laying a foundation for God's kingdom.

Knowing Abraham's great character one would be sure that he would have full faith that the Lord would allow no harm to come to Sarah if he followed his commandments. There would be no question that Sarah would be fully protected and would come back from the house of Pharaoh unharmed.

The Apocryphal Genesis

Now, in a remarkable way, the recent translation of the apocryphal Genesis (the Lamech Scroll)

The Apocryphal Genesis scroll. Badly worn side was apparently lying on the floor of the cave. (Photo from A Genesis Apocryphon, by Nahman Avigad and Yigael Yadin. the Magnes Press, Hebrew University, Israel)
Mr. James Biberkraut, working on Genesis scroll. (Photo from A Genesis Apocryphon, by Nahman Avigad and Yigael Yadin, The Magnes Press, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel.)
fully confirms this point of view. As noted by Yigael Yadin, in his book, *The Message of the Scrolls*, "The scroll is unique in preserving an original legend explaining why Abraham counseled Sara to hide her true identity... According to this legend, this deception was God's counsel, rather than Abraham's, revealed to the latter through a dream."²

The actual translation from the scroll is as follows:

"Now we passed through our land and entered into the land of the sons of Ham, the land of Egypt. And I, Abram, dreamed a dream on the night of our entering into the land of Egypt and lo! I saw in my dream one cedar and one palm.* . . . And men came and sought to cut down and uproot the cedar and to leave the palm by itself. And the palm cried out and said, 'cut not down the cedar, for cursed is he who will fell. . . .' And for the sake of the palm the cedar was saved. . . .'³

It was in this dream, according to the scroll, that God instructed Abraham to have Sarai tell the Egyptians that she was Abraham's sister.

The translation of this scroll also brings new light upon the question of Sarah's protection while she was in the house of Pharoah. The translation is as follows: (Abraham writing)

**Sarah is Protected**

"And when the King heard the words of Horkanosh and the words of his two companions, for all

²*The Message of the Scrolls*, by Yigael Yadin, page 147.
³Ibid., p. 147, 148.

*Dotted lines represent sections of the scroll that were too badly deteriorated to be translatable.
three spoke as one man, he desired her (Sarai) exceedingly and he sent at once to bring her to him and he looked upon her and marvelled at all her loveliness and took her to him to wife and sought to slay me.

And Sarai spoke to the King, saying, 'He is my brother' that it might be well with me. And I, Abram, was saved because of her and was not slain. And I wept, I Abram, with grievous weeping, I and with me, Lot, my brother’s son, wept that night when Sarai was taken from me by force.

"That night I prayed and entreated and begged and said in sorrow, as my tears fell, ‘Blessed art Thou, Most High God, Lord of all worlds, because Thou art Lord and Master of all and ruler of all the kings of earth, all of whom Thou judgest. Behold now I cry before Thee, My Lord, against Pharoah—Zoan, King of Egypt, because my wife has been taken from me by force. Do Thou judge him for me and let me behold Thy mighty hand descend upon him and all his household and may he not this night defile my wife. And men shall know, My Lord, that Thou art the Lord of all the kings of earth! And I wept and grieved."

*Ibid., p. 146.*
The Scroll’s story continues with a description of how a “pestilential wind” descended upon Pharoah and all his house making it impossible for him to come near to Sarah, even though she was in his household for two years. Eventually, these plagues and afflictions became so burdensome that Pharoah sought the advice of all of the wise men and physicians of Egypt in an effort to find a cure. When these men could not heal Pharoah and his household, Horkanosh, the servant who had met Abraham and Sarah when they arrived at Egypt’s border, again visited Abraham and sought his help. While with Abraham, Lot disclosed the fact to Horkanosh that Sarah actually was Abraham’s wife. Lot suggested to Horkanosh that perhaps this was the cause of Pharoah’s afflictions and if he would return Sarah to her husband, the afflictions would disappear.

Accordingly, after Horkanosh reported this conversation to Pharoah, the king commanded Abraham to come to the palace where he was requested to “lay his hands” on Pharoah and heal him. Pharoah also chided Abraham for having deceived him in allowing him to believe that Sarah was Abraham’s sister, rather than his wife.

After this experience, and after Pharoah and his household were healed, Abraham was commanded to leave Egypt. Pharoah, nevertheless, was so grateful to be healed that he bestowed many gifts upon Abraham and sent him back to Canaan a wealthy man, “rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.”

5Genesis 13:1, 2.
It was also during this Egyptian experience that Hagar came into Abraham's household. Apparently, she had been a servant to Sarah while she was in Pharoah's house. Hagar was included in the bounteous gifts bestowed by a grateful Pharoah, and she went with the Abraham party and remained in Canaan as Sarah's maid-servant.\(^6\)

This is the story of Abraham's and Sarah's sojourn in Egypt as recorded and now translated from one of the ancient scrolls. It fully confirms the Pearl of Great Price account which states that Abraham was following God's counsel. Furthermore, it supports the Mormon belief that the Lord protected Sarah as well as Abraham while they were in the land of the Pharoahs.

