

REPORT OF THE NINTH GENERAL MEETING OF THE CATHOLIC BIBLICAL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

GEORGE A. DENZER

At the request of Rev. Matthew P. Stapleton, the President of the Association, His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, graciously bestowed His apostolic benediction upon the members present at the meeting. We subjoin the pertinent cablegrams.

Cablegram of Rev. Matthew Stapleton

Most Holy Father, the members of the Catholic Biblical Association of America, gathered together for their annual meeting at Boston beg the apostolic blessing; they offer at the throne of Your Holiness their homage of filial veneration, perfect obedience, and renewed zeal for the study and spread of the Sacred Scriptures.

Reply of His Holiness, Pope Pius XII

The Holy Father is deeply grateful for the filial message of homage from the members of the Catholic Biblical Association of America assembled at the annual meeting in Boston. Invoking abundant divine assistance upon the important deliberations, He lovingly bestows upon the members present His paternal blessing.

Montini, Substitute

Letter from His Eminence, Eugene, Cardinal Tisserant

Dear Members of the Catholic Biblical Association of America!

The presence at your general meeting in Boston of the Very Reverend James M. Voste, O. P., Secretary of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, gives me the welcome opportunity to send you my personal greetings.

I am very happy to have this occasion to congratulate you on the fine accomplishments you have achieved in the ten years of existence of the Catholic Biblical Association of America, and I wish to commend especially your publication of the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*. The learning of its articles, the quality of its reviews, the actuality of its "Biblical News" make your periodical a very useful instrument for the members of the American clergy, who wish to become better acquainted with the progress being made in the study of Holy Scripture.

Through the annual courses of lessons which you intend to have, and which begin this year at Niagara University, your Association will bring to the attention of young teachers new researches in the biblical domain,

will inform them about the most recent excavations and discoveries, and keep them in touch with modern work in exegesis, without speaking of the considerable advantage those young teachers will have by seeing how expert lecturers make their science accessible, clear and attractive.

Our beloved Holy Father, Pius XII, happily reigning, laid down in His recent encyclical "Divino Afflante Spiritu" a program of work for Catholic students of the Bible. First, His Holiness insists on the absolute necessity of a critical and historical exegesis. Surely, the Bible is a spiritual book, to be used for developing the religious life of the faithful; but the doctrinal synthesis has to be founded on the serious study of the historical, literal sense. Secondly, although not everyone can become an Orientalist, it is necessary that some of the Catholic scholars be qualified in the knowledge of Eastern languages, especially of those most necessary for the critical study of the original text and ancient versions of the Bible. Without such Catholic scholars, our exegesis must always be dependent on the critical works, grammars, and dictionaries prepared by others, and possibly might not be able to detect systematic deflections from true science. Finally, it is important that Catholic biblical professors and students be thoroughly acquainted with the progress of excavations in the Near East. This is especially pertinent for American scholars, since so many American institutions of higher studies are taking an important part in archeological researches in Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia and Egypt. It may be that a better knowledge of the field work of your fellow countrymen would encourage mutual esteem and open an approach towards cooperation, that would be of great advantage to individuals and societies, both religious and civil.

Invoking on you and your work the blessings of Almighty God and the powerful assistance of Mary, Sedes Sapientiae, I beg to remain

Very sincerely yours in Christ,
(signed) Eugene Card. Tisserant

Bishop of Porto and Santa Rufina

Rome, Whitsunday, June 9, 1946

Reply Cabled to Cardinal Tisserant

The members of the Catholic Biblical Association of America, assembled at St. John's Seminary, Brighton, Mass., U. S. A., wish to thank His Eminence, Cardinal Eugene Tisserant for his kind message of encouragement and counsel addressed to them and desire to assure him that they will earnestly endeavor to fulfill the hopes which His Eminence has so benevolently expressed in his letter.

Report of the Secretary

The Ninth Annual Meeting of the Catholic Biblical Association of America was held in commemoration of the fourth centenary of the Council of Trent in Boston, from Tuesday, August 27th, to Thursday, August 29th, under the patronage of the Most Reverend Richard J. Cushing, D.D., Archbishop of Boston. The sessions were held in the beautiful hall of the library building at St. John's Seminary in Brighton.

