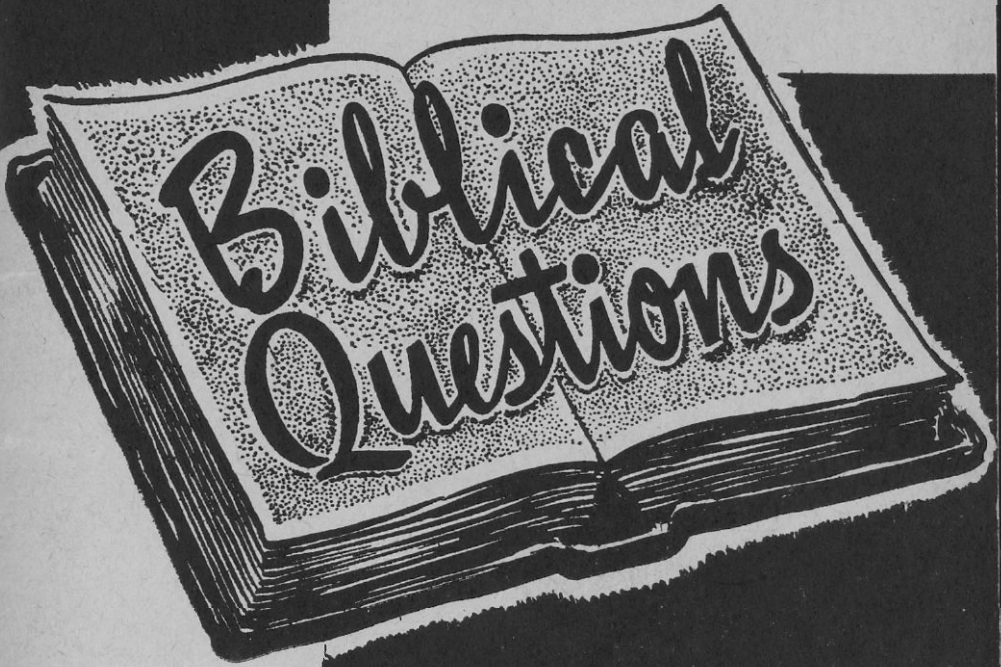


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A MANUAL FOR HIGH SCHOOL
AND COLLEGE STUDENTS AND -
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S AND - -
ADULT DISCUSSION GROUPS -

By REV. RUDOLPH G. BANDAS

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"MODERN QUESTIONS"

A Manual for High School and College Students and for Young
People's and Adult Discussion Clubs

By The Rev. Rudolph G. Bandas

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BIBLICAL QUESTIONS

A Manual For High School And College
Students And For Young People's And
Adult Discussion Groups

By

REV. RUDOLPH G. BANDAS

OUR SUNDAY VISITOR LIBRARY
HUNTINGTON, INDIANA

Series I

Nihil Obstat

Rev. George Ziskovsky, S.T.D., L.S.Sc.
Censor Deputatus

die 11a Februarii, 1943

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Series I of "Biblical Questions" is intended to give the student a general acquaintance with the Bible. The Chapters and Discussion Aids are constructed in such a way as to oblige the student to page the Bible, become acquainted with the arrangement of the Books, and read some sections in each Book. Series II will continue this general discussion about the Bible. The subsequent Series will take up specific questions in the Old Testament and the New Testament. With the permission of the Bruce Publishing Company, some of the materials in the Series are taken from our work, "Biblical Questions—Old Testament," a book which is now out of print.

We wish also to express our gratitude to the B. Herder Co., for permission to use in the preparation of these booklets the following publications: S. G. Messner, "Outlines of Bible Knowledge" and L. C. Fillion, "The Life of Christ"; also to St. Anthony's Guild of Paterson, N. J., for permission to use its Scriptural publications. The Biblical texts are from the Rheims-Douay Version published by the E. M. Lohmann Co., of St. Paul.

The Author

Chapter I

The Book of Books

The Word "Bible"

The word "Bible" means "the book." In both the Latin and Greek languages the term "Biblia" is a plural noun and signifies "The Books." Originally, the Bible was not one book but a collection of books—in fact, a whole library. It was only in about the fourth century that the seventy two books of the Bible were combined to form the "volume." Eventually, the plural "Biblia" became a singular noun, and in modern languages signifies "the book." The passing of the word "Biblia" from the plural into the singular was no doubt occasioned by an understanding of the real character of the Bible: While the human authors were many, the Divine Author is but one. The Bible is called "The Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:16) and "Holy Scriptures" (Romans 1:2).

The Word "Testament"

The titles "Old" and "New Testament" were used by St. Paul (2 Corinthians, 2:14). The term "testament," as applied to the two parts of the Bible, means: a covenant, agreement, pact. In the language of the Bible it denotes the agreement or pact between God and man: Man agreed to do certain things and God, in return, promised certain blessings. The Old Testament contains a record of the pact between God and Abraham and between God and Moses. The New Testament is an account of the pact between God and His creatures. Both



the old and the new covenants were sealed by blood: The pact between God and Abraham was sealed by the circumcision (Genesis 17); the pact between God and the Jewish people, by the sprinkling of the people with the blood of animal victims (Exodus 24:7, 8); the pact between God and men, by Christ's own blood (Matthew 26:28; 1 Corinthians 11:25). Besides denoting the Jewish and Christian religions, the terms "Old" and "New" Testaments also designate the sacred books of each.

Original Language Of The Bible

Two books of the Old Testament—Wisdom and II Machabees—were written in Greek. The rest of the Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language. The New Testament was written in Greek, with the exception of St. Matthew's Gospel which—according to the unanimous testimony of Christian antiquity—was written in Hebrew or Aramaic.

The books of the Bible were very likely written in the cursive style of writing. The cursive (or "running hand") style joins the letters of a word together as when we write today. In addition, the ancients had two other styles of writing: the lapidary (from the Latin word, *lapis*, meaning stone) and the uncial (from the Latin word *uncia*, meaning inch). The lapidary style was followed in inscriptions on stone monuments and used only capital letters. The uncial style was used in fine editions of books and in elaborate Bibles and employed large disconnected letters resembling the capitals. In "uncial" writing there were no spaces between the words or sentences and punctuation marks were used rarely. The word "uncial" comes from St. Jerome's description of

some Bibles of his time as being written in "letters an inch high."

Divisions of the Bible

The Old Testament books are grouped in the following manner:

1) *Historical books*, which are arranged not in the order in which they were written but according to the order of events in time which they narrate (Genesis to Esther);

2) *Didactic or sapiential or moral books*, which are so called because they *instruct* us especially about heavenly *wisdom* and principles of *morality* (Job to Ecclesiasticus);

3) *The prophetical books*, which contain God's message to men and predictions concerning the future (Isaias to Malachias);

4) A *historical appendix* (the Books of the Machabees).

The New Testament like the Old Testament has also a threefold division:

1) *Historical books* (the Gospels and the Acts);

2) *Didactic writings* (the fourteen Pauline Epistles and the seven Catholic Epistles);

3) A *prophetical book* (the Apocalypse).

The various divisions of the Biblical books are of rather recent origin. The Jews divided their sacred books into sections. The chapter division, as found in the Bible today, dates from the thirteenth century and is the work of Stephen Langton, professor at the University of Paris and later Archbishop of Canterbury. The present verse division was first introduced by the Dominican, Santes Pagnino (1528), and his system is still in use in most

of the books of the Old Testament. The modern verse division in the New Testament is the work of Robert Stephen, a Paris printer of the sixteenth century. The chapter and divisions are of great value for purposes of reference but frequently break up the sequence of thought.

Biblical Autographs

Autographs, as distinguished from copies and reprints, are writings which came from the pen of the author himself. As far as our present knowledge goes, the Biblical autographs are no longer in existence, although we can determine fairly well how they appeared. Like other books of the time they were probably papyrus rolls or scrolls. Papyrus was made from the pith of the papyrus plant, a long stemmed reed terminating in a large umbrella, which grew in abundance on the banks of the Nile River and in other Oriental countries. A sheet of papyrus was made of thin strips of the pith arranged horizontally and vertically and was usually six to fifteen inches in height and three to nine inches in width. The separate sheets were then glued together, dried in the sun, attached to one or two sticks or wooden cylinders, rolled up around them, thus making a roll or scroll.

Papyrus was cheap but not durable. The winding and unwinding as well as moisture soon proved destructive to the scrolls. A more durable, though more expensive, material was furnished by the skins of lambs, sheep, goats and calves. As in the case of papyrus, sheets of the leather or the parchment were sewed together to form a longer strip, and strips, in turn, were joined together to form a roll. The copies of the Old Testament books which were

used in the Jewish religious services were undoubtedly written on leather. Saint Paul had parchments with him (2 Timothy 4:13) but it is not very likely that his Epistles were written on this costly material.

The skin of a single animal furnished only a few sheets and was naturally very costly. Hence when a leather book or scroll became illegible from long usage, or when a library had too many copies of the same book, the old text was scratched or washed out and replaced by a new writing. Such copies are known as "palimpsests" (erased again). With the aid of reacting chemicals the old writing has in some instances been restored and lost texts have in this way been discovered.

The "Codex"

The entire Bible would have been a roll of immense length. It would have been clumsy and impractical. It would have made the location of a text very difficult, especially if the desired text occurred toward the middle or end of the roll. Hence we see the emergence, in the fourth century of our era, of the "codex" or book in our sense of the term. The "codex" or book was possibly a Christian invention and was perhaps introduced for the first time in the Christian Bibles. It not only made easier the location of a particular text but put together in a single volume all the books of the Old and New Testaments.

The oldest existing codices of the Christian Bible are all parchment copies, written in uncial letters, and dating from the fourth century. Among these oldest existing Bibles the following are the more important:

1. The *Codex Vaticanus*, dating from the first half of the fourth century and preserved in the Vatican Library. It represents a form of text current in Egypt in the second century.

2. The *Codex Sinaiticus*, also dating from the fourth century and representing the same form of text as the preceding. It was discovered in 1844 in the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai, and is now kept in the British Museum.

3. The *Codex Alexandrinus*, belonging to the fifth century. It was brought from Alexandria to Constantinople and later transferred to the British Museum in London.

4. The *Codex Ephraemi*, also belonging to the fifth century. It is a palimpsest: Some writings of St. Ephraem were written across the Biblical text, which had been more or less erased but is still legible.

The naming of these Bibles is largely accidental. One is designated by its place of origin (*Alexandrinus*), another by its place of custody (*Vaticanus*), another by its place of discovery (*Sinaiticus*), and the last by the special character of its manuscript (*Ephraemi*).

Versions of the Bible

Versions of the Bible are translations of the Bible into other languages. The following are the most important versions or translations of the Bible.

1. *Septuagint*. The oldest Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament is known as the *Septuagint*, and was made between 300 and 130 B. C. It derives its name from the seventy or seventy two translators to whom it is attributed. According

to a legend, Ptolemy II (284-247 B.C.) wished to have a copy of the Law of Moses in his famous library in Alexandria. At his request the high priest sent seventy two scholars (six from each of the twelve tribes) from Jerusalem to Alexandria to translate the Law into Greek.

The Septuagint contains all the forty-five books of the Old Testament. It was used by the Apostles and early Christians and helped greatly in the spread of revealed truths among the Greek pagans. Many Jewish and pagan converts obtained their first knowledge of the Bible through the Septuagint.

2. *Old Latin*. Since the Christians of Rome and of the Roman Empire needed a Latin Bible for the Liturgy and for private reading, it is probable that as early as the first century the Greek Bible—both the Old and New Testaments—began to be translated into Latin. The Latin Bible which was used in Western Europe prior to the acceptance of St. Jerome's text is commonly known as the "Old Latin."

