

that had yet been found from so early a date. This was a complete copy of Isaiah, rather carelessly written, but preserving a text that is almost identical with the text of Isaiah in our present Hebrew Bible, though nearly a thousand years earlier than the earliest copy available before this discovery. Numerous portions of another copy of Isaiah were also included in this group of scrolls. Later search in other caves has brought many more Bible portions to light, including a great many small fragments. Within a few years parts of almost every Old Testament book had been found. These may eventually prove to be of great help for textual criticism of the Old Testament, and thus be very valuable for Old Testament studies.

The makers of the scrolls belonged to a previously unknown Jewish sect. They are generally called Essenes, since this is a term used by Josephus and Pliny to describe groups of Jews who went out into the wilderness and lived an ascetic life there. However, some of the characteristics of the Essenes as given by these ancient writers differ from those of the group at Khirbet Qumran, the community headquarters where the scrolls were made. Khirbet Qumran was excavated in 1951-6. One of its rooms proved to be a Scriptorium, with a table and inkwells, and everything set out for copying of manuscripts.

About half of the scrolls are Bible manuscripts. The other half are of a different sort, dealing with the life of the people who made the scrolls. Some of these contain rules for the life of the community; others are commentaries on various Biblical books, interpreted by the particular ideas of the community, and showing their outlook on life and their theology. There has been much discussion of the relation of this material to Christianity, which we shall examine below, under Derivation.

C. General Corroboration.

The New Testament assumes a situation in which a foreign group, the