The excellent program of the three-day meeting was arranged by the following members of the *Program Committee*: Rev. Matthew P. Stapleton, President of the Association; Most Rev. Henry J. Grimmelman, Bishop of Evansville, Indiana, Consultor; Rev. Wendell S. Reilly, S.S., Consultor; Rev. Joseph L. Lilly, C.M., General Secretary; and Rev. Michael J. Gruenthaner, S.J., Editor-in-chief of the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*.

The members of the *Executive Committee* met in a preliminary session on Monday evening, August 26th. The following morning, at 8:30, the meeting was formally opened with the offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass by Archbishop Cushing in the chapel of the Theology House. After the Mass the Archbishop addressed the members of the Association and warmly welcomed them to the archdiocese. He urged the Association to continue with undiminished zeal its work of making America Bible-conscious. In his talk the Archbishop went on to indicate the close relation between the proper and fruitful reception of Holy Communion and the reading of the Bible. He emphasized that a more fruitful reception of the Word "enfleshed" is conditioned on a fuller understanding of the Word revealed.

Archbishop Cushing's message sounded the key-note for the morning session, at which three papers were read, all pertaining to the Holy Eucharist. In the first paper, "The Eucharist and St. John," the Rev. Patrick Temple presented an excellent commentary on the words of the Promise contained in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel. The Rev. Edward Peters, C.S.P., in his paper, "The Eucharist in St. Paul," limited his discussion to those points of the Eucharistic doctrine which are specifically St. Paul's. These are, in the Apostle's own language, the *anamnesis* (1 Cor. 11) and the *koinonia* (1 Cor. 10). The Rev. John F. McConnell, M.M., summarized the various theories of alleged influence of the mystery religions on the Eucharistic doctrine of the New Testament, and then showed how false and inadequate these theories are. His paper was entitled, "The Eucharist and the Mystery Religions."

At this first session the Rev. Matthew P. Stapleton, retiring President of the Association, welcomed to the meeting the Very Rev. James M. Vosté, O.P., Secretary of the Pontifical Biblical Commission. Just prior to the meeting at Boston, Father Vosté had lectured at the Biblical Summer

School, which the Association inaugurated so successfully this year and which was held at Niagara University from August 16th to August 26th. During the meeting at Boston Father Vosté lectured on the subjects, "The Council of Trent and the Bible" and "Fifty Years of Biblical Studies." In the first lecture the eminent Dominican scholar explained the significance of the "Insuper" decree of the Council of Trent. It was this decree which declared the Vulgate to be "authentic." Father Vosté defined this authenticity as a juridical authenticity, a "vis probandi," and emphasized that preference must always be given to the original texts, which are authentic "per se". In his second lecture Father Vosté characterized the encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* of Pope Leo XIII as the "Magna Charta" of biblical studies. He reviewed the advance that has been made in Catholic biblical research during the 50 years that elapsed between the *Providentissimus Deus* and the publication of the encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* by Pope Pius XII in 1943. In some fields, however, Father Vosté pointed out, Catholic biblical scholarship has not been to the fore, and he urged the members of the Association to correct this deficiency and to contribute to the further advance of Catholic scriptural science.

Members of the secular and religious clergy and of the teaching communities of the archdiocese were present at the afternoon session of the first day. The Rev. John F. Renehan, C.S.S.R., who spent five years on the North Carolina missions as a trailer-chaplain, read a paper on the subject, "How to Present Catholic Views on the Bible to Non-Catholics." Father Renehan reminded us of the great appeal that arguments drawn from the text of Scripture have with many non-Catholics. The Rev. Gilmore H. Guyot, C.M., in his paper, "The Apocalypse in the Seminary Scripture Course," outlined a practical plan for the teaching of the Apocalypse. It was at this session that Father Vosté lectured on "The Council of Trent and the Bible."

