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EDITORIAL

Lectures. The course of Biblical lectures which has been running at the Newman Association, 31 Portman Square, London, W.1, for the past three years, will start again in October next with *Introduction to Bible Study*. Though numbers have not been large they have been fairly constant and there has been sustained interest on the part of the students. We hope that we may now say that the course is an established part of the programme at the Newman Centre, and that the numbers will gradually grow. Apart from the three-year cycle of lectures, it is planned also to have eventually other Biblical lectures of a more specialized character for the benefit of those who desire to continue their studies further.

A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture. The editorial work on this may now be said to be practically complete. There is, however, a vast amount of work to be done by the printers and they are pushing on with their colossal task as fast as is humanly possible. They expect to publish at the end of this year.

Rome Meeting of the Society for Old Testament Study. As our readers already know, the President for 1952 of this Society is our own Chairman, Monsignor Barton, Consultor of the Pontifical Biblical Commission. The members of the Society are of course predominantly non-Catholic and the meetings have nearly always been held in Great Britain. It was a happy thought to invite the Society to meet this year in Rome at the Biblical Institute during Holy Week, under the Presidency of Mgr Barton. It should be here recorded that shortly before the meeting took place, Mgr Barton was made a Domestic Prelate of His Holiness the Pope. We offer him our respectful congratulations. Father Dyson, S.J., professor at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome made himself responsible for most of the arrangements for the meeting, and sincere thanks are due to him for his care and hard work. The members were comfortably accommodated in various places in the city, and the sessions

took place at the Biblical Institute. Many papers were read and a large audience attended, including the heads of colleges and other dignitaries. The British Minister to the Holy See, Sir Walter Roberts, came to one of the sessions and also spoke. There were on the average, about fifty to eighty present at each session. Everything possible was done to make the meeting as memorable as possible.

The treasures of the Vatican Library were thrown open and the members were shown round by Father van Lantscoot, a Consultor of the Biblical Commission. Father Dyson took members round the Vatican Museum. Many other visits and excursions were also arranged.

The high point of the meeting was reached with the Papal Audience which took place on the morning of Good Friday, 11th April, in the Throne Room. His Holiness addressed them for a few minutes and then imparted the Apostolic Benediction. Here is the text of His discourse:—

When We come to expressing a word of welcome and encouragement to such an elect group of Scripture scholars, Our memory goes back at once to what Our saintly Predecessor, Damasus, well on to sixteen centuries ago, wrote to the learned St Jerome. 'I do not believe there can be a subject more worthy of conversation between us than the Scriptures' (Ep. XXXV—Migne, P.L., Vol. XXII, col. 451). Nothing could be truer, when one reflects that from the *IN PRINCIPIO* of Genesis to the *VENI, DOMINE JESU* of the Apocalypse the Holy Scriptures contain the word of God. What a precious vein of untold riches is opened up by almost any of its sentences! But We must be brief. 'Pleasant is a meadow', wrote Chrysostom, 'a garden is fair; but still more pleasant is the study of Holy Scripture. In the meadow we find flowers, but they quickly fade; in Holy Scripture we hear words that have the power of immortal life. In the meadow the zephyrs blow; in the Scripture the Holy Spirit breathes . . . In the meadow there is the passing pleasure of the senses; the reading of Scripture procures advantages of lasting value to the soul' (Migne P. G., Vol. LII, col. 395-96).

But those spiritual advantages will be genuine and solid in proportion to one's certain and accurate knowledge of what the sacred author has said. Hence the ever-present need of devoted scholars, who in their tireless research to unfold the exact meaning of the divine word will be equipped to make wise and judicious use of the vast apparatus of biblical philology, geography, history, archæology, textual criticism and the natural sciences, so that Eternal Truth in all its splendour may shine forth to enlighten and warm the minds and hearts of men.

It is gratifying to note from a perusal of your programme, that such scholars are not lacking to-day in the various parts of the world, and We fondly hope that many others, who have been blessed by

God with large measure of natural talent, of piety and learning, will follow you in the same praiseworthy apostolate.

You are closing your study-week on a day hallowed by the memory of the glorious triumph of Him, whose sacred person hovers over all the pages of the Bible. Its different parts, like so many converging rays, focus their light on His radiant figure, the promised, the long-expected One, who at the appointed time came to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of all mankind for life eternal. His proffered gift was peace—peace with God, the Father of all. This, too, is the burden of Our daily prayer, the aim of all the toil and sufferings of the Church. When all men have sought and found peace with God, they will have come a long way to enjoy the blessings of a true peace between nations.

May the peace and joy of the risen Christ fill your own hearts and the hearts of those who are near and dear to you.

After that, His Holiness walked round speaking to each in turn. He asked them about their work and showed great interest in their activities.

A photograph was taken at the end of the audience and in this the place of honour beside His Holiness appears to be taken, at the Pope's express wish, by the small daughter of one of the professors attending the meeting.

It would not be too much to say that the whole visit to Rome made a profound impression on those taking part, and the significance of the meeting, the first of its kind to be held there, did not escape the participants.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

VALUE OF THE SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE

IN the January number of *SCRIPTURE*, Father C. Lattey, S.J., gave a brief commentary on the questions and answers issued by the Biblical Commission about the book of Isaiah together with a few notes on some of the more relevant problems of the book, such as the Servant songs and the Emmanuel prophecy. As regards the fourth and fifth answers, Father Lattey rightly says that 'plurality of authors is not absolutely excluded' (p. 3).

Now the question arises: Supposing we are able one day to demonstrate conclusively that the book of Isaiah has been written by two or more authors, how are we to account for the unanimous tradition which