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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... Charging Forward

By God’s grace and kindness, *Veritas Scripturae* (VS) begins its second year of publication. Recall the plan from the first issue: VS will be a simple bulletin on Biblical inspiration and inerrancy, and a small step for further inquiry into these two doctrines. I move ahead.

VS has gained subscribers from throughout the U.S., and others from Canada, Ireland, England, Italy, the Dominican and Czech Republics, and elsewhere. Some readers are from academia. Others are from publishing circles. I am humbled to have a number from among the clergy, religious, and the seminary. These last three groups deserve our prayers on a daily basis.

Concerning the bulletin: each issue is now accessible at my website under “Writings.” The Catholic Education Center

generously hosts the PDFs. Please visit the Center at www.catholiceducationcenter.com.

Permission is granted to either forward VS to any interested persons or organizations, or photocopy and distribute for Bible study, religion class, catechist training, school, etc. Increasing the number of subscribers is fine, but not essential. What is essential is that the orthodox teaching on Divine Revelation be sustained in the Church. Confidence in the veracity of the Bible can only increase our love for the Savior, and fortify our loyalty to Holy Mother Church.

With respect to readership, I want to thank publically those who kindly sent to me new or used books to facilitate my research. I won’t solicit donations for VS; this is a free publication. However, books help

write VS, and are always put to good use. The amount is left to the reader’s generosity. If moved by actual grace to contribute a book, then please send an e-mail (place in the subject line “Book donation”).

Finally, two changes. Firstly, “The Biblical World” column has replaced “Featured Web Site.” The new column will address topics that illuminate Sacred History: geography, archaeology, political conditions, the social environment, etc. A grasp of these multifaceted subjects will make the Bible more intelligible. No doubt, an area as complex as Biblical archaeology deserves its own bulletin. Secondly, VS is reduced to a quarterly, which will help keep the bulletin on schedule. Dear reader, I again request your prayers.

Godspeed,
Salvatore J. Ciresi

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Scripture Memorization & Exegesis: Acts 1:1-3	2
Inerrancy Basics: The Bible and Science, Part I	2
The Church Fathers & Scripture: St. Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius on Gospel Authorship	3
St. Thomas Aquinas & Revelation: A Thomistic Pattern for Theology	3
The Magisterium Speaks: The Scriptural Reforms of Trent	4
The Pontifical Biblical Commission: The Response of 1906, Part III	4
Addressing Bible Difficulties: New Testament Replication, Part V	5
The Biblical World: A Basic Timeline	5
Book Recommendation: <i>Summa Theologiae</i>	6

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: Acts 1:1-3

"In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up, after He had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the Apostles whom He had chosen. To them He presented himself alive after His passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:1-3).

St. Luke's Acts of the Apostles is a fitting conclusion to his earlier Gospel. One could appropriately link both books; read Luke 24:44-53 with Acts 1:1-14. Our present focus is Acts' opening three verses.

The prologue in Acts, which could include the opening five verses, echoes the prologue in the Lukan Gospel. Both introductions follow the style of secular historians. Each

prologue indicates St. Luke is concerned with the facts about Jesus Christ and His Church. Acts 1:1 speaks of His public ministry: what He began to "do and teach" (*poiein te kai didaskein*). Hence, actions ("do") and words ("teach") are crucial for the inspired writer. Stated another way: St. Luke aims to tell the truth.

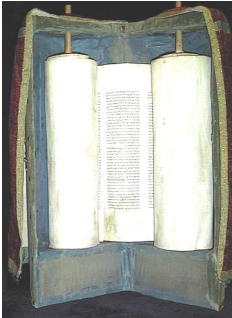
In light of the above points, St. Luke's reference to a "first book" (*prōton logon*) provides evidence that he wrote both works. Thus, the Pontifical Biblical Commission makes use of Acts 1:1-2 in the 1913 response; *On the Author, Time of Composition, and Historical Character of Acts*. The Commission underscores traditional scholarship.

St. Luke next describes the God-man's ascension; He was "taken up" (*anēmphthē*). New Testament passages that

mention this miraculous event assume, without argument, a literal and not merely symbolic action (cf. Mk 16:19; Lk 24:51; Acts 1:9).

This same manifestation of the supernatural is seen in the phrase "many proofs" (*pollois tekmeriois*). Such words steer us to the risen Savior's post-resurrection appearances. Abbot G. Ricciotti says in part, "Christ's Resurrection was, in fact, the cornerstone of the Apostolic catechesis" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 45-46).