The editors and translators of the Old Testament met on Tuesday evening, under the direction of the Rev. Stephen J. Hartdegen, O.F.M. Progress was reported on the work of translating the Old Testament from the original languages. Meetings were held also by the various committees that had functioned during the previous year.

The session on Wednesday morning was marked by the presence of the Very Rev. Sylvester Saller, O.F.M., rector of the Franciscan Biblical Institute of Jerusalem. Father Saller addressed the meeting and described the excavations that have been made during the past fifteen years under his direction at Mt. Nebo and at Ain Karim. He also informed the Association that in July of this year the Dominican Fathers were able to resume their work of excavating in Palestine. He added that important findings made during the war would soon be published. The Rev. Anthony Cotter, S.J., read a paper on the subject, "The Obscurity of the Bible."

Father Cotter defined to what extent the Bible is obscure and indicated the reasons for this obscurity. In his paper, "The Prophet Jonas," the Rev. Albert Casey, S.J., stated that there are good arguments for and against the historical interpretation of much of the material found in the book of Jonas. Father Casey defended the historical interpretation but admitted that some authoritative Catholic exegetes are inclined toward the opposite opinion. The Rev. Richard Murphy, O.P. read a paper entitled "The Authorship of Isaias." Father Murphy presented a concise summary of the literary arguments for and against the twofold authorship of the book of Isaias. He asserted that the arguments in favor of the twofold authorship are not compelling, but that the opinion may be considered probable.

On Wednesday afternoon the members of the Association were treated to a sight-seeing tour of Boston. This pleasant diversion was only one of many manifestations of the determination of the local *Committee on Arrangements* to make the three-day meeting a happy and comfortable occasion for all the members of the Association. The Association feels deeply indebted to this local committee and to Archbishop Cushing for their gracious hospitality.

The highlight of the meeting was the public session on Wednesday evening, at which about 600 of the laity were present. Father Vosté communicated the greetings and blessing of our Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, to the Association; and Archbishop Cushing read a telegram of congratulation and blessing that had just been received from the Holy Father. The sermon on this occasion was preached by the Very Rev. Ignatius Smith, O.P., Dean of the School of Philosophy at the Catholic University of America. The eloquent preacher outlined the program of Catholic living and then showed how all the elements in this program have their foundation and support in Holy Scripture. The theme of Father Smith's sermon was, "The Bible and Catholic Living". Archbishop Cushing appealed for a greater use of the Bible by the laity. He urged that all of us should find in Sacred Scripture a ready means for the solution of the problems of the day and a great aid to personal sanctity. He urged that in addition to speaking to God, as we do in prayer, we should often let God speak to us, as He does in Holy Scripture. Father Stapleton read a message which Father Vosté had brought with him from Eugene, Cardinal Tisserant, president of the Pontifical Biblical Commission. Cardinal Tisserant congratulated the Catholic Biblical Association for the splendid work that the organization has been carrying on, and singled out for special commendation the publication of the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* and the inauguration of the Biblical Summer School. Archbishop Cushing concluded this public meeting with Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

On the third day of the meeting the Association was honored by the presence of the Most Rev. Matthew Brady, D.D., Bishop of Manchester,

at both the morning and afternoon sessions. Bishop Brady represented the Episcopal Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

During the morning session the Very Rev. Thomas Plassmann, O.F.M., who had just returned from a visitation of the Franciscan communities in Germany, addressed the members. Father Plassmann mentioned that in many personal interviews with soldiers who had been engaged in the recent conflict he had been told of the strength and consolation that these men had found in the reading of Holy Scripture. The Very Rev. Charles Callan, O.P., had prepared a paper on "The Bible in the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas," which he was to read at this session. Father Callan explained that his physical indisposition would scarcely warrant the exertion involved in reading the paper, and that the Rev. John McHugh, O.P., would read the paper in his stead. In the course of the lecture it was shown that the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas is based on the data of revelation contained in Holy Scripture, and that the Summa contains an exact and literal interpretation of all the essential passages in the Bible.

