THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

A NUMBER of articles and briefer notices have appeared in these pages in the last year or two with regard to the Hebrew Scrolls discovered in a cave near the Dead Sea in 1947[1]—usually referred to now as the MSS. of Khirbet Qumran, from the nearest locality. Readers of SCRIPTURE may like to have a summary of the present position, especially in view of reports of two more recent finds in the same general locality, with rumours of yet a third !

It was, in fact, expected when the discovery of the original scrolls was announced in 1948 that further finds would be forthcoming. The area immediately to the west of the Dead Sea, the 'Wilderness of Juda' (ancient Jeshimon), is not only very dry—and so, suited to the preservation of ancient MSS.—but abounds in caves, and has been an ideal hide-out and place of refuge in both ancient and modern times. Thither King David fled from the wrath of Saul, and there the Jewish Zealots made their last stand after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Professor Sukenik, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was of opinion that thorough exploration of the whole region would yield rich fruit for the archæologist; in fact he launched an appeal for funds for the purpose some years ago. One may surmise, too, that not only the archæologist, but also the native Bedouin, would have been stimulated to further exploratory efforts by the 1947 finds. The recent discoveries, then, were not wholly unexpected. Information at the present stage, however, is necessarily fragmentary and incomplete, and so any conclusions arrived at must be but tentative.

Intimation of the first of these finds,[2] referred to provisionally as the 'MSS. of the Wadi Murabba'at' (from the place of discovery) came with the appearance for sale in Amman (Jordan) of fragments of ancient parchment containing Greek letters. Upon enquiry, certain nomads reported that they had found the MSS. in a cave to the west of the Dead Sea in October 1951, and they offered to point out the actual place. The cave—or rather, caves (there are four all told)—are situated in a position difficult of access on the north side of a steep valley, the Wadi Murabba'at, about eight and a half miles north of Engaddi and eleven miles south of the Khirbet Qumran, where the 1947 scrolls were discovered. To reach the spot involved a two hours' journey on foot from the Dead Sea—one is reminded of the description of the same region, where King David sought refuge, given in the first book of Kings: 'rocks so steep that only wild goats could find a footing !' (xxiv, 3). Père de Vaux, O.P., of the École Biblique, Jerusalem, and Mr G. L. Harding, curator of Antiquities, kingdom of Jordan, who together in

[1] See especially the article of Fr R. T. O'Callaghan, in SCRIPTURE IV (1949), p. 41.
[2] Notices in *Biblica* XXXIII (1952), pp. 163, 303.

1949, had explored the Khirbet Qumran cave, carried out a thorough investigation over a period of six weeks, in the winter of 1951 to 1952. Two of the caves revealed nothing worthy of note; in the other two, five archæological strata were uncovered—Neolithic, Middle Bronze Age, Iron Age II, Roman and Arabic (i.e. the caves had been lived in, off and on, during a period of from four to five thousand years!) It was in the fourth stratum (Roman period—end of first century B.C. to beginning of second century A.D.) that the finds were made, viz. coins (of the Roman procurators, of Herod Agrippa I, of Hadrian and from the second Jewish War), pottery, Hebrew ostraca (i.e. inscribed potsherds), and—in the fourth cave—leather and papyrus fragments, inscribed in Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic, and in a poor state of preservation. Among these were biblical MSS., seemingly deliberately torn, which contained fragments of Genesis, Exodus and Deuteronomy; the script is apparently more recent that that of the MSS. of Khirbet Qumran. Also among the fragments are part of a matrimonial contract in Greek, dating from the seventh year of Hadrian, i.e. A.D. 124, a valuable clue to the date of the deposit as a whole; two letters of 'Simon bar Koseba' (apparently the Bar Kokhba who led the Jewish revolt of A.D. 132-135)[3] to a certain Yeshua ben Galgali, one dealing with administrative matters, the other containing references to the fight against the Gentiles and the liberation of Jerusalem; fragments of MSS. in an unknown cursive Hebrew or Aramaic script, and a palimpsest papyrus, the original script of which appears to be very ancient, possibly of the seventh or eighth century B.C. It appears that these caves were a Jewish hide-out at the time of Bar Kokhba's revolt, perhaps used by the leader himself. Historically, the finds are valuable as affording the earliest evidence on a very obscure period of Jewish history. Their relation to the 1947 scrolls is uncertain—at all events they should provide a new term of comparison to assist in the dating etc. of the script of the latter.