3. *Vulgate*. The Latin "Vulgate" ("accepted" or "commonly used") text is the work of St. Jerome (383-405). The New Testament is St. Jerome's revision of the Old Latin text made with the help of ancient Greek manuscripts. Most of the books of the Old Testament are a direct translation of the original Hebrew, while the rest are the Old Latin text. The Council of Trent made the Vulgate the official text of the Catholic Church, and our present edition was brought out by Clement VIII in 1592.

4. *The Rheims—Douay Bible*. The most widely used English Catholic translation (from the Latin

Vulgate) of the Bible is the Rheims-Douay or Douay Version. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth many English bishops, priests and laymen were obliged to seek refuge in France and other European countries. In 1568 a number of illustrious Oxford scholars opened an English College at Douay in France, in order to supply priests for the English missions. In 1578 the College was transferred to Rheims and later back again to Douay. Among the founders of this College were William Allen, principal of St. Mary's Hall at Oxford and later Cardinal; Gregory Martin, fellow of St. John's College of Oxford; Richard Bristow, fellow of Exeter College of Oxford, and others.

The English translation of the Bible was made by Gregory Martin and the work was revised by Allen and Bristow. The New Testament was published at Rheims in 1582, and the Old Testament at Douay in 1609-1610. The language of the text was modernized by Bishop Challoner (1749-1752).

5. *The Westminster Version* of the Sacred Scriptures—of which Fathers Lattey and Keating of the Society of Jesus are general editors—was published in England. It is a new critical Catholic translation of the New Testament made directly from the Greek. It is a private and not an official version of the Bible.

6. *The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Edition of New Testament*. This is not a translation but a revision of the Challoner-Rheims Version undertaken by a group of Catholic scholars under the patronage of the episcopal committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. It aims to bring the language of Challoner's version into conformity

with modern English and to render accurately the divine message in the language of our own day.

7. *Protestant Version.* a). *The King James or Authorized Version (AV)* was published in 1611 in the reign of King James I. The Authorized Version is not a new translation but a revision of an English Bible known as the Bishop's Bible and published in 1568. The translation is often colored by anti-Catholic prejudice which in certain instances leads to outright falsifications of the text. The purity of its English, however, has made it the Bible of English Protestantism. b). *The Revised Version (RV)* (1881-1885) is a modern critical revision undertaken—at the instance of the British Parliament—by a group of English and American Protestant scholars. The committee departed in at least thirty-six thousand instances from the text of 1611. c). In 1901 the American group of the same committee brought out its own text of the Revised Version and this is known as the *American Standard Version (SV)*.

Discussion Aids

Set I

1. What is the meaning of the word "Bible"?
2. Was the Bible originally one book? When did the "volume" style come into vogue?
3. What is the meaning of the word "Testament"? How were the Old and the New Testaments sealed?
4. What was the original language of the Old Testament? Of the New Testament?
5. What were the three styles of writing in antiquity?
6. How were the books of the Old Testament grouped? of the New Testament?

7. When was the Bible divided into chapters? into verses? by whom?
8. What is a Biblical autograph? What materials were used in the composition of the original books of the bible?
9. Name the four oldest Bibles.
10. What is a version?
11. Describe the origin of the Septuagint version; of the Old Latin version; of the Vulgate.
12. Describe the origin of the Rheims-Douay Version; of the Confraternity edition of the New Testament.
13. Name three Protestant versions.

Set II

Discuss thoroughly each sentence in the following quotation:

"The word of God is an inexhaustible treasury of heavenly science. It is the only oracle that discloses to us the origin and sublime destiny of man, and the means of attaining it. It is the key that interprets his relations to his Creator. It is the foundation of our Christian faith and of our glorious heritage. Its moral code is the standard of our lives. If our Christian civilization is so manifestly superior to all actual and preexisting social systems, it is indebted for its supremacy to the ethical teachings of Holy Writ" (James Cardinal Gibbons, "The Ambassador of Christ," p. 227).

Set III

Discuss and apply to your own life the following statements of the Fathers of the Church:

Saint Jerome: "To be ignorant of the Scriptures, is to be ignorant of Christ."

Saint Augustine: "Letters have reached us from

that city apart from which we are wandering; these letters are the Scriptures which exhort us to live well."

"He who receives negligently the Word of God is not less guilty than he who, through his own fault, would permit the Sacred Host to fall on the ground."

The Imitation: "I perceive two things to be particularly necessary for me in this life, without which it would be insupportable to me. Whilst I am detained in the prison of this body, I acknowledge myself to stand in need of two things, namely, food and light. Unto me, then, thus weak and helpless, Thou hast given Thy Sacred Body for the refreshment both of my soul and body, and Thy Word Thou hast set as a lamp to my feet."

Religious Practices

1. "The most highly valued treasure of every family library, and the most frequently and lovingly made use of, should be the Holy Scripture. We trust that no family can be found amongst us without a correct version of the Holy Scriptures" (Pastoral Letter of the Third Council of Baltimore, 1844).

2. In 1898 Leo XIII granted "to all the faithful of both sexes who piously and devoutly read for a quarter of an hour each day the Holy Gospel, the edition whereof is recognized and approved by legitimate authority, an indulgence of 300 days for each reading thereof."

3. "The more we read the Gospel, the stronger our faith becomes" (Pius X). "Our one desire for all the Church's children is that, being saturated with the Bible, they may arrive at the all-surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ" (Benedict XV).

Chapter II

Catholic And Protestant Bibles

The Old Testament

The Protestant Old Testament omits several entire books and parts of two other books. To explain how this came about, it is necessary that we go back to the ancient Jewish Scriptures. The Hebrew Bible contained only the Old Testament and from its Old Testament it excluded seven entire books—namely, Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, First and Second Machabees—and parts of Esther (10:14 to 16:14) and Daniel (3:24-90; 13; 14).

These books which are missing in the Jewish Bible came to the Catholic Church with the Septuagint, a pre-Christian Greek translation of the Old Testament. In the Septuagint Version they are placed among and given equal rank with the other Old Testament books as in our Catholic Bible today. Since the Hebrew is older than the Septuagint Bible, the list of books in the former is called the first canon or collection while the catalog of books in the latter is called the second canon or collection. The seven additional books are found only in the second collection and always associated with it.

Jewish opposition to the additional books of the second collection was due to the circumstances in which the Jews lived and to the spirit of the times. During the last centuries which preceded the coming of Christ the Jews—because of the captivities, persecutions and antagonisms from outside nations—

became more and more conservative and looked with increasing suspicion on anything that was new. Since the additional books were of comparatively recent origin and since some of them were written in Greek—the language of paganism—they naturally aroused the opposition of the Jews. The fact, too, that the early Christians used the Septuagint in their controversies with the Jews only served to confirm the latter in their opposition to this translation of the Old Testament.

The Protestants of the sixteenth century objected to the additional books because of the doctrinal teachings of these books. The Second Book of Machabees, for example, contains the doctrine of purgatory, of prayers and sacrifices for the dead (12:39-46). The book of Tobias teaches the importance in the eyes of God of good works. The Protestants could not reject some without excluding all of the additional books. Hence, in drawing up their list of Old Testament books they went back to the first collection of Biblical books of the Palestinian Jews. They removed the additional books, which had been in the Bible up till 1517 and placed them at the end of the Bible in a special appendix. In addition, they labelled them as "apocryphal" (spurious, uninspired), a designation which helped to lower them in the estimation of Protestant readers.

The Lutheran and Anglican Bibles still carry these books in the appendix or give them at least a secondary place. But the other Protestant churches reject them entirely. In 1827 the British and Foreign Bible Society decided not to print or handle Bibles that contained the additional books and not to aid financially companies that published Bibles con-

taining them. As a result these books have practically disappeared from Protestant Bibles.

The Catholic Church has always considered these books as inspired and of the same rank as the other Old Testament books. Her attitude is based upon the following facts:

1) The Apostles and New Testament writers quoted principally the Septuagint. In fact, of the three hundred and fifty Old Testament quotations found in the New Testament, about three hundred are taken from the Septuagint.

2) Some of the New Testament writers made use of the additional books themselves, particularly of the Book of Wisdom, which seems to have been St. Paul's favorite volume. The Epistle of St. James—to take another example—shows an acquaintance with the Book of Ecclesiasticus. If the Apostles and New Testament writers used some of the additional books, did they not thereby approve the entire Septuagint collection?

3) The additional books were accepted in the Church from the beginning. The Epistle of Pope Clement, written before the end of the first century, makes use of Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom, gives an analysis of the book of Judith, and quotes from the additional sections of the book of Esther. The same is true of other early Christian writers.

4) The oldest Christian Bibles in existence (Codex Vaticanus, etc.) contain the additional books intermingled with the rest, just as we find them in the Catholic Bibles today.

5) The oldest Christian lists of Biblical books contain the additional books. In 382 Pope Damasus in a Roman Council issued a formal list of Old and

New Testament books and the list contains the same books as we have in our Bibles.

6) Finally, Christian art of the first four centuries—especially that found in the catacombs and cemeteries—furnishes among others the following illustrations from the additional books: Tobias with the fish (Tobias 6), Susanna (Daniel 13), Daniel and the dragon (Daniel 14), the angel with the three children in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3:49), Habacuc and Daniel in the lion's den (Daniel 14:35).

In conclusion, let us point out that since they follow the synogogue in their rejection of the additional books of the Old Testament, the Protestants should in all logic follow it in its rejection of the New Testament and of Christ Himself.

The Apocryphal Books

The Protestants often designate as "apocryphal" those seven books and those sections which their Bibles omit from the Old Testament. The Catholics object to this title. These books are regarded by the Church as inspired. They formed a part of the Bible of united Christendom before the Protestant revolt, and Christian antiquity was practically unanimous in regarding them as of divine origin.

But what, then, do Catholics mean by "apocryphal" books? The word "apocryphal" is derived from the Greek "apokryphos" and means something hidden or secret. The religious books of ancient pagans were called Apocrypha because they were kept carefully concealed in the temple and shown only to full-fledged members who were wholly initiated into the mysteries of religion. Books forged by magicians were also called Apocrypha because they were thought to contain hidden secrets.

Gradually, however, the word "apocryphal" came to have a very specific meaning. It came to be applied to a class of books, which pretended to possess divine authority and Scriptural rank but which never succeeded in obtaining a place among the books of the Bible. These Books were composed during the last two centuries before Christ or during the early centuries of the Christian era. The authors remained unknown or wrote under a fictitious name. Some of these books contain false and heretical doctrines, others aim at satisfying a foolish curiosity about Biblical personages, others strive to edify. Their value lies in setting forth, by contrast, the superior character of the inspired books and in furnishing to the Biblical scholar interesting information about the customs and conditions of the times.

The apocryphal books are divided into two groups—into the Old and the New Testament apocrypha. a) The Old Testament apocrypha supplement the inspired Old Testament books with fictitious stories about some patriarch or prophet, forged Messianic prophecies, or pious exhortations and precepts. Examples of this group are the Assumption of Moses, Apocalypse of Abraham, Ascension of Isaias, etc. b) The New Testament apocrypha strive to supplement and amplify matters either briefly mentioned in the inspired books or omitted entirely. Their favorite topics are the Infancy of Our Lord and His sojourn on earth after the Resurrection. They contain much that is silly, legendary and disedifying. The portrait of Our Lord contradicts in many respects that of the Gospel, and their accounts of Him contain much that is doctrinally unsound

and heretical. As many as fifty Gospels, twenty-two Acts, and many Epistles and Apocalypses were known to have belonged to this group at one time.

The New Testament

The Protestant New Testament contains the same books as the Catholic New Testament. Although Luther showed great hostility to St. James's Epistle because of its doctrine of the necessity of good works and contemptuously called it an "epistle of straw," he clearly saw that he had no more reason for excluding that book than he had for rejecting the other books of the New Testament. The differences between the Protestant and Catholic New Testament arise from changes in specific passages in various books of the New Testament.

