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Veritas Scripturae

The Bulletin of the St. Jerome Biblical Guild

A publication that focuses upon the doctrines
of Biblical inspiration and inerrancy —
via Tradition and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

“Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth” (Jn 17:17)



From the Director... Has this Happened to You?

The Catholic inerrantist, on occasion, may be irrationally labeled a ‘Fundamentalist.’ Such a charge may even come from a fellow Catholic, who considers the alleged Fundamentalist a more pathetic creature than the leper described in Leviticus 13:1-3. Granted, the inerrantist may not be forced to cry out “unclean” in public, but he must, nonetheless, respond to the accusation.

For starters: there is no such thing as ‘Catholic’ Fundamentalism. Fundamentalism is a Protestant phenomenon; a Catholic is simply orthodox or heterodox. The Fundamentalist tag, affixed to a Catholic, is a ploy. Such labeling is a species of name calling; an old political trick designed to control, manipulate, and back one into a defensive position. The inerrantist must expose and counter this gimmick.

Ask the accuser to actually explain the movement called Fundamentalism. See if he can cite pertinent dates, name significant characters, identify major institutions, discuss the influential literature, or identify the core beliefs of the movement. Such questions posed to the interlocutor may bring the charge (and conversation) to a screeching halt. If not, then highlight five sharp differences between Catholics and Fundamentalists, numbered as follows:

#1: Catholics venerate Tradition as one of the sources or channels of Divine Revelation; Fundamentalists do not.

#2: Catholics heed the Magisterium as the final interpreter of Scripture; Fundamentalists do not.

#3: Catholics acknowledge the variety of literary genres and

senses within the Bible; Fundamentalists do not.

#4: Catholics recognize 46 inspired books within the canon of the Old Testament; Fundamentalists do not.

#5: Catholics read Holy Writ substantially the same way as the Church Fathers, Doctors, and Scholastics; Fundamentalists do not.

Fundamentalists are generally decent folk. Their adherence to many key Christian truths is commendable. But Catholics and Fundamentalists differ on many essentials (#1 to #5 scratches the surface). The differences must not be ignored or watered down. Still, Fundamentalists should not be considered enemies, but treated charitably, as potential and much needed converts.

Godspeed,
Salvatore J. Ciresi

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St. Jerome (343-420) says:

“Read assiduously and learn as much as you can. Let sleep find you holding your Bible, and when your head nods let it be resting on the sacred page” (*Letter* 22.17.2; A.D. 384).

“Constantly read the Bible; in fact, have it always in your hands. Learn what you have got to teach” (*Letter* 52.7.1; A.D. 394).

“Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ” (*Commentary on Isaiah* bk. 18 prologue; A.D. 408-410).

“Love the Bible and wisdom will love you...” (*Letter* 130.20; A.D. 414).

Scripture Memorization & Exegesis: Ephesians 6:11-17

“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph 6:11-17).

This long extract from St. Paul describes the Christian living in the real world. The Apostle appears to use two images: Yahweh preparing for war

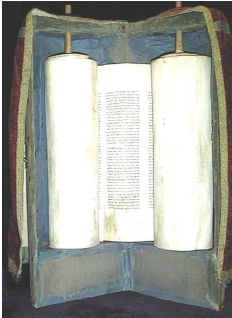
against the godless (cf. Is 11:5; 59:17), and the uniform of a Roman soldier. Both images were known to the recipients of the Ephesian letter. Below are points to ponder.

St. Paul assumes, does not argue, the realities of Satan and the fallen angels. See the terms “devil” (*diabolou*), “evil one” (*ponērou*), and the other expressions that denote the bad spirits (“principalities,” “powers,” “rulers,” “spiritual hosts of wickedness”). These realities are revealed also in Luke 10:18; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8; and 1 John 3:8.

