

## BIBLICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL NEWS

### THE FIFTEENTH GENERAL MEETING OF THE CATHOLIC BIBLICAL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

The Fifteenth General Meeting of the Association was held under the patronage of His Excellency, the Most Rev. Martin D. McNamara, D.D., Bishop of Joliet, Illinois, at St. Procopius Abbey, Lisle, Illinois. The Right Reverend Ambrose Ondrat, O.S.B., Abbot of St. Procopius, was host to the meeting. After Mass offered by Bishop McNamara and a cordial message of welcome from His Excellency, the first session was called to order at 10:00 A.M., August 26, by the President, Very Rev. John E. Steinmueller, Consultor to the Pontifical Biblical Commission. In his Presidential Address Father Steinmueller opened with a brief reference to the audience granted on April 11 of this year to the Society for Old Testament Study (Cf. *CBQ*, 14, 255-6) and recalled that most of the members of the Society are members of the Church of England:

"There may be some indeed who would shrink at such close collaboration with scholars outside the fold of our faith and would prefer to have our Scriptural scholars as biblical isolationists in all departments of scholarly research. Little do they realize, know and appreciate—as the Holy See does—the complexity and vastness of modern biblical science, which through mutual collaboration and friendly discussion facilitates the acquisition of truths and probable opinions in many fields outside the domain of the divinely revealed faith and morals contained in our sacred Catholic religion. The god-given talents of mankind as well as the native genius or scholarly fruits of all nationalities must be pooled and utilized for the promotion of the glory of God and the salvation of mankind. Thus through the natural and basic religious truths commonly held we may reasonably hope that those outside the fold may accept, through the grace of God, all the truths contained in that stream of living tradition which leads straight to Christ through the Apostles to the present day. . . .

"It is noteworthy that throughout the Western World congresses, the members of which are international scholars from different nationalities and creeds, are periodically held and discuss important cultural, archeological, philological and historical problems that are directly related to Holy Writ. Does it not seem paradoxical or even enigmatic that the Bible which once sharply divided the Jew and the early Christian on their interpretation of the Messianic passages of the OT and which in the sixteenth century separated the Catholic from the Lutheran on the basis of the authentic against the private interpretation of the Bible, should now be the common meeting ground for international scholarship? . . . Perhaps in the Providence of God it will be the Bible, God's written message to all mankind, that will reunite divided Christianity and even help to revivify, spiritualize and personalize benumbed Christianity. Perhaps it will be even the Bible that will bring Judaism into the true fold to recognize Jesus Christ as its Messiah."

Father Steinmueller then recalled the part which the Association has played in this Apostolate, insisting that though "our youthful activity may not be fully mature compared to our European and Palestinian confreres, yet it is somewhat beyond the purely catechetical stage, in which many Catholic European scholars are still fond of classifying us." As projects for the future the President made the following proposals:

"There is another thought that comes to my mind; namely, the members of the Association should be able to make use of a good Biblical library. All of us are aware of the fact that the individual professors of Sacred Scripture and seminary libraries are limited in their capacities and contents of Biblical literature. Perhaps our Association could make some sort of financial arrangement with the Catholic University, so that it would be the cultural center of Biblical literature with valuable ancient and modern books, which could be utilized by the members of the Association for their scholarly and devotional studies.

"There is much left that each and everyone of us could consider as his private enterprise. The Italian Biblical Society was organized less than ten years ago and yet they have published many commentaries to the Bible. However, during the past fifteen years hardly any scientific commentaries to the individual books of the Bible have appeared in the United States. Besides, the Biblical pamphlet field is in a sad and unorganized state, and it is very difficult to collect this popular and devotional literature to meet the universal demand. Many of these pamphlets are by good, pious priests but without a solid Biblical background. A well organized committee could study the universal needs and satisfy the popular demand. Then too, a special Society of St. Jerome as in Europe as a guide for devotional reading and the diffusion of the Bible may be of great value in the United States.

"Although in the fifteen years of our existence the Association has done a tremendous and praiseworthy task, yet there is much left to be done by the active members. We are reminded on this occasion of the words of our Divine Saviour: 'Lift up your eyes and behold that the fields are already white for the harvest' (Jn 4, 25), and 'The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few' (Mt 9, 37)."

The first paper was read by Rev. Patrick Cummins, O.S.B., on "Supreme Court, Natural and Supernatural." Drawing an analogy from the variable interpretations of the United States Constitution by the Supreme Court, Fr. Cummins argued that Christ's indestructible Church, based on Tradition and Scripture as her fundamental constitution, must be endowed with a Supreme Court that is infallible. The analogy was suggested by James M. O'Neill's two books, *Religion and Education under the Constitution*, and *Catholicism and American Freedom*. The rest of the morning session and part of the afternoon session was spent in a discussion of the problems of *CBQ*. The question of publishing more popular articles for the benefit of our associate members and general readers was raised. It was decided to publish solid articles of a more popular nature as well as purely scientific studies until such time as the Association finds it possible to publish a popular biblical magazine.