Details of the second discovery are even briefer. In March 1952 a regular expedition, sponsored by the Jerusalem Schools Committee of the American Schools of Oriental Research, discovered in a cave near the Khirbet Qumran, along with fragments of other MSS., two *bronze* scrolls, covered with square Hebrew characters, each nearly eight feet in length, twelve-sixteen inches wide and an eighth to a sixth of an inch (3-4mm.) thick. The scrolls have not yet been opened.

To return to the original scrolls of 1947—since their discovery was first announced in America in April 1948, many of the MSS. and fragments have been published, and much scholarly discussion has

[3] The name varies somewhat in historical records. On coins, it is given as 'Simeon, prince of Israel'. Christian sources speak consistently of 'Simon bar Kokeba', i.e. 'son of the Star', apparently a Messianic title, cp. Num. xxiv, 17; rabbinical sources refer to him as 'Bar (Ben) Kozeba', lit. 'son of a liar'—either a term of reproach, as some think, or else his real name.

taken place—comprising several books and no less than 500 learned articles up to the middle of 1952. Yet the questions raised have by no means been solved, and even during the last few months new evidence has come to light which has occasioned a radical modification of certain widely-held opinions.

A résumé of the known facts about the scrolls will not be out of place here, especially in view of the conflicting character of certain popular accounts of the last year or two. The scrolls—of skin or leather, wrapped in linen, and enclosed in jars sealed with wax—were discovered in the spring of 1947 by Bedouin shepherds of the Ta'amire tribe, who were looking for lost sheep, in a cave a mile from the north-western shore of the Dead Sea, in what is now Jordan territory, two and a half miles north of Ain Feshka (after which they were named at first), and less than a mile north of a ruined locality known as Khirbet Qumran. Some time later—details of the intervening period are not perfectly clear—in July of the same year, four of the scrolls, and some fifteen fragments were purchased by the Syrian Orthodox Metropolitan of Jerusalem and Transjordan, Mar Athanasius, on behalf of the Syrian convent of St Mark in Jerusalem. In February 1948 he permitted Dr J. C. Trever, of the American Schools of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, to photograph three of the scrolls column by column, and subsequently allowed them to be taken for safety to the United States (the civil war in Palestine was then raging), where all but one were subsequently published by the American Schools of Oriental Research.[4] In November and December 1947, meanwhile, three more scrolls and certain fragments came into the hands of Professor E. L. Sukenik of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, through the intermediary of an antique dealer in the holy city; these, together with two whole specimens of the jars in which the scrolls were stored, are now the property of the same university, and have been published in part.[5]

As a result of the re-discovery of the cave from Jordan at the beginning of 1949, and its subsequent exploration in February and March of the same year by Père de Vaux and Mr Harding,[6] about 600 more fragments, mostly very small, were collected; these are now the property of the Palestine Archæological Museum, and are being gradually identified and published. Early in 1950, the same museum purchased from certain dealers a quantity of fragments that had evidently been detached from the scrolls that had already come to light. It is highly probable that the tally of fragments, perhaps even of scrolls, is still not

[4] *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St Mark's Monastery*, ed. Millar Burrows and others. Vol. I (1950); Vol. II (1951). New Haven.

[5] *Megilloth Genuzoth* (i.e. 'scrolls stored away'—the work is in Hebrew), ed. by E. L. Sukenik. Vol. I (1948); Vol. II (1950). Jerusalem.

