

## **BIBLICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL NEWS**

### **REPORT OF THE EIGHTEENTH GENERAL MEETING OF THE CATHOLIC BIBLICAL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**

**Providence College, Providence, Rhode Island**

His Excellency, the Most Reverend Russell J. McVinney, D.D., Bishop of Providence, formally opened the meeting with Mass at 9:00, Tuesday morning, August 23. Several members of the Association served as officers of the Mass. Immediately at the end of the Mass His Excellency extended his welcome to all the members attending and promised his prayers for the success of the meeting. Other commitments, however, made it impossible for him to stay for the day's sessions.

At 10:00 the first morning session got under way. The Rev. Thomas Aquinas Collins, O.P., vice-president of the Association, welcomed the members to Providence College in the names of the Very Rev. Terence S. McDermott, O.P., Provincial of St. Joseph's Province, and the Very Rev. Robert J. Slavin, O.P., President of the College, neither of whom could be present. After reading a telegram from the Very Rev. Daniel W. Martin, C.M., President of the Association, expressing profound regrets over his inability to attend, Fr. Collins read the presidential address, which Fr. Martin had forwarded. After a brief summary of the scholarly activities of CBA, Fr. Martin made a plea for further efforts by CBA members toward meeting the need for popular works on things biblical. The text of this part of the address follows.

#### **Presidential Address**

The Association has also made a beginning in the work of promoting a greater love of the Scriptures among the faithful. But here it seems—and I advance this merely as an opinion that is subject to correction—it seems to me that the work has been slow and meager in view of the vast need there is of spreading the knowledge and love of the Scriptures among the faithful. A survey of Catholic college curricula will show that there are few, very few, courses offered that have the Scriptures as their basis and objective. Even a cursory glance through the popular manuals of religion that are used in our secondary schools would startle most of us, I think. In their treatment of the OT, almost all the authors present interpretations that have been discredited for over fifty years. They not only present these interpretations; they impose them under the guise of Catholic truth. We can give the laity and religious a list of titles of popular works on the NT. But it is a list and no more, for most of the works have been out of print for years.

The work of popularization of the scholarship of our colleagues here and abroad is a field that is practically untouched. And yet it is a field that can be cultivated with relative ease and with the most gratifying results to the laborer.

The work of research demands not only specialized training and freedom from external distraction, but also an abundance of time. I am sure that there are many members of the Association, otherwise equipped for scholarly research, who have not this abundance of time. Yet they have such a store of habitual knowledge of the Scriptures that they could do a work of popularization largely from this habitual knowledge, with a minimum of research. The most laborious part of the work will be the co-ordination of knowledge they now have, and the expression of ideas with clarity and simplicity that is adapted to the needs of the faithful. But this labor itself is a most rewarding effort, since it will both stimulate the teacher's interest in his subject and will aid remarkably in the presentation of his matter in the classroom.

Mere brevity in a popular work is not always a recommendation. If I might be pardoned in using an example that is close to home, I would point to the Association's one-volume commentary on the NT. Its scholarship is sound and has received deserved recognition. The more I have reference to it, the more impressed I am at the amazing amount of erudition that is condensed within its narrow compass. But its brevity is such that it requires a rather complete explanation to become really useful. A popular work, furthermore, should not seek to startle the uninitiated by opinions which are not only novel but also unacceptable to the faithful. It should, rather, present sound and accepted exegesis in language that is simple, direct, and as vivid as possible. Probable explanations surely ought not to be presented as certain merely for the sake of simplicity; but simplicity should limit the number of explanations, and if possible should set forth only one sound explanation while merely indicating the existence of others. Finally, the presentation should be primarily religious. By this, I mean that its end should be not merely to satisfy curiosity, but to stimulate the faithful to a greater practice of virtue through the truths of faith presented in the Scriptures. This, according to our present Holy Father, should be the end of the seminary course; surely no less should be expected of a work intended for the laity and religious.