**The Pearl of Great Price**

The ancient records from which the Abraham account in the Pearl of Great Price was translated came into Joseph Smith's hands in July, 1835. These records, written on papyrus, were brought to the Prophet by Michael H. Chandler who came to Kirtland exhibiting Egyptian mummies. In the exhibit were four human figures and some rolls of papyrus covered with hieroglyphics. After the Prophet had translated some of the characters, Mr. Chandler gave him a letter in which he confirmed that the translation corresponded in the most minute details with those he had received from learned individuals in certain large cities of the United States.

The recent translation of the apocryphal Genesis brings to light some additional details which are

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significant in that they, too, confirm the accuracy of the account in the Pearl of Great Price. The Bible account, in Genesis, makes no mention of the fact that Egypt was the land of the sons of Ham. The account in the Pearl of Great Price states that the king of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of Ham. This fact is similarly indicated in the apocryphal Genesis scroll, as described in the translation given above.

These new and revealing facts from the Dead Sea Scrolls constitute another testimony from the dust that the plan of salvation is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Chapter Eighteen

THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

The Dead Sea Covenanters were earnest searchers after truth. They believed that knowledge was a gift of God, available to all who would seek for it. Apparently, they had the conviction that man is saved no faster than he gains knowledge and wisdom and that the source of God's, and ultimately man's, power and joy lies in intelligence.

These are fundamental Mormon concepts. The members of this Church believe in all truth and have no fear of the discovery of truth no matter from where it comes. As outlined in the Ninth Article of their faith,

"We believe all that God has revealed, all that he does now reveal, and we believe that he will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." Furthermore, in the Thirteenth Article of Faith, "If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things."

God has many ways of revealing his will and his truths to his children here on earth. Certainly, his gospel embraces all that is "virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy," and dedicated Mormons seek constantly after these things.

The religious controversy which now is fomenting over the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the knowledge now available of their contents, is of
particular significance to members of the Mormon Church. Although members of some other Christian churches may be frustrated in the face of the fact that a religious body that lived prior to the time of Jesus, may have understood and practised some of Jesus' teachings, Mormons stand in no fear of this truth. They know that the gospel of Jesus Christ—his plan of salvation—was instituted before the world was created. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints know that the gospel was given to Adam, Noah, Moses, Abraham, and others and that it was on the earth through the various dispensations down to the Meridian of Time.

_Jesus Restored the Gospel_

To real searchers for the truth it should me no shock to learn from ancient scriptures that Jesus did not come to establish his gospel but rather, to restore it and call the people back to God's commandments. They should not be surprised to learn that a group of religious believers who lived in the vicinity of the Dead Sea before the time of Christ had many of the doctrines and organization practices of the gospel.

That this group might have had an organization of the church similar to that later established by Jesus himself; that they might have believed in the doctrine of free agency and had a reasonably accurate understanding of the nature of the Godhead is not startling. It is entirely possible that many of the gospel truths could have been preserved from previous dispensations and could have been available to a group of dedicated believers who were deter-
mined to discover and preserve the truth and to live as closely as possible in accordance with God's commandments. It is an extremely interesting fact, and a believable one, that the Dead Sea Covenanters should have practised baptism by immersion.

*Authority Needed*

There is full, plausible significance to the fact that the Dead Sea Covenanters understood the necessity of authority and frequently, in their writings, referred to their priests as having been called after the Order of Aaron. Is it entirely possible to believe that they may have had a system of priestly organization patterned after the Aaronic Priesthood as described in the scriptures.

Moreover, all sincere students of the scriptures can fully understand why it was necessary for the gospel to have been upon the earth prior to the Savior's mortal existence. God is no respecter of persons. The gospel is for all of His children—those who lived before the advent of the Savior as well as those after. When Jesus, during the period before he was resurrected, preached to the spirits in prison who had been disobedient during the days of Noah, he was giving them the opportunity to accept something which they previously had not accepted. Otherwise, how could they have been disobedient?

*Gospel for All*

Throughout his writings, Paul makes it clear that the gospel is for all men. Prophets and writers in both the Old and the New Testaments declare
that the gospel is the same today, yesterday, and tomorrow. Certainly, God's plan of salvation is a plan that has not changed and will not change. This plan was presented to everyone during the pre-existent life. As spirits, all had the opportunity of accepting the plan of salvation as presented by Jesus, or a plan of compulsion as offered by Lucifer. The fact that mortal beings are here in this life is proof that they accepted the Savior's plan, otherwise, they would have been cast out of heaven and would not have had the opportunity of this mortal experience.

This plan of salvation requires that everyone has his free choice during this mortal existence. While here in this life, all are subjected to the temptations of the devil and his hosts as well as the persuasions that come from the Savior, from his gospel, and from his apostles and teachers who strive constantly to establish his kingdom upon this earth.

Because mankind kept their first estates in the pre-existence, everyone in this life has the opportunity of this mortal life. Those who keep this estate and abide by the teachings of the Savior through his holy prophets, will be added upon and be returned to the presence of their Father in heaven to be blessed with exaltation. It is through this process of salvation, that all earn eternal life for, as God has said, "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."1

Even the Dead Sea Covenanters, if they searched "with contrite spirits" and with faith unaltering, could have found the truths that would bring them

1Pearl of Great Price, Moses 1:39.
joy and peace and the conviction that they were living in accordance with God's teachings.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is really one of the great religious discoveries of modern times.

It has particular and deep significance to members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and to all who love the truth.
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