The afternoon session opened with an interesting and informative paper on "The Slavonic Version of the Bible," by Rev. Vladimir Vancik. "The Hebrew Attitude toward Mythological Polytheism," reprinted in this issue of *CBQ*, by Rev. John L. McKenzie, S.J., was the second paper. During the discussion which followed this paper Msgr. E. Florit, of the Lateran University in Rome, and special guest to the meeting, spoke in Latin on the unique fact of monotheism among the Israelites.

The final paper of the Tuesday afternoon session evoked lively debate. In "An Irenic Approach to Gn 3, 15," Rev. William T. Barry C.S.S.R., submitted that the text does not speak directly and literally of Mary's triumph over Satan, but attributes it to Eve, who is considered in the text as living on in Mary by reason of the fact that Mary is her daughter and therefore her flesh and blood. This interpretation would seem to satisfy the demands of both exegetes and theologians, in so far as it would maintain the identity of the woman with Eve, while at the same time holding that it is Mary's victory to which the text directly and properly refers.

Wednesday, August 27, at 9:00 A.M., a Solemn Requiem Mass for the Rev. Joseph Lilly, C.M., was celebrated by Rev. Louis Hartman, C.S.S.R., General Secretary of the Association. At 10:00 the third session was called to order by the Rev. President. The General Secretary then read the letter, printed at the beginning of this issue, from His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, to Bishop Edwin V. O'Hara.

The constitutional assembly followed. A revision of the constitution, drafted by a special committee composed of the Very Rev. John Steinmueller, Msgr. Matthew Stapleton, and Rev. Louis Hartman, was read and discussed section by section for the remainder of the morning session.

Before returning to the constitution in the afternoon, the business meeting was held, except for the election of new officers. Both the treasurer's and general secretary's reports were accepted as read. The committee on credentials proposed the following candidates for election to active membership, who were voted in unanimously: Revs. Callaghan Burke, C.S.S.R., Joseph De Vault, S.J., Peter Ellis, C.S.S.R., John J. Fernan, S.J., Norbert Geis, C.M., Isidore Masoulf, O.F.M.Cap., John J. Mahoney, O.P., Francis McCool, S.J., Marcian Strange, O.S.B., Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P., Vladimir Vancik, Bruce Vawter, C.M., John Whealon.

The reports of the committees on the OT translation and on visual aids followed. Under new business a resolution was passed to have an annual Mass on the occasion of the general meeting for deceased members and benefactors. The suggestion of the editorial board that the name of *CBQ* be changed was approved by the assembly. Members were requested to offer suggestions to the editor, who will submit them for selection at the next general meeting. A resolution of thanks to Rev. Michael Gruenthaner, S.J., for his long and excellent service as editor of *CBQ* was passed with applause. The assembly approved the motion that the Association publish a series of biblical pamphlets and empowered the President to appoint an editor. At this point the meeting recessed

for a few minutes to enable the photographer to take the official picture of the group attending the meeting.

Upon resumption the meeting heard a report from Rev. Thomas Kelly on his participation, at the request of the General Secretary, in a conference held in Cleveland last April, at which plans were made to form an over-all council of learned Catholic societies. The Association voted to send an official delegate to the next conference of this council.

The Rev. Chairman then re-convened the constitutional assembly, and the proposed draft was discussed during the remainder of the afternoon and evening sessions. A delightful respite from this trying labor was afforded by a picnic lunch served on the spacious grounds of St. Procopius Abbey. The evening session re-convened at 8:00 and concluded its work at 10:00.

The sixth and last session of the general meeting opened at 9:00 A.M. on Thursday, August 28. The Rev. Chairman read a congratulatory telegram from the Washington Knights of Columbus.

In his paper, "The Genus *Litterarium* of Gn 1-11," indicated by the Biblical Commission as a still unsolved problem, Rev. Roderick A. F. MacKenzie, S.J., treated the following points: 1) The question of *provenance* of the materials used in these chapters: direct revelation, "primitive tradition," or pre-Abrahamic, non-Israelite traditions; 2) The intention of the hagiographer, the discussion being aided by a comparison of Ez 28 with Gn 2-3; 3) An attempt to define the *genus litterarium* (suggested name, "religious prehistory") and to show in what sense it is historic, in what sense non-historic.