In the passage from I Corinthians 11:27, "Whoever shall eat this bread OR drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord," the Authorized Version (AV) of King James replaced "or" by "and." Inspired by doctrinal and anti-Catholic bias, the editors purposely changed the text in order to remove the argument for communion under one kind. Today all Scriptural scholars agree that "OR drink the chalice" is the correct reading. Modern critical Protestant editions of the Bible—the Revised Version and the Standard Version—have rejected the reading of the Authorized Version and restored the old or Rheims-Douay reading.

A further deliberate change in the interest of the Protestant doctrine on original sin is introduced into several passages. The Reformers, as we know, maintained that human nature was essentially corrupted by the Fall. Man's intellect is positively

darkened and his free will destroyed. In I Corinthians 7:9 where the Rheims-Douay Version reads: "If they do not contain themselves, let them marry"; the Authorized Version changed the passage to read: "But if they cannot contain, let them marry." The same Authorized Version changes "do not" to "cannot do" in Galatians 5:17: "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary to one another, so that you do not the things that you would." The aim of the editors in both instances was to introduce into the Scriptures the false Lutheran doctrine concerning the total depravity of human nature because of original sin. St. Paul is made to affirm that a Christian cannot lead a stainless virtuous life. The critical editions of the Bible, however—the Revised and Standard Versions—refused to adopt this reading and returned to the reading of the Rheims-Douay.

To the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:13, the Authorized Version adds the doxology or the long ending: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen." The Revised Version, however, as well as all critical editions, omit this doxology—and correctly so. The doxology is not a part of the Lord's Prayer. It is not found in St. Luke's version of the Our Father. In St. Matthew's Gospel, the intimate connection between verses 13 and 14 shows that the original text had no clause between the two verses. The long ending is not found in two of the oldest extant Bibles—namely, the codex Sinaiticus and the codex Vaticanus. In the course of time, however, the doxology began to appear on the margin or was written in the text with

red ink, until finally in some later manuscripts it becomes a part of the Bible. According to the almost unanimous opinion of scholars the doxology is an interpolation which worked its way into some Bibles from the early Christian liturgy.

The King James Version (AV) also adopted the Protestant form of the *Gloria in excelsis Deo* in Luke 2:14. Before considering the intrinsic merits of this reading, let us compare it with the reading in the Revised Version (RV) and Standard Version (SV) and in the Rheims-Douay Version (RD):

AV—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men."

RV and SV—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom He is well pleased."

RD—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will."

These quotations show that the reading of the Revised and Standard Versions and that of the Catholic Bible are substantially the same. Hence we need consider only the AV reading and the RD reading. The Protestant version of the Angelic hymn consists of three clauses, the Catholic version of two clauses. The Catholic version is better attested because it is found in the oldest and best extant Bibles. Internal reasons likewise favor the RD reading. In the Protestant version we should expect an "and" before the third clause. The RD version gives us two parallel clauses, each containing three ideas parallel to the other:

In the highest . . . glory . . . to God.

On earth . . . peace . . . to men of good will.

Opinions are divergent as to the interpretation

of the phrase, "men of good will." Does "good will" signify a disposition or quality of the soul? If it does, the angel announces his tidings of peace to the well-disposed among men. This view is open to two objections: first, nowhere in the New Testament is the Greek original of "good will" used to signify the state of men's will in relation to God; second, this interpretation robs the message of its grand, comprehensive mercy. Christ died for all men and sent a message of peace to all men. God by the giving of His Son has shown His mercy to the whole world. The good will of God as it proceeds from God is universal, for He wishes all men to be saved. In every sense, therefore, the message of peace was to all men. Men are called "men of goodwill" in the sense that they are men enjoying the benevolence of God, the *objects* of God's redeeming will, or of His will to save them all.

Discussion Aids

Set I

1. What seven books, and parts of two others, were not found in the Hebrew Old Testament?
2. When were these seven books added to the Greek Old Testament?
3. Why were the Jews opposed to these seven books?
4. Why did the Protestants of the Sixteenth century object to these books?
5. When did these books definitely disappear from Protestant Bibles?
6. Give five reasons why the Catholic Church accepts these books.

Set II

1. Were the Protestants justified in labelling these books as "Apocryphal"?
2. What was the meaning of the word "Apocryphal"?
 - a) in ancient times?
 - b) in the last two centuries before Christ?
3. Discuss the author, purpose and value of the apocrypha.
4. Describe the Old Testament apocrypha; New Testament apocrypha.
5. When is the term "apocryphal" used in an objectional manner?

Set III

1. Why was Luther opposed to St. James's Epistle?
2. What change did the King James Bible introduce into I Corinthians 11:27?
3. What changes introduced by the King James Bible were inspired by the Reformers' doctrine on original sin?
4. Was the long ending, which Protestants today add to the Lord's Prayer, contained in the first and oldest Bibles?
5. What is the correct division and interpretation of the Angelic Hymn, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will"?

Religious Practices

- 1 I will always be grateful to the Catholic Church for preserving for me the priceless

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treasures of truth contained in the additional books of the Old Testament.

2. I will imitate Tobias by manifesting outwardly through good works the faith that is within me.
3. I will heed the lesson of II Machabees 13:46 and pray frequently for the dead.

Chapter III

The Bible, the Sole Rule of Faith?

Protestants derive their religion from a mere reading of the Bible which they interpret according to their own private judgment. Catholics derive their doctrines from the Church which propounds to them infallibly the teachings of the Bible and of Tradition.

Which of these two formulas is supported by the Bible itself and by the facts of history, and which consequently is correct?

The Bible makes it clear that Christ established the Church as a teaching organization to speak to the world in His name and with His authority. The Church was to teach men whatsoever He had taught—nothing more and nothing less: "All power is given to Me in heaven and earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18-20). Christ placed on all men the obligation of hearing His Church as they would hear Himself: "He that heareth you, heareth Me" (Luke 10:16); "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16). He promised to be with the Church and guide it until the end of time: "And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matthew 28:20). He sent the

Holy Ghost, the Spirit of infallible truth, upon the Apostles and their successors in order that they might be illumined and assisted in the work of continuing the teaching mission of God's own Son.

Our Lord Himself wrote nothing. He commanded the Apostles not to write but to teach and preach: "Going, therefore, teach all nations" and "preach the Gospel to every creature." Christ's disciples and the Christians were commanded to hear the Church, not to read the still nonexistent or at best incomplete New Testament Scriptures: "He who hears you, hears Me."

The teaching Church was in existence long before a single line of the New Testament was written. The Apostles evangelized different peoples, not by presenting to them a copy of the New Testament which did not as yet exist, but by preaching the Gospel, the oral message of Christ to them. Thousands of men became Christians and adhered to the whole truth of God before they saw or read a single book of the New Testament.

It was the leaders of the existing teaching Church who wrote the books of the New Testament. It was the Church which collected and preserved these books, and distinguished them from spurious books which might have otherwise found their way into the Bible. It was from the Catholic church that the Protestants of the sixteenth century took their Bible and also their belief in its divine inspiration.

How illogical, then, it is for a group to step in fifteen hundred years later, wrest the Bible from its historical and lawful possessor and fosterer, put the Bible in the place of the Church, and pretend to

possess a true understanding of the purpose and meaning of the Bible?

The different books of the New Testament were for many centuries scattered in the various Christian communities of the Orient. Being written on papyrus which was fragile and breakable, these books could not be widely circulated and hence were read by a comparatively few groups. It was only in 397 A. D. that the Council of Carthage finally decided which books belong to the Bible, and it was about this time, too, that the books of the Bible were combined into one volume. Yet prior to this, the Church spread rapidly to many lands, converts were received into the Church by the thousands, the faith of the people was so strong that it peopled heaven with countless saints and martyrs.

Before the invention of printing in the sixteenth century, copies of the Bible written by hand were so rare and costly that only the rich could procure them. To own a Bible during this period was to own a fortune, and in many instances the Bible had to be chained in order to prevent its being stolen. Were the poor, then, during all these centuries, without a religious guide and teacher? Was God indifferent to the salvation of the countless souls that passed into eternity during these fifteen hundred years? Did not our Lord provide for the salvation of these unnumbered millions, even though they could not procure, or read, or understand the Bible? We are sure that even our non-Catholic brethren would hardly subscribe to these blasphemous conclusions.

Bible Christianity, then, is an invention of the sixteenth century. In the previous centuries it was

not only unknown but it was impossible. Bible Christianity is a formal denial of the Catholic Church, of her divine authority and mission to teach all men. It strives to abrogate the Church which Christ instituted, endeavours to substitute in its place a book, and makes the Bible, as interpreted by one's own private judgment, the sole and supreme rule of faith and morality.

That the Bible is not self-explanatory is apparent, for example, from a mere casual reading of any chapter of the Epistle to the Romans or of the Apocalypse. That it is not self-sufficient is evident from the countless commentaries and books on Sacred Scripture. St. Peter himself was aware of certain difficult passages in the Pauline Epistles when he wrote: "Our most dear brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, hath written to you, as also in all his epistles speaking in them of these things; in which are certain things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction" (II Peter 3:15-16). The Bible is a large and ancient book, and no book can be perfectly intelligible to all man and of all times. It was written at first in the Hebrew and Greek languages which today are understood perfectly by only a few. It reflects the customs, habits of thought and conditions of an ancient civilization and was written in part to meet the problems of those times. It contains supernatural truths which transcend the capacity of human reason. These are only a few reasons why the Bible stands in need of an authoritative explanation.

The Bible is not a textbook or a systematic

exposition of Christian doctrine. It does not pretend to be a complete statement of Christian teaching. Three of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) are largely three versions of one and the same story. The Pauline Epistles are not doctrinal treatises but letters prompted by the needs of individuals and particularly communities. The thought furthest from the minds of these sacred writers was that their writings should be collected into one volume and considered as a complete statement of Christian theology.

The Bible nowhere states how many of its books are inspired and why. It nowhere teaches the abolition of the Sabbath or the abrogation of the precept prohibiting the eating of blood or things strangled. The basic Protestant article that Scripture is the sole rule of faith is not found on its pages. On whose authority, then, do the Protestants accept these doctrines and facts?

Bible Christianity is the motivating idea in two contemporary movements: The reading of the Bible in public schools, and second, the distribution of copies of the Bible in every tongue and in every country of the globe. We shall briefly evaluate these two activities.

Bible Reading In Public Schools

Twelve states by statute require Bible reading in the public schools: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee. Seven states have statutes specifically permitting the reading of the Bible in the public schools: Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Mississippi, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota. The authorities of a

state or of a public school who demand Bible reading as a means of moral education, tacitly recognize the Bible Christianity of the Protestants, impose it on the children of Catholic taxpayers, and thereby infringe on the latter's sacred convictions. Apposite in this regard is the statement of the attorney general of Michigan: "The principle of unfettered individual liberty of conscience necessarily implies what is too often forgotten, that such liberty must be exercised by him to whom it is given so as not to infringe upon the equally sacred right of his neighbor to differ from him. To that end it is fundamental that the law itself shall be watchful to forbid the use or abuse of any of its powers or privileges in the interests of any church or sect. Nowhere is such an abuse more likely to manifest itself than in our system of public schools."

Protestant Bibles—whether it be the King James Version or any other version—omit seven books from the Old Testament and sections of two other books. If they do not omit these books entirely, they relegate them to an Appendix and label them as "Apocrypha" (spurious books). Should state and school authorities impose the reading of a Protestant version in the public schools, they would thereby adopt and indorse the Protestant canon of Scripture, and with the force of civil law impose this arrangement on the children of Catholic taxpayers.

The problem as to what Bible would be used in the public schools, whether it would be a Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish version, offers almost insurmountable difficulties. The plan to read only certain passages from the Bible is unsatisfactory.