A most important problem that faces any author of a popular work on Scripture is that of finding a publisher. Perhaps the difficulty is no greater in this field than in any other; but I think that it is. It has even led us to informal discussions at these meetings regarding the advisability of seeking or providing subsidies from the Association. But these should not be necessary. The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in the several dioceses will usually welcome popular works on Scripture that can be used for study clubs and religion classes. And the membership of this Association can do much to create an interest in popular Scriptural works and thus to encourage Catholic publishers to welcome them. Catholic publishers are sensitive to sales, as they must be. And sales are affected by reviews and estimates of books, whether these be given privately, in the classroom, or in some publication. I do not suggest that shoddy material be palmed off on an unsuspecting public out of a false sense of loyalty. But we will all agree that not only author and publisher

but also the Church itself suffers if a reviewer uses a popular work as a spring-board for propounding pet theories, or if he passes judgment on a work without reference to the audience which the author has in mind. If a book is popular, its special contribution will be its presentation of familiar matter for a specific audience in terms that are intelligible to that audience and are true to the matter presented. If our reviews and appraisals of books are made in a spirit of sympathetic and zealous understanding, they will go a long way to provide that reading public that any publisher must have in order to make his venture a reasonable risk.

In all this, I may seem to be presenting myself to this learned body as an apologist of mediocrity. To this, I would answer in one of the favorite maxims of Saint Vincent de Paul: "The better is the enemy of the good." Would that all of us were in a position to contribute to the total of Biblical scholarship. But since we are not in this position, then let us not sit by like the idlers in the market-place, but let us rather contribute what we can in the circumstances in which we have to work. And let us be assured that we will deserve well of the Church through these labors of popular exposition of the Scriptures, as our Holy Father assures us in the closing paragraphs of his "Divino Afflante Spiritu":

Let the present-day commentators of the Sacred Scripture emulate, according to their capacity, what those illustrious interpreters of past ages accomplished with such great fruit; so that, as in the past, the Church may have at her disposal learned doctors for the expounding of the Divine Letters; and, through their assiduous labors, the faithful may comprehend all the splendor, stimulating language, and joy contained in the Holy Scriptures. And in this very arduous and important office let them have "for their comfort the Holy Books," and be mindful of the promised reward: since "they that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that instruct many unto justice, as stars for all eternity."

#### **Papers Read Tuesday**

Two papers were scheduled for the morning session. Rev. Christian P. Ceroke, O.Carm., in a very extensive and carefully thought-out study, "Jesus and Mary at Cana: Separation or Association?" presented arguments from the immediate context to show that Jn 2,1-11 expresses Mary's association with Christ, not temporary separation. A lively discussion followed, which raised the questions of Jn's method and theological preoccupation, the relevance of Gn 3,15 in determining the meaning of "hour" and "woman," and the extent of Mary's union with Jesus over and above the physical bond of motherhood.

Rev. Joseph E. Lussier, S.S.S., in "The Word *'ādām* in the First Chapters of Genesis," listed examples of the varying translations given this word in Gn 1-5. Presupposing correction of the vowel in 2,20; 3,17.21, on the basis of the LXX, Fr. Lussier advanced the opinion that *'ādām* should be translated as a common noun (collective or individual sense) in every instance up to Gn 4,25.

Tuesday afternoon His Excellency, Archbishop Edwin V. O'Hara arrived in Providence. He presided at the afternoon session, stayed for supper, and

gave a short but encouraging talk after the meal. He expressed his gratitude for the dedication of the April issue of the QUARTERLY to him. Besides adding a plea that the deceased members of the Society be remembered in prayer, he emphasized the importance and influence of the annual celebration of Bible Week and asked all the Fathers to continue even in the face of seeming disinterest to foster this work.

Rev. William J. Moran, S.J., in the first talk of the Tuesday afternoon session discussed the "Amarna Evidence for the So-Called *Hireq Compaginis* of Biblical Hebrew." His study, he pointed out, is as yet incomplete, and, therefore, no definitive conclusion could be reached. He felt, however, that the Amarna literature did throw further light on those forms of biblical Hebrew, so designated by the grammarians.