Shortage of time curtailed the lengthy discussion which this paper provoked. The editor of *CBQ* promised to publish the paper in the January issue and asked that the discussion be continued by letters and comments that could be published in subsequent issues.

Afterwards, Rev. Louis Hartman explained in a few words the contents and purpose of the paper, "The CCD Translation of the Book of Job," which Rev. Patrick Skehan had planned to read. Father Skehan was unable to attend the meeting because of illness.

At this point the constitutional assembly re-convened. The motion to suspend the present constitution was passed. Before adopting the proposed constitution a few minor changes were made, and resolutions were passed enabling the committee on nominations to nominate and the assembly to elect officials. Thereupon the new draft of the constitution was adopted by unanimous vote, to be in force until the first business session of the next general meeting.

The following officers were then elected: Rev. Joseph Considine, O.P., *President*; Rev. Barnabas Ahern, C.P., *Vice-President*; Rev. Louis Hartman, C.S.S.R., *Executive Secretary*; Rev. Francis Crump, O.M.I., *Treasurer*; Rev. Charles O'C. Sloane, *Chairman of the Board of Trustees*; *Nominating Committee*: Revs. Lucien Ouellette, C.S.V.,<sup>1</sup> John McEvoy, S.J.,<sup>2</sup> Thomas Kelly,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To serve for one year.

<sup>2</sup> To serve for two years.

<sup>3</sup> To serve for three years.

Thomas A. Collins, O.P.;<sup>4</sup> *Credential Committee*: Revs. Ernest Lussier, S.S.S., and Victor Donovan, C.P.; *Editorial Board*: Revs. Edward Siegman, C.P.P.S., John McKenzie, S.J., Francis Rossiter, Roland Murphy, O.Carm., Alan Smith, O.P., Bernard LeFrois, S.V.D., Roderick MacKenzie, S.J., Charles Heupler, O.F.M.Cap.; *Consultors*: Revs. William Barry, C.S.S.R.,<sup>1</sup> and Alphonsus Benson, M.S.Ss.T.<sup>2</sup>

Finally the Executive Board announced its decision to make Msgr. Florit an honorary life member of CBA, and the distinguished prelate replied with a few final words of appreciation. The meeting adjourned at 10:40 A.M. The following active members were present:

Ahern, Barnabas Mary, C.P.	McGough, Columban, O.C.D.
Balducelli, Roger, O.S.F.S.	McGrath, Brendan, O.S.B.
Barry, William, C.S.S.R.	McKenzie, John, S.J.
Benson, Alphonsus, M.S.Ss.T.	MacKenzie, Roderick, S.J.
Brunet, Achille, S.J.	Magyar, Joseph
Bushinski, Leonard, C.S.Sp.	Mahoney, John J., O.P.
Ceroke, Christian, O. Carm.	Maly, Eugene
Cerny, Edward, S.S.	Martin, Daniel, C.M.
Collins, Thomas, O.P.	Mercurio, Roger, C.P.
Considine, Joseph, O.P.	Most, William G.
Crowley, Edward, C.S.S.R.	Murphy, Richard, O.P.
Crump, Francis, O.M.I.	Murphy, Roland, O. Carm.
Cummins, Patrick, O.S.B.	Murray, John J., C.M.
Dannemiller, Lawrence	O'Brien, Marcus
De Vault, Joseph, S.J.	O'Connell, John
Denzer, George A.	O'Donnell, Joseph
Donovan, Victor, C.P.	Ouellette, Lucien, C.S.V.
Ellis, Peter, C.S.S.R.	Pagano, Sebastian, O.M.I.
Grassi, Joseph, M.M.	Schneider, Bernardine, O.F.M.
Griffin, James, S.J.	Schoenberg, Martin, O.S.C.
Hartdegan, Stephen, O.F.M.	Schroeder, Francis, S.S.J.
Hartman, Louis, C.S.S.R.	Siebeneck, Robert, C.P.P.S.
Heupler, Charles, O.F.M.Cap.	Siegman, Edward, C.P.P.S.
Hodous, Edward, S.J.	Sloane, Charles O'Connor
Jensen, John A., M.M.	Smith, Alan, O.P.
Kelly, Thomas J.	Stapleton, Matthew
Krumholtz, Robert H.	Steinmueller, John E.
Louis, Conrad, O.S.B.	Stuhmueller, Carroll, C.P.
Lussier, Ernest, S.S.S.	Unger, Dominic, O.F.M.Cap.
McConnell, John, M.M.	Vancik, Vladimir
McCool, Francis, S.J.	Vawter, Bruce, C.M.
McEvoy, John A., S.J.	Whealon, John

ROGER MERCURIO, C.P.  
*Recording Secretary*

<sup>4</sup> To serve for four years.