

of the Old Testament in the actual writing of a time nearly a thousand years earlier than the manuscripts which we formerly possessed. Yet the similarity of the text is very marked and gives clear evidence of the general dependability of the Biblical text which has been handed down to us.

Jerusalem has become a center of busy activity as the fragments of papyrus, parchment, and leather~~x~~ have been cleaned and examined. It is much like working a jigsaw puzzle. Fragments varying from tiny bits to larger sections have constantly been compared for texture of material and type of writing. Little by little smaller fragments have been pieced together into larger sections of manuscripts. Search in a concordance often reveals that the particular fragment contains a portion of the Old Testament. Generally it is in Hebrew, but sometimes it is an Aramaic, or even a Greek translation.

In March, 1952, a group of archeologists examined the desert area for several miles north and south of Khirbet Qumran and found thirty-nine places where what seemed <sup>at first</sup> <sup>2</sup> to be tiny crevices~~x~~ in the side of the mountain~~x~~ proved to be the entrance to a cave. Two of these contained portions of manuscripts, and many others contained ancient pottery. In one cave two copper rolls were found, which originally composed a copper plaque, eight feet long and twelve inches high. It was rolled up at the two ends, and broken in the middle. It could be made out that Hebrew letters had been engraved on its inner sides, as they showed through to the outer side at many points. Unfortunately the rolls were badly oxidized so that it seemed almost impossible to open them without destroying their writing. One museum suggested that they should be cut through and the sections examined separately.