

# 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... Sources from Outside the Fold

I am partial to older works of Catholic scholarship. This is the case not only for Biblical studies, but in other subjects such as dogmatic theology, philosophy, devotional works, etc. Granted, some sources from earlier generations are dated in places, while many newer works are trustworthy. Still, I have an attachment to books from the past. This raises a related question: What is one to do with quality scholarship by non-Catholics?

The Pontiffs have dealt with this matter. One is Pope Leo XIII, in *Providentissimus Deus* (1893): “For although the studies of non-Catholics, used with prudence, may sometimes be of use to the Catholic student, he should, nevertheless, bear well in mind — as the Fathers also teach in numerous passages — that the sense of Holy Scripture can nowhere be found incorrupt outside the

Church, and cannot be expected to be found in writers who, being without the true faith, only gnaw the bark of the Sacred Scripture, and never attain its pith” (II, C, 1, d). This papal counsel is cautious, but reasonable.

There are notable Protestant Bible translations, such as the *New King James Version* (1982) and *English Standard Version* (2001). As well, there is helpful Biblical scholarship from non-Catholics such as Drs. F.F. Bruce and Walter Kaiser, to name just two (both are closer to the Magisterial doctrines on Scripture than some ostensibly Catholic scholars). But one must be careful: Pope St. Pius X’s warnings found in *Pascendi Domenici Gregis* (1907) still apply today. When you and I consult the works from our separated brethren, we accept the orthodox, and reject the

heterodox. The same course of action applies when reading Jewish and pagan authors. Think of St. Jerome’s handling of Rabbinic literature, or St. Thomas Aquinas’ appeals to Aristotle. Such practices must be underscored by the cardinal virtue of prudence.

Sad, but true: what passes for Catholic scholarship today, in some circles, is uneven in places. Some scholarship is far worse; it is recycled Modernism. But God is merciful. Newer, solidly Catholic books on Scripture are appearing today. Thus, I cling to the Fathers and Doctors, and my used books, but I employ what is sound in the contemporary market. St. Paul is an inspired guide: “test everything; hold fast what is good” (1 Thess 5:21).

Godspeed,  
Salvatore J. Ciresi

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St. Jerome (A.D. 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: The Five “Mythical” Verses

“As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the divine training that is in faith” (1 Tim 1:3-4).

“If you put these instructions before the brethren, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the good doctrine which you have followed. Have nothing to do with godless and silly myths. Train yourself in godliness” (1 Tim 4:6-7).

“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths” (2 Tim 4:3-4).

“For there are many insubordinate men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially the circumcision party;

they must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for base gain what they have no right to teach. One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, ‘Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.’ This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, instead of giving heed to Jewish myths or to commands of men who reject the truth” (Tit 1:10-14).

“For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty” (2 Pet 1:16).

Does the Bible employ myth? Yes — in a pejorative manner. “Myths” (*muthois* or *muthous* in 1 Tim 1:4; 4:7; 2 Tim 4:4; Tit 1:14; 2 Pet 1:16), within the Pauline and Petrine extracts, are set in opposition to “divine training,” “godliness,” “sound teaching,” “truth,” and Christ’s “power and coming.” Such a

stark contrast, in the very words of Holy Writ, ought to make comparative religion enthusiasts leery of using myth in a positive fashion with respect to Divine Revelation.

No doubt, some books, such as Genesis, display some similarities to pagan myths (think of the Gilgamesh Epic). But this is so because the latter is based on the former. The earlier supernatural events lay the foundation for the later profane fables.

True, myth is hard to define with precision (cf. G. Kittel’s *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* IV:762ff). But this inexactitude is reason enough to stop grouping myth with the undisputed genres used favorably in the Bible. Scripture, in five occurrences, reveals negative connotations for the term in view of Divine Revelation. That is a caveat.



## Inerrancy Basics: The Bible and Science, Part II

We resume our examination of the topic of Biblical inerrancy and its relation to science. J. Pohle and A. Preuss continue to offer guidance in their text, *God: The Author of Nature and the Supernatural*. Recall that the relevant section from their dogmatic tome is focused upon the “Hexaemeron” — the six days of creation.

