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A table of contents for *Scripture* can be found here:

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# NOTES ON THE RECENTLY-FOUND HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS

## THEIR AUTHENTICITY

THE view has been expressed more than once that the recently-found manuscripts are not authentic at all. Now, however, one may claim that conclusive proof of their genuineness has been obtained. Professor Sukenik has had the manuscripts photographed under infra-red rays. As a result of this words which had completely disappeared have reappeared with great clearness.

Professor Sukenik is preparing a new edition of these interesting manuscripts, to which we refer the reader. As an example we may quote one of the discoveries made as a result of the infra-red photography already mentioned. In the *Book of Thanksgiving Songs* at the end of line twenty-five of Plate X (cf. Sukenik, *Megilloth Genuzoth*, Jerusalem, 1948) the word *b'wn* (in sin) has reappeared, and at the beginning of line twenty-six one may now see quite clearly three words which mean "from the womb even unto old age in guilt" (cf. Sukenik's second fascicule, Jerusalem, 1949). The whole passage now becomes clear: "and he (i.e. man in general) is in sin from the womb, and even unto old age is he guilty of crime." This passage is of the greatest interest for it seems to show that even before the Christian era, the Jewish people believed in the doctrine of Original Sin.<sup>1</sup> This truth was subsequently obscured in traditional Judaism. We may, however, quote the expression of the Rabbi D. Gimchi "man whose nature is in sin."

## A NEW READING OF ISAIAH liii 11.

Convincing arguments for the resurrection of Christ are afforded by the witness of those who saw Him alive after His death, together with the prophecies which Jesus himself made to both friends and enemies, as well as those set down in writing long centuries before his birth. These prophecies are well known. But the argument from prophecy takes on a fresh cogency from the fact that an explicit prophecy of the Resurrection of Christ has recently been made clear beyond doubt in the Book of Isaiah.

In 1947, as already noticed in this quarterly, a scroll of parchment was discovered, among others, in a cave near the Dead Sea, containing the complete Hebrew text of the Book of Isaiah. The date of this manuscript has been established as the second century B.C. Between ch. lii, 12 and ch. liv, 13 there has been noted only one reading differing in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. I Levi, *Le péché originel dans les anciennes sources juives*, Paris, 1907.

meaning from the Massoretic text,<sup>1</sup> and this variant reading concerns the resurrection of the Messiah.

In ch. liii, 11 the MT is as follows "Because of the suffering of his soul he shall see, he shall be satisfied in his knowledge; my just servant shall justify many and it is he that shall take away their iniquities." What will he see? The complement of the verb has disappeared. The Greek Septuagint translates "The Lord wishes . . . to show him (the) light (phôs)." Now the scroll of Isaiah recently discovered reads as follows: "He shall see (the) light ('ôr)"—a reading which is of great value for textual criticism. But what exactly does it mean in this context?

In Accadian (Assyrian) the expression *nûra amâru* (to see the light) often means: to live. In Biblical Hebrew the meaning is: *to live*, *to survive* some danger of death, *to revive* after a serious illness, *to come back to life* after having died. Let us examine the texts. Job regretted that he had not died at birth or even before being born: he would rather have been as the abortions which saw not the light (Job iii, 16). He asks himself why "God gives the light to the distressed man, and life to him in whose soul is bitterness, to those who desire death and who would rejoice to find a sepulchre in which to disappear (verse 20 ff.). Ecclesiastes (vii, 11) declares "Wisdom is good with an inheritance," and adds that "it is profitable for them that see the sun" and this precisely because it (Wisdom) "makes them live"—(we would say "helps them to prolong their life"). The wicked are threatened with death, even with violent death, and they declare that after that they will not see the light again. To take away their life is to take away "their light" (Job xxxviii, 15); it is to drive them "from the light towards darkness" (Job xviii, 18). They will remain in Sheol as sheep whose shepherd is death (Ps. xlix, 14): "the sinners" (so lxx) or "the generation of his ancestors" (so MT) "will not see (the) light." The just hope that God will preserve them frequently from death (this is the meaning of the expression "twice, thrice" in Job xxxiii, 29). To remain thus "in the light" is in some way to be led by God out of the pit into the light, into the light of the living (verses 28-9). This is the hope of the author of Ps. lvi "Thou wilt deliver my soul from death. (Will he not preserve) my feet (i.e. my steps) from falling (fatally) so that I may walk before God in the light of the living?" verse 14.

The case of the Servant of Yahweh is quite exceptional for it is after having been put to death and placed in a tomb (verses 8-9) that he will see the light. While normally no one can "see the light" after his death, he on the other hand *will* see it precisely because he has chosen to die as atoning victim for us sinners. And the prophet indicates that this resurrection will not be long delayed since the Servant will have an

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Bulletin of American Schools for Oriental Research*, No. 111.

important mission to fulfil: that is, to make the multitudes of the Gentiles tremble (lii, 14) and to communicate his own justice to many sinners (liii, 11). This work of justification, conditioned by the antecedent immolation, will be without geographic limits and will last as long as there are sinners on earth to convert. Thus will the risen Messiah prolong his days, by interceding, without ceasing, for sinners, in the midst of a spiritual posterity which is in every place and which lasts through all ages.