[6] See the photos of the cave in SCRIPTURE IV (1950), facing pp. 133 and 147.

complete—it is known that, in between the original discovery of 1947 and the re-discovery of 1949, the cave was visited by the Bedouin, and broken into by persons unknown. The story of similar discoveries in Egypt shows that MSS. can remain hidden away for years, e.g. some of the Tell el-Amarna tablets did not come to light till nearly thirty years after the original finding.

It will be noticed that possession of the scrolls and fragments is divided among three different bodies—in some cases, one possesses a MS. more or less complete, another possesses fragments detached from it deliberately or accidentally. Description of the known MSS. and fragments is as follows, taking first the biblical MSS., then the apocrypha, and then the writings hitherto unknown ('sectarian writings').

Firstly, there is a scroll containing the complete Hebrew text of Isaias (DSIa, according to the abbreviations adopted by the Americans), forming part of the Syrian collection, and published in 1950. The text is pre-Massoretic,[7] though resembling the Massoretic text in many instances, while presenting a number of distinctive readings.[8] Its peculiar orthography or script (e.g. the frequent use of the 'matres lectionis', that is, of consonants serving as vowels) renders it of great value for the history of Hebrew grammar and pronunciation. Moreover, there is a striking difference in grammar and orthography between chapters 1-33 and 34-66.

Another scroll of Isaias, this time incomplete (chapters 41 to 66: DSIb), is in the possession of the Hebrew University. Two extracts were edited by Professor Sukenik in 1950 in the second of his two volumes (owing to its fragile condition, the scroll was not opened till 1949). Fragments of the same original scroll, from the earlier chapters (16, 19, 22-23, 28, 38-39) belong to the Palestine Museum. The text of this scroll is almost identical with the Massoretic; it seems to presuppose the existence of a 'textus receptus', basis of the later Massoretic, at the time it was written.

The text of Habacuc, chapters i and ii, will be mentioned in connexion with the Habacuc Scroll below. Among the biblical fragments so far known, are one fragment of Genesis and five of Leviticus (xix, 31-34; xx, 20-23; xxi, 24–xxii, 5)[9]—the script of these latter fragments is archaizing in type, dating possibly from the fourth century B.C. There are several fragments of Deuteronomy (embracing xxix, 13-18 and xxx, 20–xxxi, 6), a few brief fragments of Judges, and three from Daniel (i, 10-16; ii, 2-5; iii, 23-30) from two distinct scrolls, besides

[7] The Hebrew Massoretic text, as found in modern Hebrew Bibles, with its elaborate system of vowel-pointing, etc., was edited between the fifth and ninth centuries A.D.

[8] E.g. the important variant for LIII, II, noted in SCRIPTURE IV (1949) by Père Bauchet (p. 114).

[9] See photograph in SCRIPTURE IV (1950), facing p. 146.

the fragments of DSIb already noted. All these belong to the Palestine Museum, with the exception of the Daniel fragments, which are part of the Syrian collection, and the Isaias fragments noted above. The report that the Syrian Metropolitan also had in his possession a volume of 'Haphtaroth' (Synagogue readings from the prophets) which was never made public, seems to have been based on a simple mistake.[10] Fragments from the Old Testament apocrypha are also in the possession of the Palestine Museum—from the Book of Jubilees (xxvii, 19-21) and, though not established with certainty, from the Book of Henoch (or possibly the beginning of the lost Book of Noe, portions of which are incorporated in Henoch).