By the very fact that they are mere selections, they exclude the Bible as a whole and in this way infringe on the religious convictions of Catholics. Again, these selected readings would have to be non-dogmatic and colorless so as not to offend anyone. The great New Testament passages on the Church, the primacy of St. Peter, the Real Presence in the Eucharist would have to be excluded. The Jew, in turn, would oppose everything distinctively Christian and insist upon reading principally from the Old Testament.

Finally, the readings of passages from the Bible can hardly be more than a literary exercise unless it be accompanied by an interpretation. But such an interpretation is likely to take on a sectarian complexion and again subject the Catholic pupil to offense or to proselytism.

Bible Societies

Bible Societies are based on the principle that the Bible and the Bible alone is the foundation and source of all religion. The Catholic Church objects to Bible Societies for the following reasons:

- 1) Bible Societies are a denial of the Church as a divinely instituted teaching organization and the infallible interpreter of Sacred Scripture. It is an affirmation of Bible Christianity and of the principle of private judgment.
- 2) Divine revelation is contained not only in the Bible but also in Tradition. The Bible alone, consequently, is an insufficient rule of faith.
- 3) The Bible is a difficult book and needs interpretation. If even the Biblical scholar and preacher must make constant use of commentaries, how can an unlessoned pagan, as he labors through the

pages of the Bible, solve the critical problems of Scripture and construct for himself from his unexplained text an adequate concept of the teaching of Christ? Does not the existence of countless Protestant sects show that many have wrested the Scripture unto their own destruction?

4) The mere possession or reading of a Bible does not work wholesale conversion of individuals and nations. The distribution of thousands of Bibles frequently fails to produce a single convert.

5) Copies of the Bibles, distributed by these Societies, are often used for vulgar and profane purposes. Wrapping up groceries, papering walls, lining slippers are some of the uses pagans find for Bibles.

These Bible societies would do well to reflect seriously on the following remarks of a contemporary author: "While their societies are distributing abroad, to the confusion of the heathen, innumerable copies of the Bible, their religious brethren at home are busy tearing the book to pieces and robbing its pages of all authority. Large portions are rejected as spurious. Inspiration is denied to what remains. Young men are ordained ministers who do not believe in the Virgin Birth and corporal Resurrection of Our Lord. In the chairs of Protestant universities are seated the most ruthless destroyers of the Bible's sacred character. Inconsistency, however, was never a more striking note of Protestantism than it is today."

Discussion Aids

Set I

1. What is the difference between the Protestant and Catholic rules of Faith?

2. Christ established the Church as a teaching organization. Explain.
3. Did Our Lord write anything? Did He command the Apostles to write anything?
4. Did the Catholic Church exist before the Bible? Explain.
5. Was it easy for a Christian before the sixteenth century to procure a copy of the Bible?
6. Is the Bible self-explanatory?
7. Is the Bible a systematic, complete textbook of religion?
8. What doctrines and facts, accepted by the Protestants, are not found in the Bible?

Set II

1. Does Bible reading in public schools endorse Bible Christianity? Explain.
2. What Bible would be read in public schools?
3. Would it be satisfactory to read only select passages from the Bible?
4. Would anyone interpret the Bible in the public schools?

Set III

1. On what principle are Bible Societies based?
2. Why is the Church opposed to so-called Bible Societies?
3. Will mere reading of the Bible bring about conversions?
4. Is the study of the Bible an easy task?
5. How are non-Catholics tearing down with one hand what they are building up with the other?

Religious Practices

1. I will always recognize and hear the voice of Christ in the voice of the Church.
2. I will adhere confidently to the teaching of the Church which proposes to me the entire truth as found not only in the Bible but also in Tradition.
3. I will assent to the Church's teachings without any fear because the Church being infallible cannot err.

Chapter IV

Inspiration and Inerrancy

Inspiration

The Bible is not only a record of the divine revelations given to the human race and of the Providence exercised by God in behalf of man, but it is a true and trustworthy account of God's revelation to man written down under the impulse and guidance of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Bible is an inspired book. The word "inspiration" comes to us from the Vulgate which speaks of the Bible as "divinely *inspired*" and of the Sacred writers as "*inspired* by the Holy Ghost." St. Paul writes that "All scripture, *inspired* of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice" (II Timothy 3:16). And St. Peter adds that "prophecy came not by the will of man at any time, but the holy men of God spoke, *inspired* by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21).

Inspiration in its strict sense denotes the supernatural influence of the Holy Ghost under which the Bible was written. In his Encyclical on Sacred Scripture Leo XIII writes: "By supernatural power He (the Holy Spirit) so moved and impelled them (the sacred writers) to write—He was so present to them—that the things which He ordered, and those only, they first rightly understood, then willed faithfully to write down, and finally expressed in apt words and with infallible truth."

I. *Sacred Scripture* yield the following data concerning the inspiration of the Biblical books:

1). *Certain books or sections were written at the express command of God:* "And the Lord said to Moses: Write thee these words by which I have made a covenant both with thee and with Israel" (Exodus 34:27). "And the Lord said to Moses: Write you this canticle, and teach the children of Israel; that they may know it by heart, and sing it by mouth, and this song may be unto me for a testimony among the children of Israel" (Deuteronomy 31:19). "And it came to pass in the fourth year of Joakim the Son of Josias king of Juda, that this word came to Jeremias by the Lord, saying: Take thee a roll of a book, and thou shalt write in it all the words that I have spoken to thee against Israel and Juda, and against all the nations from the day that I spoke to thee, from the days of Josias even to this day" (Jeremias 36:1-3); the prophet Daniel recalls this incident when he writes that "The word of the Lord came to Jeremias the prophet" (9:2). St. John was bidden to "write in a book what thou seest" (Apocalypse 1:11).

2). *In some instances the sacred character of a book is expressly affirmed.* Thus God Himself in speaking to Josue teaches the sacred character of the Law written by Moses: "Let not the book of this law depart from thy mouth: but thou shalt meditate on it day and night, that thou mayest observe and do all things that are written in it" (Josue 1:8). The Psalmist tells us that the will of the just man is "in the law of the Lord, and on His law he shall meditate day and night (Psalm 1:2).

3). *The Holy Spirit is said to have spoken through the mouth of the prophets:* "The scripture must needs be fulfilled which the Holy Ghost

spoke before by the mouth of David" (Acts 1:16). God spoke "by the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of Our father David" (Acts 4:25). "The Holy Ghost saith: Today if you shall hear his voice," etc. (Hebrews 3:7; Psalm 94).

4). *The prophets are identified with Holy Scripture*: "Paul a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which he had promised before, by his prophets, in the Holy Scriptures, concerning his Son" (Romans 1:1-3).

5). *Scripture and God speaking are used interchangeably*: "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God justifieth the Gentiles by faith, told unto Abraham before: In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Galations 3:8). "The Lord spoke by the prophet" (Isaias) (Matthew 1:22).

6). *Our Blessed Lord, the Apostle and other New Testament writers quoted the Old Testament as the word of God.*

Notice for example, the seventy quotations from the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel, or the quotations used by Our Lord while he was being tempted by the devil (Luke 4).

II. *Christian Tradition* from the beginning believed in the divine origin of the Scriptures. St. Augustine speaks of the Scriptures as "God's handwriting" and adds: "Letters have reached us from that city apart from which we are wandering; these letters are the Scriptures which exhort us to live well."

The Second Council of Constantinople added to the Nicene Creed the clause that the Holy Ghost

"spoke through the prophets," thereby defining the inspiration of the sacred writers.

The Vatican Council defined that all the books of Scripture are sacred and canonical for the reason that, having been written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their author.

The Encyclical "Providentissimus Deus," issued by Leo XIII in 1893 affirms that "It is absolutely wrong and forbidden, either to narrow inspiration to certain parts only of Holy Scripture, or to admit that the sacred writer has erred. The system of those who restrict inspiration to things of faith and morals cannot be tolerated. All the books which the Church receives as sacred and canonical are written wholly and entirely, with all their parts, at the dictation of the Holy Ghost."

Nature of Inspiration

The *Holy Spirit* as principal author of Sacred Scripture influenced the sacred writer in three ways:

1. Illuminated the mind of the sacred writer.

Under the enlightenment of the Holy Ghost the sacred writer formed a concept of what God wished him to write (history, prophecy, didactic literature) and of the single truths or facts which it was to contain. This illumination was not necessarily revelation since the sacred writer might have come to the knowledge of what was already revealed to others. But it enabled him to make correct use of his faculties, aided him in the gathering of materials, so that he correctly conceived in his mind all that God wished him to write.

2. Moved the will of the sacred writer.

After the sacred writer had under inspiration

formed in his mind an idea of the book and of its contents, the Holy Spirit moved the sacred writer's will to write freely, though infallibly, what God wished.

3. *Aided the sacred writer in the work of composition.*

Finally, the Holy Spirit assisted the sacred author in carrying out his project, by watching over him and when necessary by positively directing him, lest he add or omit something and lest he fall into error. If certain writers made use of secretaries, and if these secretaries were instrumental in choosing the language and determining the mode of expression, they were inspired collaborators.

Principal and Instrumental Causes

Although God is the Author of the Bible, He did not write it with His own hand, neither did He create it out of nothing by His almighty word. He employed sacred writers and inspired them to write what he wished. Hence while God is the author of the Bible, the sacred writers, too, were authors in a sense of what they wrote.

This human authorship of Sacred Scripture has been recognized at all times, as is evident from the following three considerations: first, Our Lord and the Bible itself speak of the sacred writers as authors: "Moses spoke of Me," "Isaias said," etc.; second, Tradition from the very beginning spoke, for example, of St. Matthew's Gospel and of St. Paul's Epistles—expressions which recognize the human authorship of the Bible; third, each book is characterized by the language and style of the human author whose it is—facts which show that

the sacred writer was not a passive tool of the Holy Ghost but really the author of his book.

Inerrancy

Inerrancy is freedom from error. The inerrancy of Scripture is a consequence of its divine inspiration. Whatever the Bible teaches, God teaches, because God is the principal author of Scripture and His teaching is necessarily true.

We attribute this quality of inerrancy in the first place to the original Biblical books written by the pen of the sacred writers themselves, and, secondly to reproductions of the Bible, but only in so far as these agree with the original sacred books. Though all the original copies of the books of the Bible have long disappeared and though certain copies of the Bible may contain errors due to copyists, translators, editors, and printers, yet in most cases the true reading can be established with the aid of the old copies and versions.

This absolute inerrancy and authority of the Bible is taught by Sacred Scripture itself. Our Lord, the Apostles and Evangelists regarded any passage from Scripture as the word of God, as necessarily true, as final and supreme authority. They affirm that "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35), that "one jot, or one title shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18) and that the "Scriptures shall be fulfilled" (Matthew 26:54).

The Christian Church has from the very beginning associated inerrancy with the divine inspiration of Scripture. There are few doctrines on which the agreement of the early Fathers and Christian writers was so unanimous and emphatic as the inerrancy of the Bible. The conviction of the Fath-

ers on this point was not something which was apparent to them from a reading or study of the Scriptures, since the difficulties of the Bible present themselves even to a casual reader. Rather, it was a traditional teaching which they inherited from the Church with the Bible.

In recent years the principle of Biblical inerrancy was emphatically reaffirmed by Leo XIII: "So far is it from being the case that error can be compatible with inspiration, that, on the contrary, it not only of its very nature precludes the presence of error, but as necessarily excludes it and forbids it as God, the Supreme Truth, necessarily cannot be the Author of error." A believing Christian, then may never question whether the teaching of the Bible is true. Should doubts arise in his mind as to the meaning of certain statements in the Scriptures, he must be guided by the well-known rule of St. Augustine: "If in these books I meet anything which seems contrary to truth, I shall not hesitate to conclude either that the text is faulty, or that the translator has not expressed the meaning of the passage, or that I myself do not understand it."