Thus do we find again the profound hope expressed in Psalms 16 and 22. In Psalm 22, after saying "thou shalt place me in the dust of death," the speaker goes on to describe with evident pleasure the great activity he will have to exercise, once he leaves Sheol (verses 23-32) "I shall declare thy name unto my brethren." In Psalm 16 the speaker expresses his firm hope that "he will rise again immediately or shortly after his death" (Lagrange, *Revue Biblique*, 1905, p. 191). Let us reread verses 9-10 of this Psalm "my heart is glad and my glory (i.e. my soul) rejoiceth; nay more, my flesh itself will rest in safety—for thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one even to see the corruption of the tomb." (See *Euntes Docete*, 1948, 3, p. 180 ff.).

No, he will not see corruption, he will see the light. As for us, who see the corruption of the tomb—we shall draw near to the Fountain of Life, and it is in his light that we shall see the light. Thanks to the intercession of the Messiah, whose bruises assure our healing, we shall rise again to a glorious life.

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# LATIN TRANSLATION OF THE MANUSCRIPT

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## PAGE A

line	Column a	line	Column b
1-2 ?		3	et ascenderunt in navem . . . . . (end of line is blank)
3		4 ?	
4 ?		5	(Domine) quia sustinuisti me in fortitudine Tua . . . . .
5	(the beginning of this line is blank) <sup>1</sup>	6	malitiae et in omni . . . . .
6	et confirmasti me . . . . .	7	mirabilem et firmasti omnem . . . . .
7 ?		8	ne . . . . . oculos meos
8	aeternitatis . . . . .	9	redemptionem Tuam et lingua eius (profert) opprobrium
9	sanctitatis . . . . .	10	Tuam quia tacebunt
10 ?		11 ?	
11	quia . . . . . in iudicio salvabis . . . . .	12 ?	
12	et omne figmentum . . . . .	13	ad ambulandum coram Te in . . . . .
13	in veritate Tua . . . . .	14	in sempiternum (end of line is blank)
14	gloria . . . . .	15	non . . . . .
15	figmentum servi Tui . . . . .	16 ?	
16	in domo . . . . . carnis . . . . .	17 ?	
17	sperabo . . . . .	18 ?	
18	crescet surculus . . . . .	19	pater filiis . . . . .
19	foederi Tuo et sustinebo veritatem Tuam . . . . .	20 ?	
20	"anshe mophet" . . . . .	21	homines belli . . . . .
21	et sustulisti cornu meum super omne (regnum)	22 ?	
22	quia sicut palea a facie venti . . . . .	23	gloriae tuae . . . . .
23	desuper, et manifestatio Eius . . . . .	24	(the line is blank)
24	quia Tu (fuisti) mihi luminari (oculorum) et firmasti pedem meum		
25	(blank line)	25 ? <sup>2</sup>	
26	notum fecisti mihi gratiis Tuis . . . . .	26 ?	
27 ?		27 ?	
28	correctionem tuam . . . . .	28 ?	
29 ?		29	bonitas Tua et misericordiae Tuae
30 ?		30	coram Te . . . . .
31-34 ?		31-34 ?	
35		35	reputatus est

<sup>1</sup> In the fold in the middle there was probably written: laudabo Te Domine (the beginning of a psalm). The end of the word 'Adonai' is just discernible at the beginning of b5.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly one should read: "Salvastis me" (beginning of psalm).

## PAGE B

line	Column a	line	Column b
1-3 ?	.....floruerunt	1-3 ?	.....
4	et factus est locus (?) aeternitatis	4 ?	.....
5	viam . . . ei qui non(est) fessus quia	5 ?	.....
6	et ad ZEBUL non mittunt . . . . .	6 ?	.....
7	aestimatus est quin cognitus sit . . . . .	7 ?	.....
8	et spiritus (pl.) sanctitatis pugnabit	8 ?	.....
9	. . . . et bibit aquas sanctitatis	9 ?	.....
10	. . . . quin . . . . .	10	..... aquae viventes et pervenerunt
11	parvulos nostros quia . . . . .	11 ?	.....
12	Tu Deus . . . . .	12	..... quia in fallacia sua . . . . .
13	.....	13	ad decipiendum veritatem
14 ?	.....	14	..... pro (?) . . . in secreto (?) fortitudinis Tuae
15 ?	.....	15	..... aeternitatis
16 ?	.....	16	..... spes quia vidit sine intellectu
17 ?	.....	17	ego autem fui . . . . .
18	..... fontem eorum (blank) <sup>1</sup>	18	(blank line) <sup>1</sup>
19	..... super libram . . . . .	19 ?	.....
20	..... pepigerunt radices suas in urbe . . . . .	20	..... sine . . . . .
21	..... et si . . . . .	21 ?	.....
22	..... ad custodiendum	22	..... aquae . . . . .
23	..... et non decipiemus populum	23 ?	.....
24	..... et fuit sicut homo . . . . .	24	se vertere ad funem rectum
25	..... sicut homo qui non (est auxilium)	25-33 ?	.....
26	..... quia pervenerunt ad V fossam . . . . .		
27	..... sicut ignis devorans . . . . .		
28	..... arundines . . . . .		
29	..... te prosternabis coram <sup>2</sup> . . . quia		
30	..... et a tempore mortis eorum fit filius (?)		
31	..... in Babel et ierunt . . . . .		
32-36 ?	.....		

<sup>1</sup> This white space allows us to see how the lines in each column correspond. Notice also the parallelism of line 10

<sup>2</sup> The word seems to be melah (salt), or perhaps kalah, or kalah ?