The final session of the biblical meeting was the business session on Thursday afternoon. The Rev. Joseph Lilly, C.M., presented his report as the General Secretary of the Association. Father Lilly informed the members that Father Vosté would remain in this country till October 10th, and that by that time he would have visited and lectured at more than 20 major seminaries throughout the country. Father Lilly suggested that Cardinal Tisserant be made an honorary member and patron of the Association; and this suggestion was received with unanimous approval by the members. Father Lilly also presented the report of the *Committee on Credentials*. Acting on this committee's approval and recommendation, the members present received the following into the Association as active members: the Rev. Frs. Alphonsus Benson, M.S.S.S.T.; Leonard Cassell, O.S.B.; Thomas Collins, O.P.; Henri Cormier, C.J.M.; Joseph K. Downing; Edwin Favier, O.F.M. Cap.; Henri Fortin, S.S.S.; Geron Fournelle, O.F.M.; Jordan Goecke, O.F.M. Conv.; Paul Lacouline; Andre Legault, C.S.C.; Ernest Lussier, S.S.S.; Herbert Merzbach, S.M.; Robert Michaud; John Moore, S.M.; Roland Murphy, O. Carm.; James Ryan; Robert Krumholtz.

The financial report was read by the Rev. John E. Steinmueller, Treasurer of the Association. The Rev. Michael Gruenthaner, S.J., Editor in Chief of the *Quarterly*, thanked all those who had contributed to the preparation of the Association's periodical during the preceding year, and urged the members to contribute articles in the future. The members present approved the motion of the Rev. Francis Crump, O.M.I., that the Associate Members of the Association be invited to the general meetings. Father Crump explained that no amendment to the constitution would be necessary for the Associate Members to participate in the meetings.

The report of the *Committee on the Diffusion of Biblical Knowledge* was

read by the Rev. Conrad Louis, O.S.B., Father Louis paid a brief tribute to the late lamented Father Cyril Gaul, O.S.B. recalling the prodigious amount of work that Father Gaul had done to help carry out the objective of the Association, which is to make America Bible-conscious. Father Louis reported that a questionnaire sent out to religion teachers in Catholic high-schools and colleges showed that the teaching of Sacred Scripture is being neglected in many of our schools and that many of the religion teachers have not been adequately prepared for the teaching of the Bible. Father Louis generously offered to continue the direction of the inter-seminary essay contest, and this offer was gratefully accepted by the members. Father Louis proposed that the theme of the contest this year be "Personalities of the New Testament."

The Rev. Walter Duffy, O.F.M.Conv., read the report of the *Committee on the Summer Biblical Institute*. The other members of this committee, which planned the Summer School and, together with the Rev. James McGlinchey, C.M., took care of the arrangements at Niagara University, were the Rev. Matthew Stapleton and the Rev. Conrad Louis, O.S.B. The report showed that the first Biblical Summer School had been a huge success. 67 auditors attended the lectures. The faculty of the school was composed of: the Very Rev. James M. Vosté, O.P.; the Rev. Michael J. Gruenthaner, S.J.; the Rev. John J. Collins, S.J.; the Rev. Patrick Skehan; and Dr. William Albright. A questionnaire distributed among those attending the lectures at Niagara showed a unanimous approval of the Biblical Summer School idea. In the light of the answers to the questionnaire, the committee proposed that the Association sponsor the summer school again next year and, further, that a committee be appointed to consider the advisability of establishing a second summer school, of one week duration, for teachers of religion in high schools and colleges. These suggestions were unanimously approved.

Father Lilly suggested that a committee be appointed to consider the feasibility of translating into English outstanding Scripture books in foreign languages. Father Stapleton suggested that a committee be appointed to consider the advisability of the Association's becoming a member of the Association of Learned Societies. Both of these suggestions were approved. The Rev. Louis Hartmann, C.S.S.R., presented a list of candidates recommended by the *Committee of Nominations* as officers for the ensuing year. The recommendations were approved and the following officers were elected: President, Rev. Patrick Skehan; Vice-President, Rev. William Kenneally, C.M.; General Secretary, Rev. Joseph Lilly, C.M.; Assistant General Secretary, Rev. Francis Crump, O.M.I.; Treasurer, Rev. John Steinmueller; Recording Secretary, Rev. John McKenzie, S.J.