Page 105 says: “The Bible is not a text-book of science. Had it been written to teach a supernaturally revealed system of physics, chemistry, astronomy, or geology, it would be a sealed and unintelligible book, nay, it would have proved positively dangerous to the faith of the masses, because scientific views and terms are subject to constant change.” This is the reason one doesn’t find in Scripture complex physics formulae, precise chemical analyses, de-

tailed astronomical charts, or finely-tuned geological graphs — as one would expect in a contemporary textbook dedicated to such topics.

Such words, however, should not be misunderstood. After laying down some distinctions, page 106 makes a key point: “We do not mean to say, of course, that the purely scientific portions of the Bible have no claim to divine authority, or to deny that they are absolutely infallible. As part of the Inspired Word they embody divine revelation.”

Pohle and Preuss march on as follows: “The exegete, on his part, is free to interpret the sacred text in accordance with the rules of hermeneutics and in harmony with each particular author’s peculiar style and with the context. Grammar, syntax, and the dictionary are

quite as valuable scientific aids as the telescope, the microscope, and the testing tube. It will not do to impose the conclusions of physical science as a positive norm upon exegesis and to demand that the Hexaemeron be interpreted in accordance with constantly changing hypotheses. Modern exegetes, especially of the last half-century [1800s], having been justly charged with paying too much attention to science and too little to the Mosaic text. Though the scientists have an undeniable right to be heard, they have no authority to dictate how the Hexaemeron must be interpreted” (p. 108).

Scripture’s freedom from all error has nothing to fear from modern research. In the end, the Biblicalist and the scientist ought not be at odds.

“We do not mean to say, of course, that the purely scientific portions of the Bible have no claim to divine authority, or to deny that they are absolutely infallible.”

J. Pohle and A. Preuss

## The Church Fathers & Scripture: St. Augustine on Gospel Authorship

St. Augustine (A.D. 354-430), Bishop of Hippo, encapsulates the previous columns on Gospel authorship.

*The Harmony of the Gospels* 1.1.1, circa A.D. 400, states: “In the entire number of those divine records which are contained in the sacred writings, the Gospel deservedly stands pre-eminent. For what the Law and the Prophets aforesaid announced as destined to come to pass, is exhibited in the Gospel in its realization and fulfillment. The first preachers of this Gospel were the Apostles, who beheld our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in person when He was yet present in the flesh. And not only did these men keep in remembrance the words heard from His lips, and the deeds wrought by Him beneath their eyes; but they

were also careful, when the duty of preaching the Gospel was laid upon them, to make mankind acquainted with those divine and memorable occurrences which took place at a period antecedent to the formation of their own connection with Him in the way of discipleship, which belonged also to the time of His nativity, His infancy, or His youth, and with regard to which they were able to institute exact inquiry and to obtain information, either at His own hand or at the hands of His parents or other parties, on the ground of the most reliable intimations and the most trustworthy testimonies. Certain of them also — namely, Matthew and John — gave to the world, in their respective books, a written account of all those matters...”

1.1.2 goes on: “And to pre-

clude the supposition that, in what concerns the apprehension and proclamation of the Gospel, it is a matter of any consequence whether the enunciation comes by men who were actual followers of this same Lord here when He manifested Himself in the flesh and had the company of His disciples attendant on Him, or by persons who with due credit received facts with which they became acquainted in a trustworthy manner through the instrumentality of these former, divine providence, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, has taken care that certain of those also who were nothing more than followers of the first Apostles should have authority given them not only to preach the Gospel, but also to compose an account of it in writing. I refer to Mark and Luke.”



## St. Thomas Aquinas & Revelation: Bible Study and the Virtue of Faith

Fr. Mathew Lamb was one of the translators for the *Aquinas Scripture Series*, begun in the 1960s, from the publisher Magi Books. Volume 2, the *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, has a helpful introduction on the Angelic Doctor's approach to Scripture. The lengthy introduction is illuminating; below is a sample.