The paper "Egyptological Remarks on the Joseph Story in Genesis," read by Rev. Joseph M. A. Janssen, gathered together in a very interesting fashion some of the information now provided by the Egyptologists which can help us to a more complete understanding of the biblical text.

Rev. A. Jamme, W.F., read a paper entitled, "South Arabia and Ancient Palestine." After introducing his remarks with a warning about the scanty evidence available at this time, he went on, following a chronological order, to present his arguments for holding to an ancient Assyrian origin for these South Arabian peoples as the best explanation for the similarities in language and religion between them and the peoples to the North. Questions afterwards showed some felt these similarities could be due to later borrowings rather than to common origin.

#### Wednesday Activities

After Mass offered by Rev. Louis Hartman, C.Ss.R., for the deceased members of the Association, the morning session began at 10:00. The Rev. Eamonn O'Doherty, S.S.C., read a paper on "The Literary Problem of Judges 1,1-3,6." The members were aided in following Fr. O'Doherty's remarks, based principally on Noth's study of the text, by the mimeographed outline Fr. O'Doherty provided. Briefly he held for a double introduction and a double conclusion in our present text, but that no pre-Deuteronomistic history is necessary to explain these phenomena, only a "Deuteronomistic History" which was divided up as well as re-worked at a later date. The questions at the end of this paper attested to the interest aroused. The question was asked why the postulated earlier "Deuteronomistic History" was later divided up as the theory demanded. Fr. O'Doherty said he could see no clear reason for this division, unless, he hazarded a guess, to simplify the history contained. In answer to another question as to the evidence for regarding 1 Sm 1-12 as separated from an earlier account of the period of the Judges, Fr. O'Doherty replied that style, theological outlook, and chronological schema all point toward this conclusion along with the nature of the facts recorded in those chapters.

The other paper read at this session was by Rev. Francis McCool, S.J. Actually he limited his remarks on this occasion to two passages: Esd 9,15

and Neh 9,33 though his paper, "The 'Justification of God' in the Later Jewish Confessions" was broader in extent. The question briefly was whether it should be understood as vindicative justice or as the faithfulness of God to His promises. Fr. McCool gave his arguments from the context, translations and authorities for the latter as the correct interpretation. Among the many points brought up at the end of the paper were the difficulty of translating this interpretation into English without a paraphrase, the evidence pointing toward the other interpretation found in some passages of the Talmud, and the inconclusive evidence from the NT since both ideas are present there.

Wednesday afternoon was taken up in a bus-tour of Providence and Newport, with the Irish Columban Seminary at Bristol as terminus. There the beautiful beach tempted hardier members to a swim. The others inspected the lovely grounds. Dinner was served outdoors to the more than fifty members who took part. By 8:00 p.m. the buses were back at Providence College.

#### **Thursday: Business Meeting and Final Papers**

The business meeting was moved up to 9:00 a.m., and the afternoon session was cancelled. Rev. Louis Hartman, Executive Secretary, reported that three grants, each of \$1,000.00, had been approved by the Executive Committee: the first, requested by Msgr. Patrick W. Skehan, Director of the American School of Oriental Research at Jerusalem, toward the budget necessary to enable Professor William Morton to continue his excavations at Dhiban; the second, requested by Professor Millar Burrows, to help defray publication expenses for the projected Isaias collation in the ASOR Dead Sea Scrolls series; and the third, to the International Greek New Testament Project toward the cost of gathering the apparatus for their projected critical edition of the NT. Because of the cumulative amount of these grants, the Committee asked the members present to approve or veto the grants. They were approved by unanimous vote. Fr. Hartman then announced that the next annual meeting of CBA would be held in Buffalo, New York, in conjunction with the Tenth Annual Meeting of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, September 26-28, 1956.