The rich saying "kingdom of God" (*basileias tou theou*) is employed also in Acts 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; and 28:31. The phrase was uttered earlier by the Savior (cf. Mt 12:28; Mk 1:15; Lk 4:43; Jn 3:5). Such words indicate the Good News is tied to Christ's Mystical Body; the Catholic Church.



Inerrancy Basics: The Bible and Science, Part I

One of the most misunderstood aspects of Biblical inerrancy is its relation to science. This is an unnecessary convolution. Theologians and Biblicists have given sound direction on this topic.

J. Pohle and A. Preuss' *God: The Author of Nature and the Supernatural* (part of the set, *The Pohle-Preuss Series of Dogmatic Text-Books*), written in 1923, provides some timeless clarity. Pages 103-123 focus on the "Hexaemeron," the six days of creation. Space limitations prevent including all the useful guidance within this chapter.

Pages 103-104 state: "The Word of God, rightly interpreted, cannot clash with the firmly established conclusions of science, because both Sacred Scripture and science have God for their author. Any apparent contradiction between the two

must be traceable either to some false and unproved claim on the part of science, or to an incorrect interpretation of Holy Writ." God has authored the 'book of Nature' and the 'book of Scripture': no conflict should arise between them. Therefore, page 104 goes on: "There can be no doubt that the various natural sciences — astronomy, geology, palaeontology, etc. — furnish, or at least are able to furnish, valuable aids to the exegete who undertakes to interpret the Mosaic cosmogony." True science, then, is no threat to the Bible. Likewise, scientists need to cease and desist from treating the Bible as if it were hazardous material.

Pohle and Preuss continue on pages 105-6: "Consequently, in order to accomplish its pur-

pose, it was necessary that the Bible in matters of natural science should adopt the language of the common people, who derive their views of nature from external appearances. This popular idiom is ever true, because it employs relative standards in the contemplation of nature, and remains forever intelligible to the masses, because it makes no claim to describe absolute facts... 'We must remember,' says St. Thomas, 'that Moses addressed himself to an uncultivated people, and, condescending to their ignorance, proposed to them only what was obvious to the senses.'" The Aquinas quote comes from the *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 68, a. 3.

Right reason is crucial for this topic of the Bible and science. We continue in the next issue.

"The Word of God, rightly interpreted, cannot clash with the firmly established conclusions of science, because both Sacred Scripture and science have God for their author."

J. Pohle and A. Preuss

The Church Fathers & Scripture: St. Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius on Gospel Authorship

Patristic testimony for Gospel authorship has been quoted from St. Irenaeus, St. Papias, *The Muratorian Fragment*, Tertullian, and Origen. We now arrive at St. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-215), by way of Eusebius of Caesarea (A.D. 260-340).

St. Clement was a student, then teacher, and eventual headmaster of the famous Catechetical School in Alexandria, Egypt. Eusebius is the 'Father of Ecclesiastical History': his *History of the Church* is one of the most valuable tomes from Christian antiquity.

Eusebius' *History* hearkens back to St. Clement. Here is a notable section (bracketed comments added for clarity): "Again, in the same books [Sketches], Clement gives the tradition of the earliest presbyters, as to the order of the

Gospels, in the following manner: The Gospels containing the genealogies [Matthew and Luke], he says, were written first. The Gospel according to Mark had this occasion. As Peter had preached the Word publicly at Rome, and declared the Gospel by the Spirit, many who were present requested that Mark, who had followed him for a long time and remembered his sayings, should write them out. And having composed the Gospel he gave it to those who had requested it. When Peter learned of this, he neither directly forbade nor encouraged it. But, last of all, John, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain in the Gospel, being urged by his friends, and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel. This is the account of Clement" (*History of the*

Church 6.14.5-7; A.D. 300-325).

This translation, by A. C. McGiffert in the second series of the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, formats the text so Eusebius makes reference to St. Clement. Other translators, such as C. F. Cruse (Baker's *Twin Brooks* series), and W. A. Jurgens (*The Faith of the Early Fathers* set), add quotation marks in places. Such marks make the statement not merely a reference, but a direct quote from St. Clement.