Of the writings previously unknown—the 'Sectarian scrolls'—the Commentary on Habacuc (DSH) and the so-called 'Manual of Discipline' (DSD) belong to the Syrian collection, and were published in 1950 and 1951 respectively. The Habacuc Scroll—in two sections and somewhat mutilated (about a fifth of the text seems to be missing) is an interlinear explanation or 'midrash' of the first two chapters of the prophecy of Habacuc. After each verse, with the formula, 'the sense of this saying is', there is an application to the circumstances in which the commentator was living, e.g. what the prophet said of the Chaldeans (Babylonians) invading Palestine in the sixth century B.C., the author applies allegorically to the 'Kittim' invading the country (or at least oppressing it) in his time; the woes fulminated against the enemies of God's people are directed to the 'Wicked Priest' and his followers, who are persecuting the 'Master of Justice' and the community of which he is the leader. Many theories of the dating and origin of the scrolls as a whole have centred around the identification of the Kittim, the Wicked Priest, and especially the Master of Justice and his sect of the New Covenant.[11] The 'Manual of Discipline' or 'Sectarian Document', as it used to be called (the title given in the text is 'Rule of the Community')[12] is also of importance in determining the origin and antecedents of the scrolls. It is fairly widely held that this MS. is related to a similar sectarian document, the 'Damascus Document' ('Sadoquite Work') (CDC), discovered in a Cairo synagogue in 1896 and published in 1910. Among other things, both rules prescribed the reading of a certain book, called 'hagu' in Hebrew—probably the basic rule for sects of this kind. Fragments belonging probably to the beginning of the Habacuc scroll are in the possession of the Palestine Museum.

[10] Article of Millar Burrows in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, XLII (1951), pp. 119-125 (quoted in *Verbum Domini*, XXX (1952), p. 103). The report was used as an argument against the genuineness of the scrolls,

[11] See the review of M. Dupont-Sommer's book elsewhere in this issue, and the article of Père Tamisier on the same subject in SCRIPTURE V (1952), p. 35.

[12] See the notes and a translation of portion of the text in SCRIPTURE IV (1949), p. 76.

Also among the Syrian scrolls is one as yet unopened, written in Aramaic, as detached fragments show, and generally believed to be the 'Apocalypse of Lamech' (DSL), one of the lost apocrypha of the Old Testament. The scroll itself is in an extremely poor state of preservation; in fact, it is now reported that the Syrian Metropolitan has removed it from the museum of Harvard University, and taken it away, presumably back to Palestine. The fragments of it are in the hands of the Palestine Museum.[13]

Belonging to the Hebrew University are the volume of 'Thanksgiving Canticles' (DST) and the scroll of the 'War of the Children of Light and the Children of Darkness' (DSW). The former is a somewhat mutilated volume, in four parts, with a few detached fragments (also in the hands of the Hebrew University), containing in all some twenty canticles of thanksgiving, so called because they begin with the words, 'I give thee thanks, O Lord, because . . .' Strictly speaking, DST is a collection of prayers and pious meditations, in a kind of poetic prose, in style and doctrine very like the most recent of the canonical Psalms and the post-Exilic canticles and prayers of the Old Testament. Biblical allusions abound—testifying to the psalmist's deep meditation on the Holy Scriptures. Specimens, five in all, were edited photographically—with modern Hebrew translation—by Professor Sukenik in the two volumes mentioned above. In these canticles, too, we meet the figure of the Master of Justice, with an allusion to his flight from the land.[14] DSW will also be familiar to readers of SCRIPTURE—it is a kind of ritual for holy war, between, on the one hand, the tribes of Juda, Benjamin and Levi ('Children of Light') and, on the other, the Kittim of Assur, Edom, Moab and the Philistines ('Children of Darkness').[15] The historical background of this writing is also a matter for discussion. A compendium and excerpts were published by Sukenik in his two volumes.

Of the remaining large collection of fragments—nearly all in the possession of the Palestine Museum—comparatively little is known as yet. One published fragment consists of two columns of a work of poetical character and apocalyptic colouring, somewhat like the Thanksgiving Canticles and the apocrypha of the Old Testament; the orthography bears a striking resemblance to that of DSIb. Of the 600 odd fragments collected in 1949, most are leather, but some forty are scraps of papyrus. Some are written on both sides, virtually all are in Hebrew, mostly in the 'square' (more recent) script, with a very few

[13] Photograph of these fragments in SCRIPTURE IV (1950), facing p. 146.

[14] Photo of portion of the MSS. in SCRIPTURE IV (1949), facing p. 101, with Latin translation of the text on pp. 118-19. See also the note by Père Bauchet in Vol. V (1951), p. 277.