In his report, Rev. Edward F. Siegman, C.P.P.S., Editor of *CBQ*, expressed his satisfaction that Rev. Alphonsus Benson, M.S.Ss.T., had volunteered to edit the Survey of Periodicals. He renewed his plea for surveyors and book reviewers, for suggestions to improve *CBQ*, for news about members, especially about publications of members.

Reports by Revs. Stephen Hartdegen, O.F.M., and Barnabas Mary Ahern, C.P., chairmen of the editorial committees for the OT and NT translations respectively, told of continued advance in the work. Fr. Hartdegen mentioned that Vol. 3 (Sapiential Books) of the OT Translation will be dedicated to Archbishop Edwin V. O'Hara in honor of his double jubilee. Fr. Ahern suggested that a letter of thanks to Rev. John F. McConnell, M.M., be sent by the Executive Secretary, for the great labor Fr. McConnell expended on the NT translation. Sickness has forced him to resign from the editorial committee.

Mother Kathryn Sullivan, R.S.C.J., chairman of the Committee on Visual Aids, reported further increase of the materials available as well as a heightened interest in materials suitable for parish lectures and high school groups.

Rev. Bruce Vawter, C.M., submitted the following names for acceptance as active members of the Association. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously passed to receive Revs. Thomas Cronin, M.M.; James J. Davis, O.P.; Warren Dicharry, C.M.; Lester J. Evett, S.J.; Francis L. Filas, S.J.; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J.; A. Jamme, W.F.; Thomas W. Leahy, S.J.; Edward M. Loveley, S.J.; Raymond Orlett, Glenmary Missioner; Francis Petru, S.J.; Stephen Rowe, O.F.M. Cap.; Howard J. Sorensen, O.M.I.; and Arnold Tkacik, O.S.B.

Rev. John Curran, S.J., read the report of the Committee on Nominations. The following were unanimously elected officers for the coming year: Rev. Thomas Aquinas Collins, O.P., *President*; Rev. Roderick A. F. Mackenzie, S.J., *Vice-President*; Rev. Louis F. Hartman, C.Ss.R., *Executive Secretary*; Rev. Francis J. Crump, O.M.I., *Treasurer*; Rev. Eugene H. Maly, *Nominating Committee* (3 years); Rev. Stephen J. Hartdegen, O.F.M., *Consultor*; Rev. Edward F. Siegman, C.P.P.S., *Editor*; Revs. Bruce Vawter, C.M., Alphonsus Benson, M.S.Ss.T., *Associate Editors* (3 years); Revs. Roderick A. F. Mackenzie, S.J., Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm., *Associate Editors* (1 year). Very Rev. Francis S. Rossiter and Rev. John L. McKenzie, S.J., had been elected Associate Editors last year for 3 years.

Rev. Patrick Cummins, O.S.B., was appointed *Consultor* for a term of two years by Archbishop O'Hara, according to the provision of the By-Law, 9.—IV,2d.

The floor was then thrown open for New Business. Rev. James A. Fischer, C.M., suggested that the Association sponsor the publication of a half-dozen pamphlets on biblical subjects. In response, a motion was passed to appoint a committee to assist Fr. Fischer in this work. Motions were passed that the Executive Secretary send congratulatory letters in the name of the Association to the Most Reverend Apostolic Delegate on the golden jubilee of his priestly ordination, and to the Rev. Michael Gruenthaner, S.J., editor of *CBQ* 1942-1951, on the fiftieth anniversary of his religious profession. A motion by Fr. Hartdegen that a Necrology of the active members of CBA be published once each year in *CBQ* was passed, as also the motion of Fr. Benson that a letter of prayerful good wishes be sent to our convalescing associate editor, Rev. John L. McKenzie, S.J. Before a ten-minute recess was called, Fr. Bruce Vawter, C.M., moved a standing vote of thanks to the Dominican Fathers of Providence College for their lavish hospitality. This motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Following the brief recess, the final three papers were read. In "The Semitic Pattern of Expressing Thought Development in Concentric Circles," Rev. Bernard J. LeFrois, S.V.D., analyzed a number of both OT and NT passages which exemplified this aspect of Semitic style. Rev. Patrick Cummins, O.S.B.,

