

Scripture

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EDITORIAL

It may be doubted whether there has ever been such a flood of biblical publications as there is at the present day, and this applies particularly to the Old Testament. In all this activity, Catholics are now taking a full part—whether it be Bible translation, exegesis, history, philology or associated sciences. One cannot be sufficiently grateful for the Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XII, *Divino afflante Spiritu*, on Biblical studies, which since 1943, the year of its publication, has been so powerful a spur and encouragement to further research and investigation. To speak of translations first, one should mention the issue of Vol. I (*Genesis to Ruth*) of *The Holy Bible translated from the original Languages with critical use of all the Sources*, by members of the Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1952. A review of this volume will shortly appear in these pages. Meanwhile we extend a hearty welcome to the undertaking, though realising that an appreciable time must elapse before the whole work is complete. This is of course only one of several Bible translations being undertaken in various languages by Catholics, e.g. *La Sainte Bible de Jérusalem*, which continues to appear in fascicles at a great rate, Herder's *Bibelkommentar* and *La Sacra Bibbia*, edited by S. Garofalo.

Of commentaries on the Bible there is a continuous stream. Our own *Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* may now take its place beside Continental works already familiar, such as the *Etudes bibliques*, the *Bonner Bibel* and Garofalo's *Sacra Bibbia*—works which until recently tended to emphasise the absence of anything comparable by Catholics in the English language. Certainly the reception accorded to our *Commentary* suggests that it was urgently needed and equally, that we cannot rest there but must follow it up with other publications. In this country a second printing is already in hand, and in the United States the American edition has now appeared.

A considerable number of devotional works on the Bible continue to appear both in French (France and Belgium) and in German (Germany, Austria and Switzerland)—frequently in connexion with the Church's Liturgy. Many of these publications are of high quality—some few tend to stray too far from the path of sober exegesis, but

these are not significant. In general, such publications show that the purpose of the Bible as a means of spiritual nourishment is not being overlooked in the pursuit of Biblical knowledge—while on the other hand one should be careful not to allow one's spiritual interpretation to be separated from the literal sense of Scripture, on which see J. Coppens, *Vom Christlichen Verständnis des Alten Testaments*, Bruges and Paris 1952.

In this country it must be admitted that though a number of worthwhile publications on this subject have been published, in general it attracts less attention than it would seem to require. It is true of course that we possess a great and abundant literature containing spiritual doctrine based on or drawn directly from the Bible, but more new publications are called for—if only to combine the results of the latest Biblical research with such traditional teaching. Here is a matter which will repay careful attention by Catholics.

Obituary. With great regret we record the death of Fr Edmund Power, S.J., who during his last years resided at the Jesuit house of Milltown Park, Dublin. Father Power was for a great many years professor at the Biblical Institute, Rome, where he was a familiar and well-loved friend to generations of students. When he retired from this active life he obviously felt the contrast acutely and must have found it difficult to accustom himself to the comparative leisure of retirement. Accordingly when he was invited in 1944 to contribute to the *Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* he accepted with alacrity, and indeed appeared quite tireless in all he undertook. Article after article came from his pen, and he was always ready to step into the breach and write a contribution if someone else fell out. It was noticeable that all the work he produced was of a high standard of scholarship, as one would expect, the ripe fruit of a lifetime of study and teaching, closely reasoned, economical in words and bearing no sign of that deterioration that sometimes comes with age. In fact, it may be said that his work for the *Commentary* gave him a new lease of life. Happily he was spared not only to do all the work he was invited to undertake but also to see the fruit of his labours actually in print, and being welcomed everywhere. He died on 3 August 1953. May he rest in peace.

Annual General Meeting. The Catholic Biblical Association will hold its annual general meeting as usual at the Newman Centre, 31 Portman Square, London W1, on Thursday, 7 January 1954 at 6 p.m. The business meeting should not take longer than about twenty minutes and it will be followed by a paper given by the Rev. R. C. Fuller, D.D., L.S.S., on *The Trial of Our Lord*.