The Apostle then names some of the instruments of spiritual warfare, given to the Church Militant by the Triune God, for repelling such nefariousness. Consider the military tools in St. Paul’s illustration. The

“breastplate” (*thōraka*) guards the torso, and is our tool of “righteousness” (*dikaioynēs*). The “shield” (*thyreon*), made of wood with a leather front that could be soaked in water to repel fiery darts, protected the entire body; our tool of “faith” (*pisteōs*). The soldier’s “helmet” (*perikephalaian*) guarded the head; our tool of “salvation” (*sōtēriou*). A “sword” (*machairan*) was employed for offense; our tool of the “Spirit” (*pneumatōs*).

The overarching theme of Ephesians 6:11-17 is grace; depicted as implements for religious combat. These graces are available, partly, from the “word of God” (*rhēma theou*). Such grace sustains the supernatural life. This should motivate us to read and study the Scriptures daily.



Inerrancy Basics: Making Distinctions

Last issue offered a variety of quotes which illuminate the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy. Another citation provides insights. Such remarks show the doctrine accords with reason and common sense.

Msgr. J. Steinmueller says, “(a) Relative to truth or inerrancy we must consider what God and the hagiographer have said. It is true that we must consider the purpose of the work and the author to understand and interpret his book correctly, but this cannot be done with the avowed purpose of limiting the extension of truth or inspiration. (b) Whatever is read in the Bible is divine. In other words, every proposition in the Scriptures contains some doctrine which enjoys divine infallible truth. The Bible, as any other book, contains judgments which are either affirmed or denied. Since God is

the principal author of the Scriptures, everything that is contained therein must be free from error. (c) It is false to teach that science or history is merely a vehicle of religious truth and consequently not free from error. This modernistic doctrine has always been condemned by the Church. It is true that God can permit error, just as He permits sin, but this can never be the case where He is the principal Author of a book. (d) Everything that the sacred writer asserts, enunciates, insinuates, must be held to be asserted, enunciated, and insinuated by the Holy Ghost. Hence, the distinction between primary or religious and secondary or profane elements in the Bible, relative to inerrancy, is false. (e) Though everything in the Bible is infallible some distinction, however, between the

religious and the profane elements in the Bible can be admitted. Since religious instruction is the primary purpose of the Bible, things pertaining to faith and morals are directly and on their own account (*propter se, ratione sui*) taught by God. All other things, which constitute, as it were, a secondary element are taught not *ex professo* or on their own account, but by reason of their nexus with religious truths. Thus the historical books of the Old Testament are to show the Divine Providence toward the chosen people and their preparation for the Messias...” (*Some Problems of the Old Testament* 27-28).

These observations fine-tune the doctrine by making necessary distinctions. Employing them will eliminate misunderstandings and caricatures.

“Everything that the sacred writer asserts, enunciates, insinuates, must be held to be asserted, enunciated, and insinuated by the Holy Ghost.”

The Church Fathers & Scripture: Tertullian and Gospel Authorship

We continue to look at the Patristic testimony to Gospel authorship. In line with earlier citations from St. Irenaeus, St. Papias, and *The Muratorian Fragment*, we meet Tertullian (A.D. 155-250).

A notable Father of the West, Tertullian likely was the first Father to write in Latin. Tragically, Tertullian fell into a number of errors: extreme rigorism and anti-clericalism, to name just two. Nonetheless, he left us several helpful treatises on Catholic doctrine.

Tertullian writes in *Against Marcion* 4.2 (A.D. 207-212): “First of all, we take the position that the evangelical Testament has as its authors Apostles, upon whom the task of promulgating the Gospel was imposed by the Lord Himself. And if there are also Apostolic men, they are not on

their own, but appear with the Apostles and after Apostles; because the preaching of disciples might be open to the suspicion of an affection of glory, if there did not accompany it the authority of the masters, which means that of Christ, for it was that which made the Apostles their masters. Of the Apostles, then, John and Matthew first introduce the faith to us, and of the Apostolic men, Luke and Mark refresh it for us.”

This work from Tertullian is his longest single tome, spread over five books. Penned against the heretical Marcion, the work is our main source for understanding his error. Two relevant points may be noted from Tertullian’s quote.