Any format sheds light. The Matthean and Lukan Gospels are called the earliest. The Markan Gospel is connected with St. Peter. The Johannine Gospel is the latest. Per St. Clement and Eusebius, one may conclude: all four Gospels have an Apostolic origin.



St. Thomas Aquinas & Revelation: A Thomistic Pattern for Theology

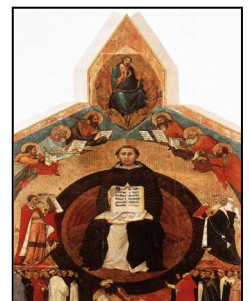
Holy Writ, in many passages, encourages the believer to honor and imitate the good example of fellow Christians. Consider 1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 5:17; and Hebrews 13:7. With such testimony from God's word, a Catholic is justified in holding up St. Thomas Aquinas as a model theologian. The Common Doctor's use of Scripture deserves emulation.

Fr. J. P. Torrell's fine work, *Aquinas's Summa: Background, Structure, & Reception*, explains: "In the first place, Sacred Scripture intimately penetrates Thomas's work. When he is referred to as a master of biblical sciences, we tend to think of his commentaries on several books of the Old Testament (Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Lamentations, Job, the Psalms) and

most of the New Testament (Matthew, John, and all of St. Paul). But it would be a mistake to see these as an isolated part of his work. In truth, his other works are equally full of biblical references, and the *Summa* is no exception. Statistics do not tell us everything, but they are useful. Since careful and patient scholars have already done the work, we will be pardoned if we use their numbers. Martin Hubert counted some 38,000 explicit citations in the *Summa theologiae* and the *Summa contra Gentiles*. Of this number, 25,000 come from the Bible, almost two-thirds. In a shorter opusculum (on the *Ten Commandments*, which is no longer than thirty-eight pages of one of our modern-day books of ordinary size), we find 491 citations, roughly 14 per page.

In addition to these numbers, we have to realize that for Thomas, the Bible is the Word of God in which he finds both his inspiration and his norm. It was a philosopher, Etienne Gilson who expressed a profound, even though a bit exaggerated, truth: 'For Thomas all of theology was a commentary on Scripture; he drew no conclusion without justifying it by some word of Sacred Scripture, which is the Word of God'" (pp. 72-73).

This method of the Angelic Doctor should motivate us to study Divine Revelation. In turn, such an interaction with the Sacred Page will lead to a familiarity with Tradition, and a pursuit of the key Magisterial decrees. Let us follow St. Thomas, whom Holy Mother Church cherishes as perhaps her finest scholar.



The Magisterium Speaks: The Scriptural Reforms of Trent

The Council of Trent (1545-1563) may be the most doctrinally significant Ecumenical Council for the Catholic Faith. A number of key reforms were launched by this act of the Extraordinary (i.e., Solemn) Magisterium. The following actions testify to the Church's veneration of the Bible. D. Murphy's *The Church and the Bible* supplies the quotes.

Session 4's *Decree Concerning the Edition and the Use of the Sacred Books* (1546) says in part: "Finally, the Council wants to curb the irresponsibility by which certain words and expressions of Sacred Scripture are changed and twisted into profane usage: for example, obscenity, fantasy, vanity, flattery, detraction, superstition, evil and diabolical magic formulae, fortune telling, decisions by lot, defamation. It is anxious to curb this irrever-

ence and disrespect toward the sacred text..."

Session 5's *Decree Concerning Reform* (1546) reads as follows: "This same sacred Council adheres to the respected constitutions of the Supreme Pontiffs and the approved Councils; it makes them its own and is supplementing them. It has established and ordered the following to prevent the neglect of the treasury of the sacred Books which the Holy Spirit has handed over most generously to the human race. In those churches where there are benefices, endowments, or whatever they may be called, destined for stipends for lecturers in sacred theology, the Bishops, Archbishops, Primates and other local Ordinaries, who obtain such benefices, endowments or stipends are strictly obliged to

expound and interpret Sacred Scripture personally, if they are suited for this. Otherwise, a suitable substitute is to be used..." (No. 1). No. 2 goes on to say that in a metropolitan or cathedral church within a key city, such benefices, etc., should attempt to be initiated if not in place already.

The Fathers at Trent continue: "Classes in Sacred Scripture will be held even in monasteries where it can be conveniently done. If abbots are negligent in this matter, local bishops will compel them with opportune remedial measures" (No. 4). No. 5 follows: "In other religious houses in which studies can be conveniently carried out, there will similarly be classes in Sacred Scripture. General and provincial chapters will assign these to teachers who are more suitable."



