

SCRIPTURE

THE QUARTERLY OF THE CATHOLIC BIBLICAL ASSOCIATION

VOL. IV. No. 6

APRIL 1950

EDITORIAL

Biblical Lectures. The course organized at the Newman Centre, 31 Portman Square, W.1, attracted a regular audience of about thirty. This, if not large was at least adequate as a start. A further course of lectures is being planned. In view of the recent forward movement of Catholic Biblical studies, these lectures should prove useful in keeping abreast of that progress. The Catholic Conference of Ecclesiastical Studies is being held this year at Campion Hall, Oxford, from 10th to 14th April. At 5.15 p.m. on Thursday, Fr Jones, Professor of Scripture at Upholland College, Lancs, is reading a paper entitled 'The Present Position of Eschatology'. The same evening there will be a meeting of priest-members of the Catholic Biblical Association.

The Dead Sea Scrolls. Dr Sukenik, Professor at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem (who has the unique distinction of having had all the scrolls before his eyes!) gave a lecture on this subject at the Palestine Exploration Fund on 15th February. He propounded with vigour his theory that the Ain Feshka cave was a Genizah or place where worn-out manuscripts were deposited when finished with. Such manuscripts were not, he said, destroyed. The scroll containing one third of the prophet Isaiah for example was not a continuous text but made up of odd scraps and chapters. In general it is not in good condition. The same is true of the Thanksgiving Scrolls. Indeed one scroll when opened had a loose sheet inside. Even the complete Isaiah manuscript in America is torn and damaged. All the MSS were torn and worn before being packed away. Though they are of the first importance to us it does not follow that they were to the Jews of those days. Dr Sukenik scouted the suggestion that the MSS had been hidden in the cave for security reasons, in a time of persecution.

It now appears that the Hebrew University have three scrolls not six—four of the six belong to one document; the Scroll of Thanksgiving (Hodayoth). The Syrian Patriarch has four, not five—two having been found to belong to the same scroll: The Sectarian Document. It is interesting to note that among the pieces of manuscript found in the cave are some scraps of the Book of Daniel. Of all the MSS, by far the most important is the complete text of the Book of Isaiah, belonging to the Syrian Patriarch. It is thought that the

MSS fragments written in the Old Hebrew script are of the same date as the others; that the Old script continued up to the time of Christ and that its use on Maccabean coins is not mere archaizing. These MSS strikingly confirm the Massoretic text though of course there are peculiarities of orthography (as already noticed in SCRIPTURE, 1949, p. 43). There are even some technical words not found in the Bible, e.g. in the Scroll of the Combat between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness.

It is noted in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, January 1950, p. 95, that a leather scroll consigned to American scholars for study proves to be the lost Book of Lamech, mentioned in medieval Greek lists of apocryphal books of the Old Testament. The language of the scroll is Aramaic and though very blurred must once have been beautiful, having been executed by a skilful scribe.

If the cave-store was indeed a Genizah as suggested by Dr Sukenik, it remains to be explained why so remote a spot was chosen for it. Indeed the isolation of the cave would seem to point to the theory that it was a hiding-place. However, if the manuscripts belonged to the sect of the Essenes, who are known to have lived in this neighbourhood the difficulty against its being a Genizah might be satisfactorily disposed of. In this connexion, the Sectarian Document must be considered although it does not seem to be noticeably Essenian.