Firstly, Tertullian makes the distinction between “Apostles” such as “John and Matthew,”

and “Apostolic men,” who include “Luke and Mark.” This distinction among the two groups is recognized in Vatican II’s *Dei Verbum* 18 (1965). Such a distinction does not create a false dichotomy between the groups, as if they operated in isolation. Thus, Tertullian writes St. Luke and Mark were “not on their own” and “appear with the Apostles.” Fittingly, all four Gospel authors are mentioned within the New Testament milieu (cf. Acts 1:13; Col 4:14; 2 Tim 4:11; Phm 24; 1 Pet 5:13).

A second point from Tertullian: the harmony among the four Gospel records. He speaks of the Apostles who “introduce the faith,” and the Apostolic men who “refresh it.” This is implicit Patristic evidence of the Evangelists’ substantial agreement.



St. Thomas Aquinas & Revelation: The Pauline Authorship of Hebrews

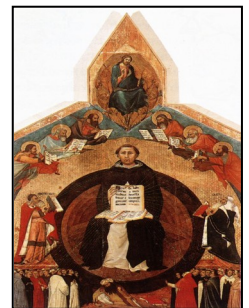
Questions about the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews circulated in the early Church; questions that remain today. Two particular concerns are the lack of a name affixed to the beginning or end of the Epistle, and its difference in style compared to other writings by St. Paul. The Angelic Doctor gives an unadorned and reasonable answer to both concerns.

The prologue to Aquinas’ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (C. Baer, trans. and ed.), addressing the omission of St. Paul’s name, says “it must be said that there is a threefold reason why he did not give his name. The first is that he was not the Apostle of the Jews but of the Gentiles, as it says in Gal. 2:8, *For He*

Who wrought in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, wrought in me also among the Gentiles, etc. And therefore he does not make mention of his apostleship in the beginning of this epistle, since he did not want to assume the duty of the apostolate, except to the Gentiles. The second is that his name was odious to the Jews since he said that the observances of the Law were not to be kept, as is clear from Acts 15:2ff. So he remains silent about his name, lest the most salvific doctrine of this epistle be rejected. The third is that he was a Jew. II Cor. 11:22: They are Hebrews: so am I. And the members of one’s household do not suffer well the excellence of one of there

own. There is no prophet without honor, except in his own country and in his own house, as is said in Mt. 13:57.”

Thomas then handles the next objection: “To the second argument it must be said that it is more elegant in style because, even if he knew every language — I Cor. 14:18: *I speak with all your tongues — nevertheless he knew Hebrew better, as it was more connatural to him, and he wrote this epistle in Hebrew. Thus, he could speak more ornately in his own native tongue than in another. Hence he says in II Cor. 11:6: For although I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge. And Luke, who was a great speaker, translated this ornateness from Hebrew into Greek” (p. 7).*



The Magisterium Speaks: *Spiritus Paraclitus* and ‘the Redactors’

Pope Benedict XV released *Spiritus Paraclitus* (On the Fifteenth Centenary of the Death of St. Jerome) in 1920. This monumental encyclical reads in one section: “What can we say of men who in expounding the very Gospels so whittle away the human trust we should repose in them as to overturn divine faith in them? They refuse to allow the things which Christ said or did have come down to us unchanged and entire through witnesses who carefully committed to writing what they themselves had seen or heard. They maintain — and particularly in their treatment of the *Fourth Gospel* — that much is due, of course, to the Evangelists — who, however, added much from their own imaginations; but much, too, is due to narratives compiled by the faithful at other periods,

the result, of course, being that the twin streams now flowing in the same channel cannot be distinguished from one another. Not thus did Jerome and Augustine and the other Doctors of the Church understand the historical trustworthiness of the Gospels...” (*Spiritus Paraclitus* III.4, italics in original).

Three observations. Firstly, both words and deeds (“the things which Christ said or did”) within the Gospel records are underscored. This emphasis is not foreign to other Magisterial texts on Scripture; an emphasis which preserves not merely Biblical events in a general sense, but their actual contents in a specific sense.