[15] Excerpt translated in SCRIPTURE IV (1949), p. 21.

in the ancient (Phoenician) cursive script. One or two are said to be inscribed with Syrian characters; it is uncertain whether there are any in Greek or Aramaic (excepting the Aramaic fragments of Lamech already mentioned). In all, some thirty distinct works can be counted from what has already been made known, but the number may well exceed 100 when all are published. Taking into account the number of jars in the cavern originally—fifty-one, to judge from the fragments remaining (so far as is known, only two of the jars are intact)—it has been calculated that probably 200 MSS. or more were in the original deposit.

The importance of the discovery in general has already been stressed in these pages—(supposing the scrolls to be genuine) the possession of texts of the Hebrew Bible up to a thousand years older than the oldest MSS. known heretofore; especially, the possession of a scroll of Isaias in all probability of the same kind as that which our Lord read from in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke iv, 16-20); valuable light shed on the history of Hebrew script, grammar and pronunciation; and new information on the history, beliefs and customs of Jewish sects around the time of Christ. Of course, the obvious question will be asked, are the scrolls genuine (say, at least, pre-Massoretic), or are they just a clever forgery, or a product of a much later age, say the Middle Ages, as some have maintained? If genuine, how did they come to be in the cave in the desolate wilderness—who put them there, and why did he leave them? Was the deposit a real sacred library or only a temporary hiding-place? Was it a Jewish 'Genizah', or store-place for sacred MSS. worn out with use, and there 'buried with honour'? Who owned the collection—what body in Palestine would be wealthy enough to possess such a library? What has happened to the other MSS. that formed part of the original library? As for the MSS. themselves, are they contemporary with the deposit in the cave, or are they older; are they originals, or just copies of more ancient texts? What was the sect mentioned in the non-canonical scrolls, who was the 'Master of Justice' and the 'Wicked Priest'? Who were the Kittim, and when was the struggle between them and the 'Children of Light'? In trying to answer these questions, great caution is needed, and careful and impartial assessment of all the evidence, archæological, palæographical (the script), scientific (tests on the MSS. etc.), historical and internal. To some of them, it is impossible, even after five years of discussion, to give a certain answer—in other cases, there is solid objective evidence to assist us. Firstly, as regards the genuineness of the scrolls, scholars of all nationalities and shades of belief are now pretty well agreed in admitting it, and more especially, those who have made first-hand contact with the actual evidence. Archæological and palæographical data, in fine, both to the early pre-Massoretic period, and are confirmed by a

modern chemical test—the application of radio-carbon to a piece of the cloth in which the scrolls were wrapped—which indicates the period from 167 B.C. till A.D. 233.[16] But when it comes to the precise dating of either the *deposit* in the cave, or the *writing* of the scrolls, or their original *composition* (for these are distinct, though related, questions), there is considerable difference of opinion. Some evidence has come to light as regards the date of the deposit, as we shall see presently. As for the script of the scrolls, it may be said that it is relatively older in the case of DSIa and DSD than of the other scrolls, but, owing to the extreme scarcity and uncertainty of contemporary Hebrew writing which might serve as a term of comparison, one cannot fix a definite date on palæographical grounds alone. What of the internal evidence, the indications in the sectarian writings? Here there is even greater divergence of opinion: suggested dating ranges from the second century B.C. (Maccabean period) till the latter part of the first century A.D., or even later. Some nine different sects have been proposed as the sect of the 'New Covenant', with equal variety as to the identity of its leader, the Master of Justice—one and the same historical character has been proposed by one scholar as the Master of Justice, and by another, as the wicked Priest, his avowed enemy![17]