The Bible, it must be remembered, is a large and ancient book, the product of a civilization and of conditions quite different from ours. It was written mostly by Orientals, whose ways of thinking and speaking were unlike ours, and in languages that we at times do not well understand. Since at times our data are only what we find in the Bible, we lack the necessary information to reconstruct a given incident with all its details. Occasionally the Bible embodies hyperboles, allegories, parables, etc. To

determine what the sacred writer meant to teach in a particular instance, we must first determine the literary form into which he cast his teaching. Again, we must make some allowances for poetic license in those books of the Old Testament which are poetry. Finally, much of the Bible deals with supernatural truths which of their very nature do not admit of direct proof.

Discussion Aids

1. How did the term "inspiration" arise? What is the meaning of the word?
2. In how many ways does the Bible itself teach the inspiration of the Scriptures?
3. What is the teaching of Christian Tradition concerning the origin and character of the Scriptures?
4. In what three different ways did the Holy Spirit influence the sacred writers? Explain.
5. Who is the author of the Bible? Make the proper distinction.
6. What is inerrancy? How is it attributed to the Bible?
7. Show how the Scriptures teach the inerrancy of the Bible.
8. Did the ancient Christian Church believe in inerrancy?
9. State briefly the teachings of Leo XIII on this point.
10. In upholding the inerrancy of the Bible what facts must be kept in mind?

Religious Practices

1. I will frequently read Sacred Scripture

which, unlike human books, is written by the finger of the Holy Spirit.

2. I accept the word of men who are fallible and often make a mistake; with much greater and absolute readiness will I accept the word of God Who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

3. I will recite with great fervor the words of the Nicene Creed: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified; *Who spoke by the Prophets.*"

Chapter V

The Bible as History

History is the systematic written account of events—especially of those affecting a particular nation—together with an explanation of their causes. Biblical history is a record of God's revelations dealing with the salvation of mankind from the creation of the world to the foundation of the Church. This historical account of God's dealing with men is contained in several Scriptural books, the contents of which we shall now briefly indicate ⁽¹⁾.

1. *Genesis*. In the first part of this book (ch. 1-11) Moses describes the beginning of all things: The creation of the material world and of man; the Fall; the promise of a Redeemer; the birth and longevity of the Patriarchs; the deluge, Noe and the Ark; the Tower of Babel and the dispersion of mankind. In the second part (ch. 12-50) the sacred writer describes the call of Abraham; the covenant of the circumcision; the birth and marriage of Isaac; the birth of Esau and Jacob; the life and character of Jacob and his twelve sons; the story of Joseph and his brethren; the sojourn of the Jews in Egypt.

2. *Exodus*. In this book the author describes the departure of the Jews from Egypt, the land of oppression and bondage. After noting the advent of a new king (ch. 1) who, unlike Pharaoh, was unfriendly to the Jews, the author gives us a short history of Moses (ch. 2-12). He tells us how Moses

⁽¹⁾ cf. H. Pope, "Catholic Student's 'Aids' to the Study of the Bible", Vol. II (London, 1930).

was exposed on the banks of the river and taken up by Pharaoh's daughter, how God appeared to him in a burning bush, sent him as a liberator to his people, and empowered him to confirm his mission with miracles. After narrating the ten plagues, the author describes the miraculous journey of the Jews to Mount Sinai (ch. 13-19). In the remaining chapters (ch. 20-40) he enumerates the Ten Commandments and other laws, and describes in detail the setting up of God's house, the tabernacle.

3. *Leviticus*. This book describes the duties, rites and ceremonies to be carried out by the Jewish priests and by their assistants, the Levites. It contains the laws concerning the various sacrifices and the manner of offering them (ch. 1-7). It describes the consecration of Aaron and of his sons to the Jewish priesthood and their first solemn sacrifices (ch. 8-10). It explains the distinction between clean and unclean animals and the laws concerning purification from leprosy and other legal uncleanness (ch. 11-15). After describing the feast of the expiation, it explains the various crimes and trespasses (ch. 16-20), and concludes with the ordinances concerning priests, offerings and feasts (ch. 21-27).

4. *Numbers*. This book is called *numbers* from the "numbering" or census which occurred at the beginning and again at the end of the forty years' wandering. The book opens with a description of the census, of the arrangement of the tribes in their camp, and of the obligations of the Levites. The latter are to take the place of the firstborn of the children of Israel in the divine services of the temple (ch. 1-4). It then enumerates further

laws and regulations, describes the offering of the princes at the dedication of the tabernacle, and recalls the second celebration of the Pasch (ch. 5-9). The following chapters (ch. 10-22) describe the thirty years wanderings of the Jews from Mt. Sinai to the plain of Moab, their many murmurings against and reconciliations with God. The remaining chapters (ch. 22-36) describe the sojourn on the plains of Moab, the appointment of Josue as Moses' successor, and the plans of the chosen people to enter into and divide among the tribes and Levites the Promised Land.

5. *Deuteronomy*. The thirty-three chapters of this book contain the great discourses of Moses to the Jewish people. In these speeches Moses extols the Providence of God in regard to the chosen people, repeats the principal laws, exhorts the Jews to obey them, and threatens dire punishment to those who transgress them. The concluding chapter (ch. 34), appended to the book, describes the death and burial of Moses.

The first five books of the Bible are frequently referred to as the Pentateuch. The word "Pentateuch" comes from the Greek terms "pente," meaning "five," and from "Teuchos," meaning "Book." A constant tradition, both Jewish and Christian, has always affirmed that Moses is the author of these five books.

Does the Pentateuch, and especially the book of Genesis, contain true history? Space does not permit us to enter into this vast and interesting problem, and hence we shall offer only a few brief arguments in favor of the historical character of these books:

a). The New Testament accepts as historical the narratives of the creation, the unity of the human race, man's original justice, the fall, the deluge, the patriarchs, etc. The great events of the opening chapters of Genesis are confirmed by similar narratives in the folklore of almost all peoples (see J. Feldmann, "Paradies und Sundenfall" Munster, 1913).

b). The few special facts narrated in Genesis as, for example, the story of paradise and the Fall, the flood and the dispersion of the human race, were events of such an unusual nature that tradition could easily have kept an accurate account of them.

c). The Jews were conscious of their divinely appointed mission, and hence, treasured with great care all information concerning their great men who were favored by God with a special revelation and had experienced His providential guidance.

d). Egyptian civilization is at least three thousand years older than the beginnings of the Jewish race. Modern science is now establishing many points of contact between Egyptian history and Old Testament history. Thus, for example, the Tower of Babel is said to belong to the same family as the pyramids of Egypt (See Series IV, ch. 3).

e). Moses meant to write history and inspiration guarantees the historical character of what he wrote.

f). Some of the facts narrated in Genesis now form a part of the infallible teaching of the church.

6. *Josue*. This book is so called because it was written by Josue and contains a record of the events which occurred under his leadership. The first

part of the book (ch. 1-12) tells us of the miraculous crossing of the Jordan, the fall of Jericho, and the conquest of Canaan. The book then describes the partition of the land by Josue and the priest Eleazer among the twelve tribes of Israel (ch. 13-22). The concluding chapters (ch. 23, 24) contain the final instructions and admonitions of Josue to his people.

7. *Judges*. This book covers a period of four hundred years, from Josue to Samuel, the last of the Judges. It is an account of the great leaders who guided the destinies of the chosen people before it had kings. The book opens with a description of the infidelity and idolatry of the Jewish people after the death of Josue (ch. 1,2). Then follows a series of biographical sketches of the Judges—of Othoniel, Ood, Samgar, Barak, Debora, Gedeon, Abimelech, Jephthe and Samson (ch. 3-16). The appendix (ch. 17-21) deals with the erection of an idol in Dan and the crime committed by the people of Gabaa a city in the tribe of Benjamin.

8. *Ruth*. The four chapters of this book record a touching incident from the time of the Judges. It tells us how Ruth, a Gentile woman of Moab, after the death of her Jewish husband returned with her mother-in-law, Noemi, to the latter's former home in Juda. Here Ruth became the wife of Booz, who was of the tribe of Benjamin. Of this union was born Obed, the grandfather of David, making Ruth the ancestress of David and of Christ: "Booz begot Obed, Obed begot Isai, Isai begot David" (4:22).

9. *I Kings*. This book gives us the history of *Samuel* (ch. 1-12) the last of the Judges, and of

the priest Heli and his two sons. It describes the battles of the Israelites with the Philistines and the wanderings of the ark of the covenant. It narrates the establishment of a Jewish kingdom with *Saul* as king (ch. 13-31). The later chapters show *Saul's* growing dislike and hatred of *David*. The book closes with a description of a battle between the Israelites and the Philistines in which *Saul* and his sons are slain.

10. *II Kings*. This book shows us the growth of the Jewish empire in the reign of king *David* (ch. 1-24). The book reveals the many weaknesses of *David* but at the same time his unwavering fidelity to the one true God and to the law of *Moses*.

11. *III Kings*. This book describes the reign of *David's* son, *Solomon*, his wisdom and his riches (ch. 1-11). It describes the building and dedication of the temple in Jerusalem. It narrates the split of the Jewish kingdom into the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. The latter comprised the tribes of Benjamin and Juda, the former, the other ten tribes; the latter came to be known as the Kingdom of Juda, the former, as the Kingdom of Israel. The book then continues with the parallel story of the Kingdoms, and in the concluding chapters narrates the remarkable deeds of the prophet *Elias*.

12. *IV Kings*. This book describes the marvelous accomplishments of the prophet *Eliseus* and continues the parallel account of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. (*III Kings* ch. 12 to *IV Kings* ch. 17). It records the end of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B. C. when the ten tribes were taken into Assyrian captivity, and the fall of the Southern Kingdom in 588 B. C. when the two tribes of Ben-

jamin and Juda were carried into Babylonian Captivity (ch. 18-25).

13. *I and II Paralipomenon* (from the Greek word meaning "things left over"). These two books sometimes supplement and amplify, sometimes summarize the Books of Kings. Book I stresses ancient genealogies (ch. 1-9) and concentrates on the history of *Saul* (ch. 10) and *David* (ch. 11-29):

Book II deals with the history of *Solomon* (ch. 1-9) and of the Kings in the Southern Kingdoms (ch. 10-36). Chapter 36:23 mentions the release of the Jews from Babylonian captivity by Cyrus. The two books of *Paralipomenon* are sometimes called the *Chronicles*.

14. *I Esdras*. The first part of the book (ch. 1-6) tells us of the first homecoming of the Jewish exiles from Babylon under Zorobabel and Josue. The author recalls how Cyrus, king of the Persians, released the Jews from captivity, restored to them the vessels which Nabuchodonosor had stolen, and gave them permission to rebuild the temple. He states the number of the Jews that returned and describes their zeal in rebuilding the temple despite the opposition of the Samaritans. In the remaining chapters (ch. 7-10) the author tells about the second homecoming of the exiles under Esdras and describes the work of Esdras in Jerusalem.

15. *II Esdras or Nehemias*. This book continues the history of the Jews, begun by I Esdras, after their return from captivity. It describes the arrival of Nehemias, cupbearer to the king of Persia, in Judea and the rebuilding of the walls of the temple (ch. 1-7) and explains the religious reforms inaugurated by Esdras and Nehemias (ch. 8-13).

16. *Tobias*. The book sets before us many good works performed in Assyrian captivity by Tobias and his son, pious Jews of the tribe of Nephtali. The books extols divine Providence and points out the value of good works.

17. *Judith*. The book tells us how Judith, a heroic Jewish widow, entered the camp of the Assyrians, slew their leader Holofernes by cutting off his head when he became drunk, and in this way saved her own people from destruction.