Secondly, the Pontiff confronts the critics who speak of an alleged literary embellishment to the Gospels: either by the

actual authors (“Evangelists”) or by later masses (“the faithful at other periods”). This gratuitous assertion is alive and well; modern commentaries often insist something called the ‘early faith community’ redacted the Gospels to their final form. This assertion is far removed from the reasonable belief that holds the Gospels came via three stages: Christ teaches, then the Apostles teach, and later the Apostles (Ss. Matthew and John) or Apostolic men (Ss. Mark and Luke) write. The Biblical Commission’s *Sancta Mater Ecclesia* II (1964) explains the stages.

Thirdly, the Pope defends “the historical trustworthiness of the Gospels” by an appeal to Tradition: “Jerome and Augustine and the other Doctors of the Church.”



The Pontifical Biblical Commission: The Response of 1906, Part I

On the Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch was promulgated June 27, 1906. The response encompassed four detailed questions; here is the first: “The Biblical Commission answers the following questions: 1. Authenticity — Whether the arguments amassed by critics to impugn the Mosaic authenticity of the sacred books designated by the name Pentateuch are of sufficient weight, notwithstanding the very many evidences to the contrary contained in both Testaments, taken collectively, the persistent agreement of the Jewish people, the constant tradition of the Church, and internal arguments derived from the text itself, to justify the statement that these books have not Moses for their author but have been compiled from sources for the most part pos-

terior to the time of Moses. Answer: In the negative.”

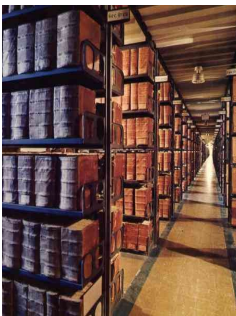
The response addresses the ‘Documentary Hypothesis’ on the alleged author/s or compiler/s of the first five books of the Old Testament (Gen-Dt). The theory is frequently tied to K. Graf (d. 1869) and J. Wellhausen (d. 1918), and continues to evolve. A summary of the theory: the Pentateuch is traced to four written codes or sources: ‘J’ or Yahwist (850 B.C.), ‘E’ or Elohist (750 B.C.), ‘D’ or Deuteronomitic (621 B.C.), and ‘P’ or Priestly (450 B.C.). Further redactions occurred by combining ‘J’ and ‘E’ into ‘R^{JE}’ (650 B.C.), ‘D’ redacted to ‘R^D’ (550 B.C.), and ‘P’ redacted to ‘R^P’ (400 B.C.). Such alleged sources were compiled at different dates (all approximations), for various historical and theological rea-

sons, eventually leading to the Pentateuch’s final form.

The Commission gives four general points for scrutinizing the theory. We offer some additional, specific material to fill out each point.

First point: the “evidences” in “both Testaments.” Many passages explicitly state Moses engaged in writing, or was connected with the Pentateuch. Look at Exodus 17:8-14; 24:1-4; 34:27-28; Numbers 33:1-2; Deuteronomy 31:7-13; Joshua 1:1-9; 8:30-32; 23:1-8; 1 Kings 2:1-3; 2 Kings 14:1-6; 2 Chronicles 25:1-4; Ezra 3:1-2; 6:16-18; Nehemiah 8:1-3; 13:1-3; Sirach 24:23; Daniel 9:3-13; Malachi 4:1-4; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-40; John 5:39-47; 7:14-24; and Romans 10:1-5.

More general points to follow.



Addressing Bible Difficulties: New Testament Replication, Part III

Alongside the Greek manuscripts, there are two other sources which assist the reconstruction of the New Testament: other translations, and Patristic quotations. Each source merits some attention.