However, new evidence has come to light which seems to settle fairly definitely the date of the deposit, or placing of the MSS. in the cave. At the suggestion of Professor Kahle of Stuttgart, the Khirbet Qumran itself was explored by Mr Harding and Père de Vaux in November and December 1951. The following information, by no means complete, was communicated by Père de Vaux to the *Académie des Inscriptions et de Belles Lettres* in France.[18] The Khirbet Qumran is a flat area, enclosed by deep and narrow moats, with a cistern and aqueduct adjoining. Within the enclosure are the remains of a building 90 to 100 feet long, built of rough square stones and wattle, evidently not a Roman construction, as was hitherto believed. It had been abandoned or destroyed at a date which further findings were to determine. Chief of these were a number of coins, ranging from the time of Augustus till the first Jewish War of A.D. 66-70, fragments of lamps and cooking-utensils, like those found in the cavern in 1949, and—sunk in the ground—a complete jar, evidently used for domestic purposes, and identical in type with those used for storing the scrolls in the cave. This latter was dated by a coin of the Roman procurators found along-

[16] See O. R. Sellers: *Date of the Cloth from the Ain Feshka Cave*, in 'Biblical Archæologist', XIV (1951), p. 29.

[17] For an excellent summary and critique of the more important opinions, see Professor H. H. Rowley's article, *The internal dating of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, in Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses, 1952 (2), p. 257.

[18] Summarized in *Biblica*, XXXIII (1952), p. 439.

side. Near the enclosure was a cemetery, some eleven tombs of which were examined. The corpses were laid in the earth without coffin, their heads to the south, except for one, and without offerings. Père de Vaux's conclusions—which involved the generous retraction of his own theory on the date of the deposit—were that this was the dwelling-place, or at least the place of assembly, of a Jewish community (some of its members would live here, while others dwelt in the caves in the vicinity). This community was probably part of the Essenes, as Père de Vaux and others had already suggested; it is known—from the writings of Pliny especially—that the Essenes lived to the west of the Dead Sea, around Engaddi, and their rules and practices resemble those of the Khirbet Qumran sect in many particulars. If this conclusion is correct, then we have now the first writings of that very seclusive Jewish sect that have come down to us. What is more pertinent to our immediate purpose, Père de Vaux reached the following conclusion with regard to the deposit: the jars containing the scrolls were not of the Hellenistic period (i.e. before 63 B.C.), as he himself and many others had thought, but—like the jar found in the monastic ruins—they were Roman, that is, a hundred years more recent, and were not specially made to hold the MSS. but were of common domestic type. The fragments of lamps and cooking-utensils found in the cave in 1949 were not left there by robbers or other visitors of later times, but were the same age as the deposit itself, i.e. A.D. 66-70, the period of the first Jewish Wars. It was at this time that the Khirbet Qumran building was destroyed and, in all probability, that the community MSS. were stored away for safe-keeping in the cave nearby.

So much, then, for the time the MSS. were deposited in the cave—of course, they may have been in use for some considerable time prior to this (they do give evidence of much usage) and, too, they may be copies of much older originals. No doubt, scholars will now take up these questions afresh. However, there is another problem, namely, concerning the fate of the MSS. that have disappeared from the original store, for which history supplies elements for a solution. It is significant that it is the biblical MSS. that are now in a minority among the Dead Sea Scrolls—and there are two ancient references to findings of biblical MSS. in the vicinity of the Dead Sea, one or both of which may have related to the Khirbet Qumran cave. The first was in the time of Origen, early in the second century. Origen writes in a footnote to the Greek version of the Psalms, which is given as the sixth column in the Hexapla: 'the sixth edition, found together with other Hebrew and Greek books, in a jar (pithos) near Jericho in the time of Antoninus, son of Severus (i.e. Caracalla, *c.* A.D. 217)'[19] This statement was

[19] For this and the following quotation and information, I am especially indebted to two articles by J. T. Milik in *Verbum Domini*, XXX (1952), pp. 34, 101.