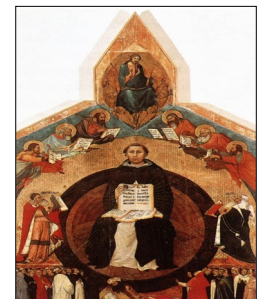
Pages 4-5 reads: “To understand the Bible more is needed than a good dose of hermeneutical techniques. They are an indispensable aid in determining the human author's intended meaning. But this meaning is what no human being could affirm as true on his own power. To understand the Scriptures as its author meant them to be understood is to accept what they proclaim: the history of

salvation culminating in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as revealing the ultimate meaning of human existence — a meaning only God could give it. A challenge to the religious conversion of faith is issued which no interpreter can explain away. Here St. Thomas is one with the entire Patristic tradition. Like an Irenaeus, an Origen, or an Augustine, Thomas had to respond to God's Word with an unreserved faith before he could even hope to understand something of that Word's meaning, and what it revealed about the meaning of his own existence.”

Lamb's observations above on Aquinas are a lesson today for every Bible student: he must have the virtue of faith in order to make any progress in his studies. This means, in the

end, that each one of us must live a truly Catholic life if we want to grasp the Scriptures. Aquinas penetrated God's word because it first penetrated him. The Common Doctor's cooperation with grace, and subsequent faith, enabled him to comprehend Holy Writ in a way that is impossible without the divine assistance. Look at Hebrews 11:6: “And without faith it is impossible to please Him.”

Pope St. Pius X defines faith in the Catholic sense in the *Catechism of Christian Doctrine*: “Faith is the supernatural virtue by which we believe, on the authority of God, what He has revealed and proposes to us for belief by means of the Church” (no. 232). It seems clear: the exercise of one's faith has a direct bearing on one's intellectual progress.



## The Magisterium Speaks: The Forgotten Monitum of 1961

The Catholic Church issued *Biblicarum Disciplinarum* nearly fifty years ago. This 1961 warning from the Holy Office (now called the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) remains relevant because of its perennial guidance for the Church Militant. Consult D. Murphy's *The Church and the Bible*, p. 314:

"In this time of praiseworthy zeal for biblical studies, statements and opinions are spreading around in various places that question the proper historical and objective truth of Sacred Scripture. And this applies not only to the Old Testament (as the Supreme Pontiff Pius XII already deplored in his Encyclical Letter *Humani Generis*) but also to the New, even regarding the sayings and deeds of Christ Jesus. Since these statements and

opinions cause anxiety among pastors and the Christian faithful, the eminent Fathers in charge of the defense of the doctrine of faith and practice, have felt they should advise all who deal with the Sacred Books always to approach such an important matter with due prudence and respect in whatever they write or say. And they should always keep in sight the teaching of the holy Fathers, the Magisterium and a sense of the Church lest the conscience of the faithful be disturbed and truths of the faith harmed.

N.B. This warning is published with the consent of the eminent Fathers of the Pontifical Biblical Commission.

Given at Rome, from the seat of the Holy Office, 20 June 1961.

Sebastiano Masala, Secretary."

The Monitum was released during the reign of Pope John XXIII. What is striking is the hearkening back to some problems called out in a 1950 Encyclical during the reign of Pope Pius XII. At that time, the Pontiff was likely decrying the misreading of his earlier Encyclical on Biblical studies: *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943).

The Monitum criticizes those who "question the proper historical and objective truth of Sacred Scripture." Such words are a fortification for Biblical inerrancy. Scripture's entire unity falls under this rampart: the "Old Testament" and the "New," with a specific reference to the Gospels (i.e., "sayings and deeds of Christ Jesus"). The faithful are also told to make use of Tradition via "the holy Fathers," with the mind or "sense of the Church." This is solid direction for 2010.