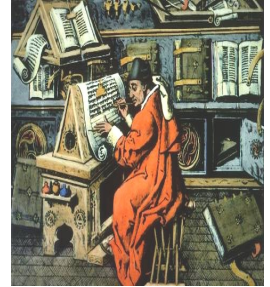
Consider the translations. J. H. Smith writes in *Understand the Bible: A Guide for Catholics*: “Wherever the Church went, the Scriptures (or at least those parts of them used liturgically in public worship) were translated into the language or languages of the people” (p. 34). Look at the period before the Council of Trent (1545-63). Standard reference books disclose that Holy Writ was put into Latin, Aramaic, Syrian and Coptic (A.D. 100-200s), Gothic (A.D. 300s), Armenian and Ethiopian (A.D. 400s), Georgian (A.D. 500s), Celtic, Anglo-Saxon,

German and French (A.D. 600s), Slavic (A.D. 800s), Arabic (A.D. 900s), Bohemian (1000s), Polish (1100s), Italian, Norwegian and Hungarian (1200s), Swedish and English (1300s), Spanish, Danish, Dutch and Welsh (1400s). Here were the common tongues of the day. Such a variety of translations, spread throughout the world, assist the replication of the New Testament.

We now come to the Patristic quotations. Consider the set by Fr. W. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*. The Scriptural index in Vol. 3 offers approximately seven pages of Bible references, taken from the main Patristic writings. Along this same line, a chart, found in Fr. C. Grannan’s *A General Introduction to the Bible* II:27, attributes general

Scripture citations to several of the early Fathers. For Gospel quotes, St. Justin Martyr has 268 assigned to him, St. Irenaeus 1038, St. Clement of Alexandria 1017, and Origen 9231. Granted, such quotations are sometimes verbatim, other times a mere allusion. Nonetheless, it has been said that if all that were extant were the Patristic writings, we could replicate the entire New Testament, minus about a dozen verses (none of those missing harms any major doctrine).

Fr. A. Alexander declares in *College Apologetics*: “Not one of the ancient Latin or Greek classics is supported by as much manuscript evidence as is the New Testament” (p. 47). The Christian can read and study his New Testament with confidence; he possesses God’s word in its integrity.



Featured Web Site: Corunum Apologetic Web Site

The ‘Corunum Apologetic Web Site’ is operated by Mr. Joseph A. Gallegos. The site states it is “dedicated to the defense of Catholic doctrines within Patristic thought. The Catholic rule of faith consists of three coordinate and complementary authorities: Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition and the teaching Church. The Church Fathers used both Scripture and Tradition to explain and defend the Catholic faith. Corunum’s mission is to present the outline of Catholic doctrines as they appear in the writings of the Church Fathers.” The site goes on to say it “does not contain a library of the writings of the Church Fathers,” but provides “testimony from the Church Fathers on various Catholic doctrines listed in chronological order.” Such testimony is priceless.

Some of the main doctrinal pages are ‘Rule of Faith,’ ‘Papacy,’ ‘Sacraments,’ ‘Trine God,’ ‘Theotokos,’ ‘Church,’ ‘Salvation,’ ‘Eschatology,’ and ‘Creation.’ Each of these pages then provides particulars of the doctrine. For example, ‘The Rule of Faith’ has sections titled ‘Scripture,’ ‘The Inspired Scripture,’ ‘Free From All Error,’ ‘Tradition,’ ‘Private Interpretation,’ ‘St. Athanasius and Sola Scriptura,’ ‘Material Sufficiency and Sola Scriptura,’ ‘St. Athanasius and Sacred Tradition,’ ‘Interpreting Scripture with the Eyes of the Church,’ ‘Sola Scriptura in the Early Church,’ and others. Going the next step, clicking the ‘Free From All Error’ link brings up quotes from Ss. Clement of Rome, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Theophilus of Antioch, Hippolytus

of Rome, Jerome, Augustine, etc.

The site offers a convenient introduction to Patrology: a ‘Fathers Primer’ page. Here, one finds useful data such as who are the Fathers, their kinds of writings, and a list of some of the main Patristic treatises. There is also a handy list of the names of the Fathers, with their respective dates.

A helpful bibliographical page is given. Sources are listed that serve as a fine starting point for building a Patristic library.

The site, unfortunately, appears to have undergone its last update in 2006. As well, some of the text layout needs some work. Still, Corunum is a valuable site.

www.cin.org/users/jgallegos



Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

J. M. J.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Mt 22:37).

"Jesus said to them, 'Is not this why you are wrong, that you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?'" (Mk 12:24).