18. *Esther*. The book narrates how Esther, living in Babylonian exile with her uncle, was chosen queen by King Xerxes to replace queen Vasthi who was deposed for disobedience to the king. It also explains how Esther saved the Jews in Babylon from destruction by the evil courtier Aman. The present Jewish feast of Purim (of Lots) recalls the casting of lots by Aman to determine in what month the Jews should be destroyed.

19. *I Machabees*. This book describes the wars, undertaken by the Jews against Antiochus IV and his successors, in behalf of religious and civil liberties. The leaders of the Jews were the priest Mathathias and his five sons among whom Judas Machabeus was the most eminent. After indicating the cause of the wars, namely the cruelty of Antiochus Epiphanes (ch. 1-2), the book describes the deeds of Judas Machabeus (ch. 3-9), and of his brothers Jonathan (ch. 10-12) and Simon (ch. 12-16). The book covers approximately sixty years in the second century.

20. *II Machabees*. This book narrates and supplements many of the facts mentioned in the first

book. It deals especially with the persecutions by the Seleucidi and the wars of Judas Machabeus. The introduction of the book (ch. 1-2) contains two letters of the Palestinian Jews to the Alexandrian Jews and the author's preface in which he explains the scope and character of the book. The first part of the book (ch. 3-7) describes the beginning of the persecutions, the profanation of the temple, the glorious martyrdom of Eleazer and of the seven brothers and their mother. The second part (ch. 8-15) describes the wars and victories of Judas Machabeus.

The New Testament

1. *The Gospels.* The gospels contain an account of the nature, Person, teachings and works of Our Lord Jesus Christ. But while the theme of the four Gospels is one and the same Christ, and while the four narratives agree in all essentials and constitute one Gospel in fourfold form, the viewpoint and standpoint of each Evangelist is different:

St. Matthew wrote his Gospel to show that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament, and that His kingdom is the Church which He founded.

The aim of *St. Mark's* Gospel is to show, especially from Our Lord's miracles over nature, that Christ is God and that He alone verifies in Himself the Roman title of "Lord of All."

St. Luke stresses those incidents which illustrate the fact that Christ is Saviour of all mankind—of both Jews and Greeks.

St. John wrote his Gospel partly with a view to supplement those of his predecessors but prin-

cipally to show that Christ was God and the Light of the World.

Because of this special viewpoint of each Evangelist, the Gospels—whether taken singly or collectively—do not give us a complete biography. St. John tells us that “there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written every one, the world itself I think would not be able to contain the books that should be written” (21:25).

2. *The Acts of the Apostles*, also written by St. Luke, is a continuation of the Third Gospel. Conformably to the theme of his Gospel and of St. Paul's preaching—that Christ is Redeemer of both Jews and Gentiles—St. Luke narrates the foundation and propagation of the Church among the Jews by St. Peter (ch. 1-12) and among the Gentiles by St. Paul (ch. 13-28).

Discussion Aids

Set I

1. From the summary of the historical books of the Bible found in this chapter construct a brief history of the Jewish people.
2. From the literary works which you are reading or have read make a list of the Scriptural references which they contain. Try to find the exact Biblical book, chapter and verse which contains the incident or idea quoted.
3. Define literature. Why must all true literature take cognizance of religion and of the Bible?

Set II

The following are some of the sections from the historical books of the Old Testament which have been incorporated as Lessons into various Masses

of the Liturgical Year. Show how the contents of each selection are indicative of the central theme of the Proper of the Mass:

1. Genesis 28:10-22: Mass for Pilgrims and Travelers.
2. Exodus 23:20-23: Mass of the Guardian Angels.
3. II Kings 24:15-25: Mass in Time of Pestilence.
4. Tobias 12:7-15: Mass of St. Raphael.
5. Judith 13:22-25: Mass of the Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
6. Esther 13:9-17: Mass for Deliverance from the Heathen.
7. II Machabees 1:1-5: Mass for Peace.
8. II Machabees 12:43-45: Anniversary Mass for the Dead.
9. Where are Abel (Genesis 4:4), Abraham (22:12) and Melchisedech (14:18) mentioned in the Ordinary of the Mass? How is Ruth 2:4 used in the Ordinary of the Mass?

Set III

What idea like a golden thread runs through the following passages? Is there any development within that idea? How is it related to the Gospels?

1. "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed" (Genesis 3:15).
2. "Blessed be the Lord God of Sem, be Chanaan His servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and may He dwell in the tents of Sem, and Chanaan be His servant" (Genesis 9:26, 27).

3. "In thee (Abraham) shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3).
4. "The scepter shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till He come that is to be sent, and He shall be the expectation of nations" (Genesis 49:10).
5. "I shall see Him but not now; I shall behold Him but not near; a star shall rise out of Jacob and a scepter shall spring up from Israel" (Numbers 24:17).
6. "The Lord thy God will raise up to thee a prophet of thy nation and of thy brethren, like unto me; Him thou shalt hear" (Deuteronomy 18:15).
7. "I will raise up thy seed after thee (David), which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish His kingdom. He shall build a house to My name, and I will establish the throne of His Kingdom forever. I will be to Him a Father and He shall be to Me a Son" (II Kings 7:12-14).
8. "I will settle Him in My house, and in My kingdom forever; and His throne shall be most firm forever" (I Paralipomenon 17-14).

Religious Practices

1. I will try to exemplify in my own life the faith and absolute obedience of the father of the chosen people, Abraham, to God's Will.

2. When I read sections in the historical books which describe the vicès and crimes of men which show me what humanity was under the influence of original sin and without Christ, I will thank God for my living in the times after Christ's Redemption.

3. Realizing that it is only the grace of God which prevents me from falling into similar sins, I will always cooperate with the graces which the Promised Messiah merited for me so abundantly.

Chapter VI

The Wisdom Literature of the Bible

The Semites were practical rather than speculative thinkers. They did not have a philosophy in the strict sense of the term, and hence we find no philosophical system permeating the pages of the Old Testament. In the religious domain the practical spirit of the Semites took the form of Wisdom or Chokma. This wisdom was a more perfect and profound knowledge of revealed truths acquired by pious meditation and expressed in daily conduct. It was piety and sanctity according to the norm of divine revelation. This practical science of life, this heavenly wisdom, is generally couched in proverbs and parables which are all instinct with the thought of God and of His divine Law, and intended to lead man to a moral life and guide him away from sin. The following books of the Old Testament are classed as Wisdom literature: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticle of Canticles, Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus ⁽¹⁾.

The *Wisdom* or sapiential literature is designated by the following additional titles: *didactic*, because it teaches doctrinal truths and inculcates a way of life; *moral*, because it deals with the principles of morality; *poetical*, because both the ideas and the form of treatment are poetical. The use of these titles will become more apparent when we

(1) cf. H. Pope, "Catholic Student's 'Aids' to the Study of the Bible", London (1930), p. 188 sqq.

study the contents of the books to which they are attributed.

Job

The book deals with the difficult problem of reconciling the sufferings of just and innocent men with the justice and goodness of God. The author does not discuss the question in abstract terms but illustrates his principles by means of a concrete story about the patient and God-fearing Job. Job probably lived in patriarchal times. His home was in the land of Hus in the northeastern part of Palestine. He was the head of a large clan and was rich in lands and cattle. In rapid succession he lost his children and his possessions, was afflicted with a loathsome disease, and became an outcast from his own people.

His three friends—Eliphaz, Baldad and Sophar—who for seven days mourned over him in silence, open the discussion as to the cause of Job's sufferings (ch. 1-3). Sufferings, they contend, are the penalty of wrong doing. God is a severe and just judge who punishes the evil and rewards the good (ch. 4-31).

Eliu, one of the bystanders, reaffirms the justice and omnipotence of God, and maintains that sufferings purify us from vice and strengthen us in virtue (ch. 32-37).

God Himself, speaking from a whirlwind, bids man not to probe too curiously into the mysterious ways of divine Providence but to submit to the divine decrees.

Both the prologue and the Epilogue (ch. 42) imply that sufferings are a Providential test of man

and redound to the honor of man and the glory of God.

The Psalms

The word "psalm" is derived from the Greek term *psalmos* or *psallein*, and according to M. Britt, *A Dictionary of the Psalter*, p. 220, denotes "a sacred song to be sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument." The psalms, then, are one hundred and fifty sacred songs, composed for the greater part by David or during his reign, and used at the religious services on Mount Zion.

The central thoughts of the Psalms are God; the Messiah, and man. The Psalms describe the attributes of God, especially His omnipotence, omniscience, providence, justice, holiness and mercy. They predict the advent of the Messiah, and describe His future reign, His victories and triumphs, and the new Jerusalem which will draw all peoples to itself. At the same time, they portray the yearnings of man's soul after God, his complaints when crushed by powerful enemies, and his despairing appeals when overwhelmed by afflictions. But God is man's Deliverer, his strength and his hope. He who takes refuge in God has nothing to fear.

More specifically, the Psalms treat of the following subjects:

1. *God's Attributes:*

"O Lord our Lord, how admirable is thy name in the whole earth.

For thy magnificence is elevated above the heavens" (8:2).

"The heavens show forth the glory of God,
And the firmament declareth the work of his hands" (18:22).

2. *Relations of Man to God:*

"As the hart panteth after the fountains
So my soul panteth after thee, O God" (4:2).

"The Lord is my light and my salvation,
Whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the protector of my life,
of whom shall I be afraid?" (26:1).

3. *God's Providence over the Jewish People:*

"He divided the sea and brought them
through,

And he made the waters to stand as in a
vessel.

And he conducted them with a cloud by day,
And all the night with a light of fire.

He struck the rock in the wilderness,
And gave them to drink, as out of the great
deep.

And had rained down manna upon them to
eat,

And had given them the bread of angels"
(77:13-15, 24).

4. *The Law of God:*

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way,
Who walk in the law of the Lord.

Blessed are they that search his testimonies,
That seek him with their whole heart" (18:1-
2).

5. *Religious Feasts:*

"I rejoiced at the things that were said to
me,

We shall go into the house of the Lord.
Our feet were standing in thy courts,
O Jerusalem (121:1-2).

6. *The Messiah and His Kingdom:*

"The Lord hath said to me: Thou art my son,
 This day have I begotten thee.
 Ask of me, and I will give thee the Gentiles
 for thy inheritance,
 And the uttermost of the earth for thy possession" (2:7, 8).

7. *Prayer:*

"Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy
 great mercy.
 And according to the multitude of thy tender
 mercies
 Blot out my iniquity" (50:3).

The Psalms may be divided into the following groups: *didactic*, which treat of God's attributes and His relation to man (1, 36, 48, 72); *historical*, which were inspired by some historical incident (3, 17, 26); *national*, which treat of the history of the chosen people (77, 78, 104, 105); *festal*, which were sung at religious feasts and functions (14, 23, 112 to 117); *gradual*, which were sung by the pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem and by the singers on the steps of the temple (119 to 133); *Messianic*, which treat of the future Messiah (2, 21, 68, 109); *penitential*, which are permeated by the sentiment of contrition for sin (6, 31, 37, 50, 51, 129, 142); *vindictive*, which implore punishment upon the enemies of God's chosen people (108). Some psalms (9, 24, 33, 110, 111) are called *alphabetical* or *acrostic* because in the original each line began with one of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Psalm 118 has 176 lines and is divided into 22 strophes of 8 lines each. The lines of each strophe begin with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet (Aleph, Beth, etc.).

Proverbs

The book of Proverbs contains not only proverbial sayings—that is, short popular statements expressive of practical wisdom and experience—but also parables, similitudes, comparisons, and short pithy sayings. It is not merely a compilation of unrelated sayings, containing the ethical wisdom of the Orientals, but constitutes the ethical code of its authors. Its spirit is thoroughly religious and the idea of God permeates the entire book.