Father Stapleton announced that the Rev. Edward Cerny, S.S., and the Rev. Walter Duffy, O.F.M. Conv., had been appointed to the *Committee*

on *Nominations*; and that the Rev. Adrien-Marie Brunet, O.P., and the Rev. Thomas Kelly had been appointed to the *Membership Committee*. In his presidential address Father Stapleton reviewed the progress that the Association has made since its inception and recommended a program of greater cooperation with biblical scholars of the Oriental rites and with non-Catholic biblical scholars.

The ninth general meeting of the Association was brought to a close with Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament in the chapel of the Theology House. The Most Rev. Matthew Brady, Bishop of Manchester, was the celebrant.

List of Active Members present

Ahern, Rev. Barnabas, C.P.	Lilly, Rev. Joseph, C.M.
Barry, Rev. William, C.Ss.R.	Louis, Rev. Conrad, O.S.B.
Benson, Rev. Alphonsus, MS.Ss.T.	McAndrew, Rev. Miles, S.S.
Bierberg, Rev. Rudolph, C.P.P.S.	McConnell, Rev. John, M.M.
Brunet, Rev. Adrian, O.P.	McGlinchey, Rev. James, C.M.
Byrne, Rev. Edward,	McHugh, Rev. John, O.P.
Callan, Very Rev. Charles, O.P.	McKenzie, Rev. John L., S.J.
Cerny, Rev. Edward, S.S.	McNamara, Rev. Elmer
Coleran, Rev. James, S.J.	Magee, Rev. Joseph, S.M.
Collins, Rev. John, S.J.	Martin, Rev. Daniel, C.M.
Cotter, Rev. Anthony, S.J.	Moore, Rev. John, S.M.
Crump, Rev. Francis, O.M.I.	Murphy, Rev. Richard, O.P.
Cummins, Rev. Patrick, O.S.B.	Murray, Rev. John
De Guglielmo, Rev. Antonine, O.F.M.	Olinger, Rev. Eberhard, O.S.B.
Denzer, Rev. George	Ouellette, Rev. Lucien, C.S.V.
De Vine, Rev. Charles, C.Ss.R.	Peters, Rev. Edward, C.S.P.
Dobell, Rev. Richard	Pickar, Rev. Charles, O.S.A.
Dougherty, Rev. John	Plassmann, Very Rev. Thomas, O.F.M.
Duffy, Rev. Walter, O.F.M.Conv.	Poirier, Rev. Leander, O.F.M.
Fournelle, Rev. Geron, O.F.M.	Quigley, Rev. Owen, C.M.
Friedel, Rev. Lawrence, S.V.D.	Rehwinkel, Rev. Christopher, O.F.M.
Galus, Rev. Walter, C.R.	Rossiter, Rev. Francis
Galvin, Rev. John, S.S.	Rowan, Rev. John
Goecke, Rev. Jordan, O.F.M.Conv.	Skehan, Rev. Patrick
Gruenthaner, Rev. Michael, S.J.	Sloane, Rev. Charles
Guyot, Rev. Gilmore, C.M.	Stapleton, Rev. Matthew
Halas, Rev. Roman, O.F.M.	Steinmueller, Rev. John
Hanley, Rev. John	Stenz, Rev. John
Hartdegen, Rev. Stephen, O.F.M.	Taggart, Rev. Sylvester, C.M.
Heupler, Rev. Charles, O.F.M.Cap.	Temple, Rev. Patrick
Kelly, Rev. Thomas	Trepanier, Rev. Benoit
Kenneally, Rev. William, C.M.	Unger, Rev. Dominic, O.F.M.Cap.
Lambert, Rev. James, S.M.	Zens, Rev. Claude
Le Houllier, Very Rev. Alban, O.M.I.	