"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He [Christ] interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Lk 24:27).

"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (Jn 20:30-31).

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The St. Jerome Biblical Guild is an educational apostolate that explains and defends Sacred Scripture; via Tradition and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. The apostolate takes its name from St. Jerome, "The Father of Biblical Studies," and labors by God's grace to accomplish the following: (1) explain the various Bible study tools and academic resources; for individual research or parish groups, (2) present studies from Scripture on specific books such as the Gospel of St. Luke, or general themes such as the Biblical roots of home-schooling, (3) promote the classic exegetical methods and insights found within Tradition; with attention to the Church Fathers and St. Thomas Aquinas, and (4) support the Magisterial doctrines of Biblical inspiration and inerrancy; the latter the main focus of the apostolate. The Guild places itself under the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary. As well, the Guild seeks the intercession of St. Jean-Marie Vianney and St. Thérèse of Lisieux for favors and protection. In all things, the apostolate seeks the greater glory of God (cf. 1 Chr 28:9; Ps 37:5; Jer 9:23-24; Jn 15:5; Col 3:17; Jas 4:13-15).

+ + +

Mr. Salvatore J. Ciresi, founder and director of the St. Jerome Biblical Guild, served two tours in the U.S. Marine Corps and now works in the aviation sector. He earned his M.A. in Theological Studies, with a Scripture concentration, from the Notre Dame Graduate School of Christendom College, where he serves on the adjunct faculty. His ecclesiastical activities include past co-host of Cross Talk, a Catholic radio program in VA; a contributor on behalf of the Arlington Diocese to the 2005 revision to the *National Directory for Catechesis*; a former board member for a private Catholic school; a past columnist for the *Arlington Catholic Herald*; and a contributor to *The Latin Mass: The Journal of Catholic Culture and Tradition*. Mr. Ciresi resides with his wife and children in VA.



Book Recommendation: *Ancient Israel*

Approaching the Holy Bible with a familiarity of its unique milieu, which spans thousands of years within two Testaments, is indispensable. True, one could pick up the Scriptures and merely read them at 'face value': this method has a time and place. But such a reading may hinder those who want to explain and defend the trustworthiness of Holy Writ. A start for grasping the setting of Divine Revelation is from Père Roland de Vaux, O.P., *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 615 pp. The text lists for \$48.

De Vaux (1903-1971) was a Biblicalist and archaeologist of international stature. He was associated with the Dominican Biblical School in Jerusalem, and directed the École Biblique from 1945 to 1965. Eerdmans, a Protestant publishing house, reprints de Vaux's classic as part of "The Biblical

Resource Series." The French original appeared in separate volumes (1958, 1960). A one volume English translation in 1961 was followed by a two volume paperback in 1965. Our brief review is the 1961 text.

In the preface we read: "The subject-matter of the book is restricted by its title to the Old Testament period, and the New Testament period is called as witness only by way of clarification or addition."

The book gives an introduction to Nomadism, followed by four main parts: Family Institutions, Civil Institutions, Military Institutions, and Religious Institutions. Among the array of material covered in the text, look at one sample in the Religious Institutions' fifth chapter; on The Priestly Office. We have 1. The name, 2. The installa-

tion of priests, 3. The priest and the sanctuary, 4. Priests and divine oracles, (a) The ephod, (b) Urim and Thummim, (c) The decreasing importance of oracles given by priests, 5. The priest as a teacher, 6. The priest and sacrifice, and 7. The priest as mediator.

The text is dated in places, but remains a stellar tome for comprehending the Old Testament epoch. The preface ends: "The institutions of the Chosen People prepare the way for, and indeed foreshadow, the institutions of the community of the elect. Everything in this sacred past matters to us, for the Word of God is a living thing, and a man is better able to hear its tones if he listens to it in the actual surroundings in which it was first given to mankind." Please pray for the repose of the soul of Fr. de Vaux.