The introductory part of the book (ch. 1-9) is a treatise on the excellence and advantages of wisdom. It proclaims that the “fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (1:7). It exhorts men to seek after wisdom, which is the best preservative against temptation and “more precious than all riches” (3:15). It urges men to practice virtue, to flee the company of the wicked and to avoid the occasions of sin.

Chapter 8 contains a panegyric on the Personal Word of God or the Eternal Word of God which, according to Scripturists and theologians, was a foreshadowing of a Second Person in God:

“The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his
ways,
before He made anything from the beginning.
I was set up from eternity,
And of old before the earth was made” (8:22-
23).

The next twenty chapters (ch. 10-29) contain about five hundred Solomonic sayings and axioms, relating to wisdom and folly, virtue and vice. The appendix (ch. 30-31) contains the sayings of a

certain Agur, the son of Jakeh, and a poem in praise of a wise housewife.

Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes means a "preacher," or a "Collector" of sayings and maxims, or the chief of an assembly of the wise. The author was a Jew who accepted the great religious principles of the Old Testament and adhered to the Monotheism and religion of his forefathers.

Although the book is lacking in a logical arrangement of subject matter, we may, nevertheless distinguish two sections in it. The first part (ch. 1-4:16) is in a certain sense theoretical and strives to answer the following question: What in this world can bring permanent happiness to man? His own investigations had brought him to the mournful conclusion: "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity." A permanent and immutable happiness, which alone can make man blessed, is not to be found in this world. And why? Because man is shortlived and mortal; things are subject to a constant flux and change; in the present order of things good and evil are inseparably intermingled and man is helpless to change it. Earthly things, such as honor, glory, riches and sensual pleasures bring ennui rather than an abiding happiness. Wisdom itself shows the defects in the world, the perversion of justice, and the vanity of all things.

In the practical part of the book (ch. 4:17 to 12:8) the author points out what man must do to attain happiness. He must observe the commandments of God, submit to Divine Providence, refrain from inquiring too curiously into the ways of Divine Wisdom, avoid covetousness, sensuality, folly,

ambition, and detraction, practice patience and mortification, be diligent in good, and remember death and judgment. The author cautions us against excesses of all kinds, strikes out for moderation and the happy medium in which virtue and morality consist, and concludes his investigation with the words: "Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is all man" (12:13).

Solomon's Canticle of Canticles

Both Jewish and Christian tradition interprets the Canticle of Canticles as an allegory, that is, a description of one thing through the image of another. In the words and imagery of an earthly love between a royal bridegroom and his lovely bride the book represents the union between God and His chosen people, between Christ and His Church, and between God and the sanctified soul. The Canticle is also applied to the Blessed Virgin in whom was accomplished the union or marriage between the Person of the Eternal Word and human nature.

The Old Testament frequently describes the love between God and His creatures in the terms of earthly friendship or love; for example: "The bridegroom shall rejoice over the bride, and thy God shall rejoice over thee" (Isaias 62:5). In the book of Ezechiel, Jerusalem, under the figure of an unfaithful wife, is upbraided by God with her ingratitude and manifold disloyalties (ch. 16). In the New Testament the allegory of marriage is used frequently to portray the union and love between Christ and His Church. We shall quote three passages illustrative of this fact; "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be like to ten virgins, who taking their lamps went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride"

(Matthew 25:1); "the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church, He is the saviour of his body. Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church" (Ephesians, 5:23-25); "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give glory to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath prepared herself" (Apocalypse 19:7).

The Book of Wisdom

The book sings the praises of wisdom and extols its excellence. It strives to confirm the Jews, living amid worldly and unbelieving men in foreign lands, in this wisdom and faith of their ancient Hebrew forefathers. It condemns idolatry, combats the materialism and Epicureanism of the times, and rebukes the pagan thinkers for their failure to come to a knowledge of the one true God and to a true way of life.

The book falls naturally into three parts: the hortatory (ch. 1-6), didactic (ch. 6-9) and historical (ch. 10-19).

In the first section the author contrasts the peace and happiness of the just with the vain reasonings and unhappiness of the unjust. He points out the difference between the chaste and adulterous generations, between the death of the just and the end of the wicked, between the fruitless repentance of the wicked and the reward of the just in the next life, and concludes with an exhortation to princes to seek after wisdom.

In the second section, the author points out the excellence of wisdom and of her fruits, and indicates the method whereby wisdom may be attained. In ch.

7:22-27 the author personifies Wisdom and speaks of her divine origin. In ch. 9 he appends a prayer for wisdom.

In the last section, the author illustrates his teaching on the excellence of wisdom by pointing out the blessings which wisdom conferred upon the patriarchs and upon the chosen people of God.

Ecclesiasticus

In the early Christian centuries this book was called *Ecclesiasticus Liber* (a church-book), and hence arose our title of *Ecclesiasticus*. The Church used this book extensively in her public readings and in her instructions of prospective converts. The book aims to point out a way of life for those who seek wisdom and strive to live in conformity with the Divine Law. The book was composed in Jerusalem between 190 and 180 B. C. by Jesus, son of Sirach.

After pointing out in the prologue (ch. 1) the origin and value of wisdom, the book falls into two parts: moral (ch. 2-43) and historical (ch. 44-50:-23). In the first part the author lays down, without any apparent order, the rules of practicing virtue in all conditions of life. This section contains lessons from history on obedience, humility, friendship, relations with others, moderation, generosity, etc. Chapter 24 is a special treatise on the origin and dignity of Eternal Wisdom while chapters 42:15 to 43:37 are a magnificent hymn in honor of divine wisdom as manifested in the work of creation. The historical section illustrates the value and influence of wisdom from the lives of great men of the Old Testament. The book concludes with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving (ch. 51).

Discussion Aids

Set I

1. What did the Jews understand by "wisdom"? How was this wisdom usually expressed? What books of the Old Testament are considered as wisdom literature?
2. What great problem is discussed in the book of Job? How is it solved? Read the first two chapters of the book of Job in the light of the following quotation from William Shakespeare (1564-1616):
 "And one that is as slanderous as Satan
 And as poor as Job
 And as wicked as his wife."
3. What is meant by a Psalm? What are the central thoughts of the Psalms? How are the Psalms sometimes grouped?
4. What is meant by "proverbs"? Indicate the contents of the book of Proverbs?
5. What is meant by the title "Ecclesiastes"? How may the book be divided?
6. What is meant by an allegory? In what sense is the Cantic of Canticles an allegory? Is the image of the earthly love used frequently to describe the relation between God and His creatures?
7. What is the aim of the book of Wisdom? How may the book be divided?
8. What is the meaning of the word "Ecclesiasticus"? How did the book acquire the title? How may the book be divided?
9. What idea is contained in Psalms 2:7, 8; 15:10; 21:17-19; 39:6-9; 68:22; 71:10;

109:4? Where have you met this idea before?

10. What Person of the Blessed Trinity is foreshadowed in the following passages: Proverbs 8:22-23; Wisdom 7:22-27; Ecclesiasticus 24? Compare these passages with Genesis 1:26, 3:22 11:7; Isaias 6:1-9 which insinuate that there is more than one Person in God.

Set II

The following are some of the sections from the Sapiential books which have been incorporated into various Masses of the Liturgical year. Show how the contents of each selection are indicative of the central theme of the Proper of the Mass.

Proverbs 8:22-35 — Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Proverbs 31:10-31—Mass of a Holy Woman.

Canticle 2:1-14—Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Canticle 3:2-5—Mass of St. Mary Magdalene.

Wisdom 3:1-8; 5:16-20—Masses of Several Martyrs.

Wisdom 4:7-16—Mass of St. Stanislaus Kostka.

Wisdom 5:15—Mass of One Martyr in Paschal time.

Wisdom 7:7-14—Mass of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Ecclesiasticus 24:5-22—Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Ecclesiasticus 31:8-11—Mass of Confessors.

Ecclesiasticus 44:16-27—Mass of Confessors.

Where are Psalms 6:3, 42 and 50 used in the Liturgy?

Religious Practices

In my search for happiness I will be guided by the following three maxims:

1. "I saw in all things vanity, and vexation of mind, and that nothing was lasting under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 2:10-11).

2. "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity except to love thee and serve Thee alone" (*Imitation*, Bk. I ch. I n. 3).

3. "Thou hast made us, O Lord, for thyself, and our heart is restless until it rests in thee" (St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk. I n. 1).

Chapter VII

Letters and Epistles in the Bible

A letter is generally regarded as a communication of a private, personal, confidential nature whereas an epistle is of a general nature, addressed to all whom it may concern, and intended to be made public. This distinction may be retained for the Bible, although quite a number of the New Testament Epistles contain those intimate touches which are proper to a letter. On the other hand since the letters are a part of divine revelation they are now of interest to all men.

Letters in the Old Testament

The letters of the Old Testament may be divided into two groups:

1) Those which do not adopt any particular form but consist simply of the message. David's letter to Joab concerning Urias is an example of this group: "And when morning was come David wrote a letter to Joab: and sent it by the hand of Urias. Writing in the letter: Set ye Urias in the front of the battle, where the fight is strongest: and leave ye him, that he may be wounded and die" (II Kings, 11:14-15). To this same class belong the letters of Jezabel concerning Naboth (III Kings 21:8-10), of the king of Syria to the king of Israel (IV Kings 5:5-7), of Jehu to Samaria (IV Kings, 10:1-6) of Elias to king Joram (II Paralipomenon, 21:12-15), and many others.

2) Those which are formal, didactic, and ele-

gent in form, which carry the name of the writer, the name of the addressee, a salutation, the message and a final greeting. As examples of this second group we may mention Aman's letter ordering the destruction of the Jews (Esther, 13:1-7), Artaxerxes' letter in favor of the Jews (Esther 16:1-24), the letter of the Romans to different nations in favor of the Jews (I Machabees 15:16-24), letter of the Jews in Jerusalem to the Jews in Egypt (II Machabees, 1-2), and the letter of the Apostles, assembled at Jerusalem, to the Churches (Acts 15:23:29). We shall quote the last one in full:

“The apostles and ancients, brethren
to the brethren of the Gentiles that are at Antioch, and in Syria and Cilicia,
greeting.

Forasmuch as we have heard, that some going out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandments; It hath seemed good to us, being assembled together, to choose out men, and to send them unto you, with our well beloved Barnabas and Paul: Men that have given their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also will, by word of mouth tell you the same things. For it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things: That you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication, from which things keeping yourselves, you shall do well.
Fare ye well.”

The Epistles ⁽¹⁾

The Epistles are the twenty-one books of the New Testament written in the form of letters to churches or individuals. The fourteen Epistles of St. Paul are called after the group or person to whom they were addressed. The remaining seven are called by the name of the author. They are called "Catholic" because they were intended for the Church at large, although the second and third Epistles of St. John are addressed to individuals.

The Pauline Epistles

The arrangement of St. Paul's Epistles in our Bibles goes back to the Council of Trent and to St. Augustine's times: first come the Epistles addressed to churches, listed in the order of the dignity of the churches (Romans, Corinthians, etc.); second, Epistles addressed to individuals (Timothy, Titus); and, lastly, the Epistle to the Hebrews. In point of time, the Epistles to the Thessalonians are the first Epistles that St. Paul wrote and also probably the oldest books in the New Testament. The Epistles to Timothy and Titus are called Pastoral Epistles because they contain instructions concerning the episcopal office. The Epistles to Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon are called the Epistles of the Captivity because they were written while St. Paul was imprisoned in Rome or Caesarea.