presented reasons for preferring the second alternative in “‘Engaged’ or ‘Married’ of Mary in Lk. 1,27; 2,5; etc?” Finally, Rev. Eric E. May, O.F.M.Cap., discussed “Some Problems in the Translation of St. Matthew’s Gospel.” From the wealth and variety of material he had gathered he selected for treatment the translation of terms designating moneys, plays on words, and instances of possible paraphrase or transliteration. Unfortunately, the length of the business session and the nearness of the time scheduled for the closing banquet allowed no discussion of these papers.

The following members were present at the Providence meeting :

Ahern, Barnabas Mary, C.P.	Hill, William F., S.S.
Balducelli, Roger, O.S.F.S.	Hodous, Edward J., S.J.
Benson, Alphonsus, M.S.Ss.T.	Jamme, A., W.F.
Brown, Raymond E., S.S.	Kenneally, William J., C.M.
Brunet, Achille, S.J.	Kennedy, Mark, O.F.M.
Burke, Callaghan F., C.Ss.R.	Kernel, Theodorick J., O.F.M.
Bushinski, Leonard A., C.S.Sp.	King, Philip
Casey, William, S.J.	Krumholtz, Robert H.
Cerny, Edward A., S.S.	Kugelman, Richard, C.P.
Ceroke, Christian P., O.Carm.	LeFrois, Bernard J., S.V.D.
Collins, John J., S.J.	LeHoullier, Alban, O.M.I.
Collins, Thomas Aquinas, O.P.	Lussier, Joseph E., S.S.S.
Cordano, Virgil, O.F.M.	Mahoney, John J., O.P.
Cronin, Thomas J., M.M.	Maly, Eugene H.
Crowley, Edward J., C.Ss.R.	Mattingly, John F., S.S.
Crump, Francis J., O.M.I.	May, Eric E., O.F.M.Cap.
Cummins, Patrick, O.S.B.	Moran, William L., S.J.
Curran, John T., S.J.	Moriarty, Frederick L., S.J.
Dahood, Mitchell J., S.J.	Murphy, Richard T., O.P.
Dannemiller, Joseph L., S.S.	McCool, Francis J., S.J.
Davis, James J., O.P.	McEvoy, John A., S.J.
Donnelly, Gerard, O.S.B.	Mackenzie, Roderick A. F., S.J.
Donovan, Victor J., C.P.	O’Brien, Marcus
Dougherty, John J.	O’Connell, John P.
Dugre, Maurice A.	O’Doherty, Eamonn, S.S.C.
Ellis, Peter F., C.Ss.R.	O’Donnell, Joseph
Fischer, James A., C.M.	Peters, Edward H., C.S.P.
Fitzmyer, Joseph A., S.J.	Pickar, Charles H., O.S.A.
Flanagan, Neal, O.S.M.	Pierce, Justin A., S.D.S.
Griffin, James T., S.J.	Plassman, Thomas B., O.F.M.
Grispino, Joseph A., S.M.	Rossiter, Francis S.
Hartdegen, Stephen J., O.F.M.	Schoenberg, Martin W., O.S.C.
Hartman, Louis F., C.Ss.R.	Siebeneck, Robert T., C.P.P.S.
Heidt, William G., O.S.B.	Siegman, Edward F., C.P.P.S.
Heupler, Charles G., O.F.M.Cap.	Sloane, Charles O’Conor

Smith, Alan, O.P.

Sorensen, A. J., O.M.I.

Stanley, David M., S.J.

Steinmueller, John

Stuhlmueller, Carroll, C.P.

Sullivan, Mother Kathryn, R.S.C.J.

Temple, Patrick J.

Vawter, Bruce F., C.M.

Whealon, John F.

JOHN F. MATTINGLY, S.S., *Recording Secretary*