subsequently repeated by Eusebius and others. It is tempting to connect our present deposit with this ancient find (the Khirbet Qumran cave is only seven and a half miles south of Jericho)—in fact, till recently, many thought that the Roman lamp and cooking utensils, fragments of which were discovered in 1949, were left in the cave by these second century intruders. Now, the matter is not quite so simple; moreover —apart from the fact that there are many caverns in the area west of the Dead Sea where MSS. might be stored—the absence of any Greek MSS. or even fragments among the 1947 scrolls seems to point in the other direction. It is possible, of course, that the second century explorers removed the Greek MSS. whole and entire, as being more relevant to their needs, and neglected the Hebrew. The second ancient discovery seems to have even more connection with the 1947 finds. It occurred about the year A.D. 800, and notice of it is given in a letter of the Nestorian Patriarch Timotheus I to Sergius, Metropolitan of Elam. He relates that certain Jews of Jerusalem—hunters, looking for a dog (the analogy with the lost sheep of 1947 springs to mind !)—found near Jericho, in a cave ('a little house among the rocks') books of the Old Testament, including 'two hundred psalms of David', and others, written in Hebrew. The Patriarch goes on to say that he had this report from a Hebrew catechumen; and from the fact that he (the Patriarch) had asked if he might consult the Psalter and the Prophets, it would seem that these at least were included in the collection. Very likely, the 'two hundred psalms of David' refers to the hundred and fifty of the canonical Psalter and fifty apocryphal canticles, akin to the Thanksgiving Canticles and other fragmentary texts among the 1947 scrolls.

So much, then, for the deposit and its history. The complex questions of the dating of the MSS. and the reconstruction of the origins, history, and subsequent fate of the Jewish sect to which they seemed to belong must be left over for another article. However, we may fittingly conclude with a brief extract from the 'Manual of Discipline', which gives us a glimpse of the life of piety and zeal led by the followers of the 'New Covenant':—

'Let all keep vigil in common for the third part of every night of the year—in reading of the Book, in the pursuit of justice, and in the common Blessing' (vi, 7-8).[20]

'The Book' was, of course, Holy Scripture—the complete scroll of Isaias (DSIa) is marked off in sections for public reading. They pursued justice, that is, sought after justification, by meditation and commentary on the sacred books, especially, it seems, the prophets (cp. the Midrash on Habacuc), and also by the authentic interpretation of their primitive

[20] Quoted from the Latin translation of the Manual of Discipline by J. T. Milik in *Verbum Domini*, XXIX (1951), p. 145

rule (the 'hagu'), e.g. in the 'Manual of Discipline', perhaps, too, in the Damascus Document. Finally, the 'common blessing' consisted in praising God by the singing or recital of Psalms and Canticles from Scripture, together with canticles of their own, such as the Thanksgiving Canticles.

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PRACTICAL SCRIPTURE INTERPRETATION—EXTRACTS FROM A 'MEDITATION'

I MUST ask excuse for the somewhat personal and autobiographical nature of what I here put forth; but in my title there appears the word 'practical', and practice one may presume is often based upon personal experience.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century I read for the Cambridge Theological Tripos, with great reverence for my professors, but a definitely catholic trend of mind. In regard of Scripture teaching the sound tradition of Lightfoot and Westcott was still powerful in my university, and that tradition was nobly carried on by the admirable H. B. Swete, then principal lecturer on the New Testament. Old Testament teaching was dominated (at least in my eyes) by the masterly lectures of a scion of the distinguished Ryle family (afterwards, I think, the second Ryle Anglican Bishop of Liverpool) whose views were moderate. On the other hand more subversive theories were much in evidence, and in Old Testament exegesis the Wellhausen reconstruction of Jewish religious history was fast gaining ground. Towards the close of my triennium—largely owing to the influence of a learned and devout 'scholastically-minded' clergyman, I revolted seriously against the anti-supernaturalist tone (the tone rather than the critical conclusion) of much Scriptural exegesis that was not only in the air, but more and more was being proclaimed in the lecture rooms. At the same time—as I have just hinted—I felt deeply the impossibility of setting aside the evidence of facts which had been brought into light by historical research and literary criticism.

It was during a year at an Anglican Theological College (Ely) that I settled down into an attitude towards the Sacred Scriptures which has lasted, which is, I hope, fundamentally catholic, and which is my excuse for putting forth the present reflexions:—a great devotion to