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

We resume our look at the first question from *On the Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch*. The question's four general points to consider for authenticity (i.e., authorship) are the evidences "in both Testaments," the "persistent agreement of the Jewish people," the "constant tradition of the Church," and the "internal arguments derived from the text itself." The last general point is our focus — material within the Pentateuch. Here are some observations.

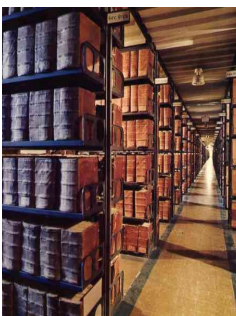
Put aside for a moment the charism of inspiration. On the natural level, Moses was highly qualified to compose or compile the Pentateuch. At the court of Egypt, he would have received an outstanding education, reared in the most literate country in the Fertile Crescent (cf. Acts 7:22).

Granted, Moses wasn't alive when the events of Genesis took place. This is not a great difficulty. His mother and relatives would have passed down to him, via oral tradition or even by written records, a knowledge of the Patriarchs from Adam to Joseph. This action would have compensated Moses' absence. It is also possible that such words and deeds in Sacred History, which preceded Moses' time, were later revealed by God directly to Moses. Recall his privileged communion with the LORD atop Mount Sinai (cf. Ex 24:15-18).

Consider the remaining books of the Pentateuch (Ex, Lev, Num, Dt). Remember, Moses actually lived in Egypt, and also dwelt in Midian of Sinai. Both residences would have afforded him a personal

knowledge of their vicinities; with respect to climates, agricultural practices, and geographical peculiarities. Such details are found in Exodus through Deuteronomy. As well, all four books reveal vivid eyewitness accounts of episodes such as the crossing of the Red Sea (cf. Ex 14:1-30), the deaths of Nadab and Abihu (cf. Lev 10:1-7), the rebellion and punishment of Korah, Dathan and Abiram (cf. Num 16:1-40), and the reiteration of the Ten Commandments (cf. Dt 5:1-24).

Admittedly, much more can be said. Weighing only the scant material above, we see that Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is no strain upon reason. Moses was in the best position for this literary task; his education and domiciles equipped him for the job.



Addressing Bible Difficulties: New Testament Replication, Part V

The employment of the Greek manuscripts for replicating the New Testament has been our focus in this column. We should not ignore the other languages that contribute to the evidence. Consider the influential Latin Vulgate.

St. Jerome (d. A.D. 420), one of the Great Doctors of the Church, is forever attached to the Vulgate. This term, specifically applied to his project, was probably first used by the Franciscan Roger Bacon (d. 1294). The Council of Trent sanctions the term in 1546. Consider some of the background to Jerome's labors.

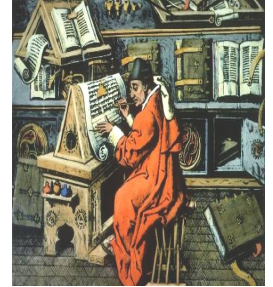
Pope St. Damasus I (r. A.D. 366-384) commissioned Jerome, about A.D. 383, to revise the earlier Latin versions of the Gospels. This was so because of their variant readings, and the array of

texts in circulation. The Pontiff wanted a standard Latin text, which would be beneficial for doctrine and the liturgy. Jerome, linguistically speaking, was fit for this task.

Nonetheless, this was a major enterprise for one scholar, lacking the tools available to translators in the Twenty-First Century. Jerome, working on the New Testament, corrected the previous Latin versions by utilizing the accessible Greek manuscripts. Changes were done when the Latin didn't agree with the Greek; in meaning, or in style. The amount of his New Testament revision is uncertain; Fr. L. Hartmann writes of Jerome: "Even though his zeal in correcting the *Vetus Latina* seems to have gradually slackened, so much so that it is uncertain whether his revision

reached beyond the four Gospels, still this work — our present Vulgate New Testament — is on the whole based on an excellent critical text of the original Greek Gospels and is rightly considered one of the glories of the Latin Church" (F. Murphy, ed., *A Monument to Saint Jerome*, p. 40). For the revision of the Old Testament, Jerome did most of the translation.