## The Pontifical Biblical Commission: The Response of 1906, Part IV

We move ahead to the second question of the response, *On the Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch*. Question 2 has two parts (separated by \* for clarity):

"2. Writer — Whether the Mosaic authenticity of the Pentateuch necessarily postulates such a redaction of the whole work as to render it absolutely imperative to maintain that Moses wrote with his own hand or dictated to amanuenses all and everything contained in it; \* or whether it is possible to admit the hypothesis of those who think that he entrusted the composition of the work itself, conceived by himself under the influence of divine inspiration, to some other person or persons, but in such a manner that they render faithfully his own thoughts, wrote nothing con-

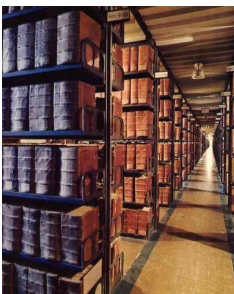
trary to his will, and omitted nothing; and that the work thus produced, approved by Moses as the principal and inspired author, was made public under his name.

Answer: In the negative to the first part, in the affirmative to the second part."

The first part deals with the physical action of writing. The Commission acknowledges in some cases of authorship, the composition of the inspired book could have been carried out by a kind of secretary. Consider Jeremiah 36:32: "Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote on it at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the scroll which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire..." Yet, earlier in Jeremiah 30:2, he does the

actual recording by command from the LORD: "Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you" (see 25:13; 36:1-23; 45:1; 51:60). The same practice occurs in the New Testament. St. Paul can say, in part, in Romans 15:15: "But on some points I have written to you very boldly." Yet, in the next chapter of the book, we read: "I Tertius, the writer of this letter, greet you in the Lord" (Rom 16:22).

The second part rounds out the first. One may believe an amanuensis was employed by Moses. But such a person adhered to Moses' thoughts, complied with his will, and left out nothing, so he remains the principal and inspired author. One possible secretary was Joshua: look at Exodus 24:13; Numbers 27:18; Deuteronomy 34:9; and Joshua 1:5.



## Addressing Bible Difficulties: Old Testament Replication, Part I

Past columns have addressed the reconstruction of the New Testament. We now move ahead to the replication of the Old Testament. Note well: this is not an insignificant matter. The Old Testament is no less inspired or inerrant than the New, which means we must be able to explain and defend the "First Testament."

The original Old Testament writings were composed in Hebrew, with some parts in Aramaic and Greek. Similar to the situation with the New Testament, as far as is known, there are no extant Old Testament autographs. Scholars depend on copies to recreate the originals.

The earliest copies in possession today are likely the Dead Sea Scrolls, also called the Qumran Scrolls. The name comes from the place of their

initial 1947 discovery: the caves near the canyon of the Wadi Qumran. This sits along the northwest coast of the Dead Sea.

Our main concern among the many discoveries at Qumran are the Biblical manuscripts and fragments, which number about 200. They are usually given an approximate date of 300 B.C. to A.D. 50. Every book of the Hebrew canon, minus Esther and Nehemiah, was found (some fragmentary). The documents are usually identified by the number specifying the cave of discovery, followed by an abbreviation of the book's name, followed by a superior letter to indicate the order in which the manuscript came to light against other copies of the same book. Thus, 1QIs<sup>a</sup> is from cave 1, of Isaiah, and the

first discovered or most important. This scroll deserves some attention.

1QIs<sup>a</sup> is perhaps Qumran's most renowned manuscript. This Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah is a virtually complete book with all 66 chapters. Dated to roughly 150-100 B.C., the scroll is over 1,000 years older than the earliest known Hebrew manuscripts. What is significant is that in spite of the gap of over a millennium, the previous Hebrew texts and 1QIs<sup>a</sup> have only slight variations between them. Such textual agreement testifies to the integrity of today's Bibles.

For an introduction to this vast subject, consult C. Evans' *Holman QuickSource Guide to the Dead Sea Scrolls* and J. Fitzmyer's *Responses to 101 Questions on the Dead Sea Scrolls*.



## The Biblical World: The Archaeological Periods

Last issue introduced a basic timeline which divided Sacred History into twelve epochs. Another way to view the setting of Divine Revelation is by the periods of archaeology. This field, a deep and complex one, offers a wealth of useful data for the Bible student. Such an archaeological timeline is often placed side by side with the standard chronological kinds, as found in the *New Jerusalem Bible* (1985).