MAN AND HIS CALL

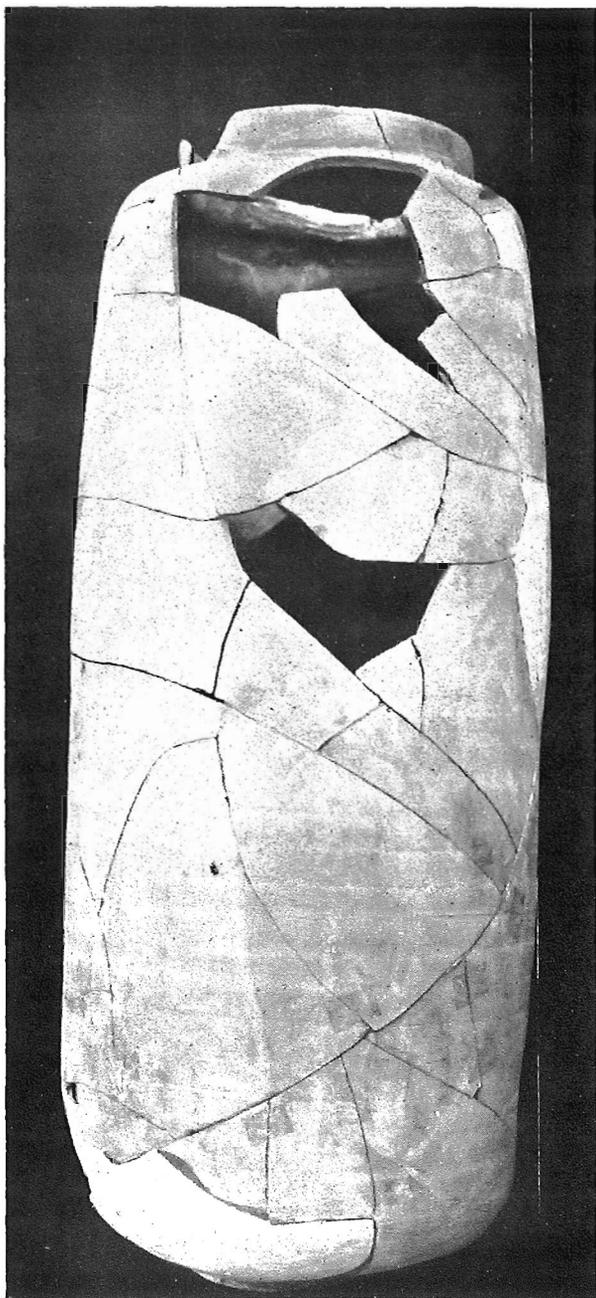
MAN'S dealings with God which we call history are before all else dealings between man who is called and God who calls him. The word first comes forth from God and gives man his life's purpose: to be a hearer of that word and not only to hear it, but also to work it out, to be one in whom the Call is now an Answer. History becomes a conversation between God and man with all the joys, but also with all the difficulties and misunderstandings, of conversation. Thus arises an obscurity which becomes even that stupidity and blindness so often spoken of in Holy Scripture. These readings from Holy Scripture will allow us to take part in the dialogue between God and those whom He calls, until such time as it is fulfilled in the song of the hundred and forty-four thousand who follow the Lamb wherever It goes.

Man, created in grace, was called to work and obedience.

(Gen. ii, 15-17.)

The Lord God took man, and put him into the paradise of pleasure, to dress it, and to keep it. And he commanded him, saying: Of every

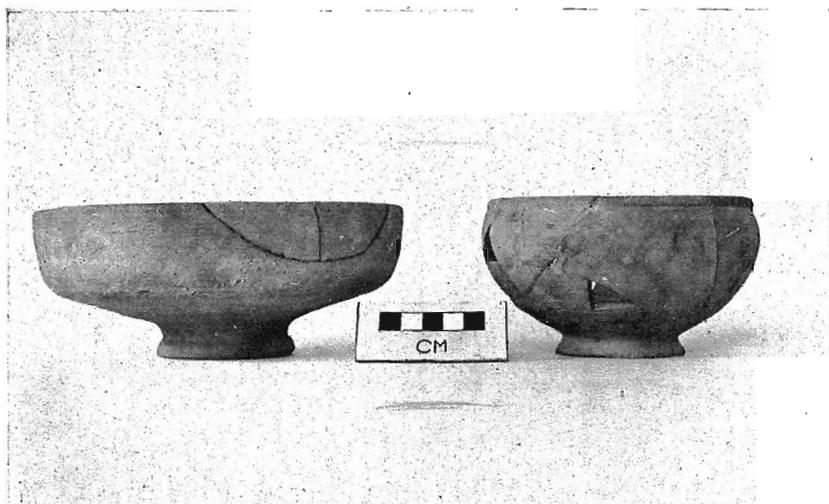
THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS



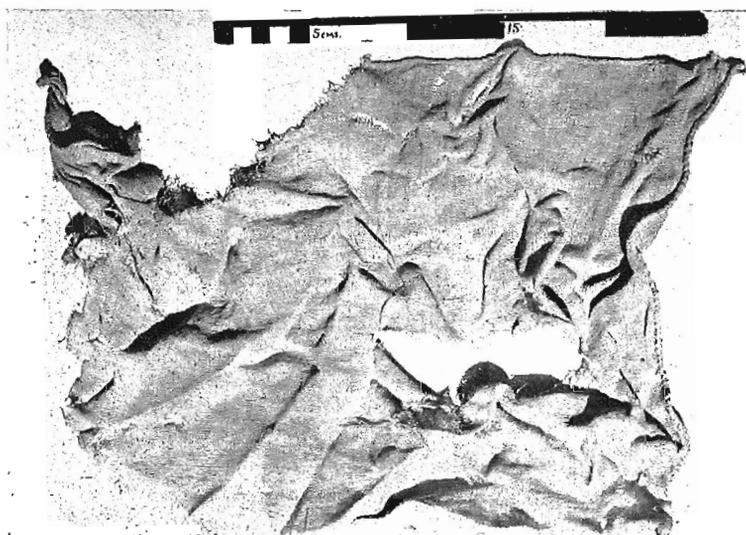
One of the jars in which the scrolls were found.

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THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS



The bowl on the left is of the usual type : that on the right is unique.



One of the linen squares used for wrapping the scrolls

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