History testifies to subsequent revisions to the Vulgate. This is associated with Popes Sixtus V (d. 1590), Clement VIII (d. 1605), St. Pius X (d. 1914), and John Paul II (d. 2005). Yet, the Vulgate lives. It is even consulted in current Protestant Bibles: the *New King James Version* (1982), *New International Version* (1984), and *New American Standard Bible* (1995).



The Biblical World: A Basic Timeline

The historical milieu of Divine Revelation, or what may be called the Biblical world, is a field of study that helps make sense of the Bible. The field considers anything pertinent to Scripture's historical setting. Such knowledge will enable a better defense of God's word.

Fr. Kenneth Baker's *Inside the Bible* provides a rationale for the study of the Biblical world: "A believer who wants to read and study the Bible should realize that it takes effort to come to a good understanding of the contents of the Greatest Book ever written. It takes effort because the Bible was composed by many different persons over a period of more than a thousand years. It was written in ancient languages... it was written in the Near East and reflects a culture flourishing two thousand years ago

that is now foreign to Americans and Europeans. Many of its words and concepts seem strange to us, and the way of thinking is often different from Western logical categories" (p. 9).

One of the fundamentals for studying the Biblical world is chronology. This is a difficult endeavor: some dates are uncertain, and approximations are often the safest approach. But dates are important, and most sources on Biblical studies offer some kind of chronological guide. Examples are found in the *Jerusalem Bible*, or in Mr. Jeff Cavins' series, "The Great Adventure: A Journey Through The Bible." A basic timeline of Sacred History will aid in clarifying the intricate periods of Divine Revelation. The following chart is adapted from Cavins;

the twelve milestones should be committed to memory.

1. The Beginning of History (Creation—2000 B.C.)
2. The Patriarchs (2000—1675 B.C.)
3. Israel in Egypt (1675—1275 B.C.)
4. The Conquest of Canaan (1275—1220 B.C.)
5. The Judges (1220—1050 B.C.)
6. The United Kingdom (1050—930 B.C.)
7. The Divided Kingdom (930—722 B.C.)
8. The Exile (722—538 B.C.)
9. The Return from Exile (538—430 B.C.)
10. The Maccabean Revolt (175—63 B.C.)
11. The Life of the Savior (3 B.C.—A.D. 30)
12. The Early Church (A.D. 30—70).



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 is now employed 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 other 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 Catechetical Directory*; 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:

Summa Theologiae

Do you want to be an orthodox theologian? A good philosopher? A competent Biblicist? Read and meditate on St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*. A fine vernacular edition comes from the Fathers of the English Dominican Province — *St. Thomas Aquinas: Summa Theologica* (Westminster: Christian Classics, 1981 reprint) 3,057 pp. The set is about \$165.

The blurb on the back cover says: "The *Summa Theologica*, as the title indicates, is a summing up of all that can be known about God and humanity's relations with God. It is divided into three parts dealing with God, man, and the God-man respectively. It consists of 38 tracts, 631 questions, about 3000 articles, 10,000 objections and their answers. The new edition contains the complete text, the supplements, a chart showing the structure of the work, and an analytical index."

The English translation came in 1911, and a later revision appeared in London (1920) and New York (1948). Today's soft cover reprint is from the 1948 edition (from Benziger). Formatted into five volumes, the reprint is durable. The font is a readable size and the paper is high quality.

The *Summa's* first question, in ten articles, is "The Nature and Extent of Sacred Doctrine." These seven pages set the tone for the entire work, and indicate the depth of the Common Doctor's learning and method. Within three parts, all the essentials of the Catholic Faith are explained with precision. The Bible student, within the course of thousands of pages, will discover in Aquinas the proper employment of both Testaments for the science of theology. The inerrantist will

devote attention to II-II, qq. 171-178: a masterly treatment of Biblical inspiration, which the Common Doctor places under the heading "Prophecy."

There are several books that assist the reader of the *Summa*. Examples are Fr. W. Farrell's *A Companion to the Summa I-IV*, Msgr. P. Glenn's *A Tour of the Summa*, and Dr. P. Kreeft's *A Summa of the Summa*. The Thomistic commentaries of Fr. R. Garrigou-Lagrange are also beneficial.

A brief review can't do justice to the *Summa*; one must simply investigate the tome for himself. Thomas is not light reading; such work takes time and effort. Note well: the review copy pictured at right is an older cover. Newer reprints have a different cover, and perhaps different pagination as well.