Pope Pius XII speaks of the value of such knowledge of antiquity in *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943), by urging us not to "neglect none of those discoveries, whether in the domain of archaeology or in ancient history or literature, which serve to make better known the mentality of the ancient writers..." (40). Pius then says: "For all human

knowledge, even the non-sacred, has indeed its own proper dignity and excellence, being a finite participation of the infinite knowledge of God, but it acquires a new and higher dignity and, as it were, a consecration, when it is employed to cast a brighter light upon the things of God" (41).

Msgr. J. Steinmueller's *A Companion to Scripture Studies* I:441, lists the following: Early Bronze: 3000-2100 B.C. Middle Bronze: 2100-1500 B.C. Late Bronze: 1500-1200 B.C. Early Iron: 1200-900 B.C. Middle Iron: 900-530 B.C. Late Iron or Persian: 530-330 B.C. Hellenistic: 330-100 B.C. Hellenistic-Roman: 100 B.C.-A.D. 100.

For the sake of comparison, the *NIV Archaeological Study Bible* has, in part, on p. xx:

Neolithic: 8300-4500 B.C.  
Chalcolithic: 4500-3200 B.C.  
Early Bronze Age: 3200-2200 B.C.  
Middle Bronze: 2200-1550 B.C.  
Late Bronze: 1550-1200 B.C.  
Iron Age I: 1200-1000 B.C.  
Iron Age II: 1000-586 B.C.  
Babylonian/Exilic Period: 586-539 B.C.  
Persian Period: 539-332 B.C.  
Hellenistic Period: 332-141 B.C.  
Hasmonean Period: 141-37 B.C.  
Roman Period: 37 B.C.-A.D. 133.

Both adapted lists above (Steinmueller's is from 1969, the *Study Bible* from 2005) have some variations, but are in general agreement. As expected, there are scholarly debates on certain points. Nonetheless, both lists will help situate the twelve epochs of Sacred History.



## 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).

+ + +

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## Book Recommendation:

### *The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The New Testament*

*The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The New Testament* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010) 711 pp., three intros, eight color maps.

Dr. Scott Hahn and Mr. Curtis Mitch have produced a Catholic commentary of the highest rank. Their text will complement the classic works of Frs. Haydock (reviewed earlier) and Lapidé (to be reviewed later). *The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The New Testament (ICSB)* comes in three editions, uses nice fonts, and is made with quality paper. The commentary employs the *Revised Standard Version: Second Catholic Edition*; this could be read alongside the *Douay Rheims*.

Before delving into the *ICSB*, the Bible student should read the two main intros. “Introduction to the Ignatius Catholic Study Bible” covers topics such as inspiration, inerrancy, Biblical authority, the

senses, and interpretation. “Introduction to the Gospels” addresses authority, canon, formation, genre, historicity, and Gospel relationships. Both intros have depth and clarity.

The commentary covers all 27 books of the New Testament. The *ICSB* looks at issues such as authorship, date, destination, purpose, and themes. An outline is provided for each book. The comments are sometimes rounded out with references to the Fathers and Doctors of the Church. Also valuable are the additional Scriptural references to other parts of both Testaments; a testimony to the unity of the entire Bible. In a convenient format, the comments are placed right below the Biblical text, and cross-references are placed between both.

Additional features include topical essays (e.g., “Faith and Works”), word studies (e.g., “First-born”), and charts (e.g., “The Seven ‘I am’ Sayings of Jesus”). Indices are given for the Savior’s parables and metaphors, His miracles, and Catholic doctrines. Black and white maps are occasionally placed within the commentary. There is also a concise concordance.

What stands out in the *ICSB* is the reverence and respect both Hahn and Mitch have for God’s word. Both men handle it as something sacred, and not as a mere piece of ancient literature. This cannot be said about all commentaries in the last or present generation. The *ICSB* hardback is reasonably priced at about \$20. The text is a high caliber of scholarship; the Old Testament counterpart cannot be published soon enough.