The Pauline Epistles are cast in the external form which was common to the letters of ancient times. They contain the name of the sender; the name of the addressee, to which is often attached a laudatory epithet; a greeting, to which is frequently

(1) cf. H. Pope, "Catholic Student's 'Aids' to the Study of the Bible" (London, 1926), Vol. V.

added a thanksgiving and a prayer for the one to whom he writes; the body of the letter which is usually divided into the dogmatic and moral sections, the former explaining truths of faith, the latter pointing out rules for Christian living; concluding salutations and the oft-repeated phrase, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." Paul usually dictated his letters to another, but he himself added brief exhortations and salutations at the end. His own signature was a sign of genuineness (I Corinthians 16:21; II Thessalonians, 3:17).

St. Paul's Epistles were not deliberate treatises and systematic expositions of Christian theology. They were not something studied and literary. They were simple letters, pastoral and not personal, written on a specific occasion and to a particular body of converts. They were suggestions in regard to local difficulties, or words of counsel, encouragement or consolation. They were supplementary to the ordinary teaching, and he does not dwell in them on anything that is not a matter of controversy or difficulty. Hence, they were not called forth by any inward purpose or necessity on the part of the Apostle to formulate his thought, but each of them was written in response to particular conditions in the community to which it was addressed. And the contents and form are often due to the Apostle's vivid realization of the situation to which he is addressing himself. A brief analysis of the purpose and substance of each Epistle will clearly illustrate these points.

1. *I Thessalonians*. Some of the Thessalonian Christians, whom St. Paul converted about 50 A.D., had not wholly emerged from the Gentile way of

living, were given to leisure and laziness thinking that Christ's return was at hand, and were extremely anxious about the lot of the dead at the second coming of Christ. St. Paul wrote his first Epistle to explain certain doctrinal truths to them and especially whatever pertained to Our Lord's second coming. He assures them that the dead would share equally with the living in the blessings of Christ's return. In the historical section of the Epistle (ch. 1-3) the Apostle rejoices over the happy condition of the Thessalonians, recalls his ministry and labors among them, and expresses the desire of visiting them. In the parenetic part (ch. 4-5) he urges the Thessalonians to avoid luxury, avarice and laziness, instructs them about the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead, and recommends obedience, peace, love, patience and prayer.

2. *II Thessalonians.* The Christians persevered constant in their faith but were still too anxious about the day of Our Lord's coming which they thought was at hand. After thanking God in the opening chapter (ch.1) for their faith and constancy, St. Paul in the doctrinal part of the Epistle (ch. 2) instructs them about Our Lord's coming. The day of Our Lord's coming, though uncertain, is not yet at hand; it will be preceded by certain signs, such as the man of sin, the apostasy of many, the destruction of the adversary. In the parenetic part of the Epistle (ch. 3) he urges the Thessalonians to pray and to avoid laziness.

3. *Galatians.* The Judaizers—certain Christian Pharisees of Judea—followed closely upon St. Paul's heels, invaded the Apostles' Galatian mission and maintained that if the Gentiles wished to be

saved they must, in addition to embracing Christianity, "be circumcised, and be commanded to observe the law of Moses" (Acts 15:5). The Epistle to the Galatians was written to refute these zealots of the Mosaic Law. After the customary salutation (1:1-5), St. Paul at once states the central theme of his Epistle: His Gospel is of divine origin, it is immutable, and therefore cannot be supplemented or perfected by man (1:6-10). He defends this thesis by a historical argument (1:11 to 2:21) and by a Biblical argument (3:1 to 4:31). First, he shows that his Gospel was received directly from God, approved by the Apostles, and applied in practice. Secondly, he proves that the Galatians received the Holy Spirit not because of their observance of the Law but because of faith; that Abraham was justified by faith before circumcision or the giving of the Law; that the Law was a pedagogue unto Christ and abrogated at His coming. In the parenetic part of the Epistle (5:1 to 6:10) he exhorts the Galatians to abide in that freedom with which Christ made them free, and in the concluding section (6:11-18) affirms that he himself will glory in Christ alone.

4. *I Corinthians*. This Epistle is a solution of pastoral problems which arose in his mission at Corinth and which were referred to the Apostle for solution. After the customary greetings (1:1-9), the Apostle proceeds to deal with the abuses in the Corinthian church (1:10 to 6:20): He condemns their dissensions, orders the ejection of the incestuous man, and commands the Christians not to bring their difficulties before pagan judges. He then answers the questions which had been submitted

to him (7:1 to 15:58) and which dealt with marriage, virginity, meats sacrificed to idols, the proper decorum in worship, the Eucharist and the love-feasts, charismatic gifts and the resurrection of the dead. In the epilogue (16:1-24) the Apostle lays down the rules for collecting alms and promises to visit the Corinthians shortly.

5. *II Corinthians*. The Judaizers, who had invaded Corinth, were making various insinuations about St. Paul's character and his work. Paul, they said, was dishonest, inconstant, ambitious, weak, compromising in his attitude, contemptible in his appearance and in his speech. The Second Epistle is St. Paul's defense of his apostolic authority and of the purity of his Gospel—his *Apologia pro vita sua*. In the first part of the Epistle (1:12 to 7:16) he explains to the faithful the character of his apostolic office; in the second (8:1 to 9:15), he urges the faithful to give alms; and in the third (10:1 to 13:10), answers his adversaries.

6. *Romans*. St. Paul planned to stop at Rome on his way to Spain. In order to prepare the way for his visit, St. Paul sent them an Epistle, in which he summed up the principal points of his teaching and at the same time reviewed the teaching of the Epistle to the Galatians. After a rather lengthy introduction (1:1-15) the Apostle states the theme of the Epistle: "The gospel is the power of salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew, first, and to the Greek" (5:16). In the doctrinal section (1:16 to 11:26) St. Paul explains the necessity of justification for both Gentiles and Jews, the method of justification, the effects and fruits of justification, and the special problem of the justification of the

Jewish people. In the moral section (12:1 to 15:13) he explains our duties to God, to our neighbor and to ourselves ⁽¹⁾.

7. *Colossians*. This epistle was written in defense of Christ's divinity and the dignity of our life in Christ against certain false teachers, who had invaded Colossa, and advocated the cult of angels as necessary for salvation, in this way minimizing the dignity of Christ, the one sole Mediator. They also inculcated a rigid abstinence from certain foods and strove to impose upon the faithful various Mosiac observances. In the dogmatic and doctrinal section of the Epistle (1:1 to 3:20) St. Paul defends the unique dignity of Christ and refutes the false doctors. In the moral section (3:1 to 4:6) he urges the Christians to live up to their dignity as members of Christ's body, explains the moral obligations of various groups, and recommends prayer, vigilance and prudence.

8. *Ephesians*. This epistle is an encyclical circular letter, addressed to the church of Ephesus and to the churches of Asia Minor, to explain to them that they are not isolated groups but incorporated into one and the same mystic body. In the doctrinal section of the Epistle (1:1 to 3:29) the Apostle explains our redemption by Christ and the incorporation of all men—Jews and Gentiles—into the one Church of which Christ is the Head. Of this mystery or Gospel St. Paul proclaims himself the privileged preacher. In the moral section (4:1 to 6:9) the Apostle explains our individual as well as social duties.

(1) cf. R. G. Bandas, "The Master-Idea of St. Paul's Epistles or the Redemption" (St. Paul, 1925).

9. *Philemon*. This Epistle is a letter which St. Paul sent with Onesimus, a run-away slave, to the latter's master, Philemon. In this letter St. Paul asks Philemon to restore and, if possible, to free Onesimus. It has been called the Epistle of Emancipation.

10. *Philippians*. This is a letter of gratitude and joy addressed by the Apostle to his beloved converts at Philippi, who had befriended him and helped him on more than one occasion. He tells them of his great affection for them (ch. 1), recommends unity and humility to them (ch. 2), warns them against false teachers (ch. 3) exhorts them to persevere in virtue, and acknowledges their contributions (ch. 4).

11. *Titus, First and Second Timothy*. These Epistles are called "Pastoral Epistles" because they were addressed to the pastors or bishops of the faithful and deal with Church government and the hierarchy. They treat of the following five points:

1) The necessity of preserving the purity of doctrine; 2) The method of proceeding against false teachers; 3) The rules to be observed in selecting men for the diaconate, priesthood and episcopacy; 4) Obedience towards religious superiors; 5) Duties of various groups of the faithful.

12. *Hebrews*. The purpose of this Epistle was to point out the great superiority of the New Testament over the Old and to prevent the Christian Jews under the stress of persecution from falling back into Judaism which at the time had taken on a new vigor and splendor. St. Paul describes the dignity of Christ, of Christ's priesthood and of his office (ch. 1 to 10:27) and warns the Christians not to

return to the abrogated institutions of the Old Law. In order to encourage his readers he places before them examples of heroic faith in the Old Testament (ch. 11).

The Catholic Epistles

The seven remaining Epistles are called "Catholic" Epistles because they were not written, like St. Paul's Epistles, only to one church or person but to several churches.

1. *Epistle of St. James.* This Epistle was addressed to Jewish Christians, who maintained a close connection with the mother church in Jerusalem, but who did not express their faith sufficiently in good works, especially, works of charity, mercy and mortification of the tongue.

2. *Jude.* This Epistle was written to Jews of both Palestine and the Dispersion whose communities had been invaded by fallen away Christians. These false teachers denied Christ's Divinity, His teachings and His second coming, blasphemed the angels, and inculcated pagan vices. St. Jude bids the Christians to stand firm in the faith delivered to the saints.

3. *I Peter.* This Epistle is directed to the faithful of several provinces who were on the point of defecting from the Christian faith because of persecutions from both Jews and Gentiles. St. Peter places before them their true dignity: They are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of acquisition. Suffering is a test of their faith, and their exemplary life a refutation of the calumnies of the adversaries.

4. *II Peter.* In this Epistle St. Peter again warns the Christians of Asia Minor against the

heretical teachers who inculcated all kinds of vices and denied Christ and His second coming. St. Peter urges the Christians to walk worthily of the vocation in which they were called, describes the punishment in store for the seducers, and reaffirms the second coming of Christ and the conflagration at the end of the world.

5. *I John.* St. John warns the Christians against certain heretics who denied Christ's divinity (Ebionites) or who denied that Christ came in the flesh (Docetae). The Apostle briefly explains the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Redemption and urges all to practice charity.

6. *II John.* St. John urges the Christians to preserve the faith, practice charity, and avoid heretics who were teaching that Christ did not come in the flesh.

7. *III John.* This is a commendatory letter written to a certain Caius, who gave hospitality to Christian preachers sent out by John.

Discussion Aids

Set I

1. What, in a general way is the difference between a letter and an epistle?
2. Into what two groups may we divide the Old Testament letters? The style of which group did St. Paul and the Apostles follow?
3. How many Epistles does the New Testament contain? What are the "Catholic" Epistles? What is the main thought in each?
4. How many Epistles did St. Paul write? Explain the arrangement of his Epistles in the New Testament. What is the main thought in each Epistle?

5. What are the Pastoral Epistles? the Epistles of the Captivity?
6. Is there any similarity of aim of St. Matthew's Gospel and the Epistle to the Hebrews?
7. St. Paul's Epistles were not deliberate treatises and systematic expositions of theology. Explain.
8. Which one of St. Paul's Epistles is the Epistle of Redemption and justification? of freedom from bondage to the Mosaic Law? of hope? of joy? of emancipation? of consolation and encouragement?

Which Epistle stresses Christ's Person? Christ's Body, His Church?

Which Epistle is a solution of practical difficulties? a defense of the Apostle's impugned authority? a manual for a Christian bishop? The testament of a dying soldier of Christ?

Set II

1. *Read Romans 5:12-21, 7:15-25 and 1:18-32.* The first speaks of the introduction of original sin into the human race, the second, of concupiscence which we inherit with original sin, and the third, of the life which results from the reign of original sin. What is the antidote to all this?
2. *Read Romans 8:35-39.* What qualities should our love of God possess?
3. *Read I Corinthians 7.* What does St. Paul say in this chapter about divorce? the Pauline privilege? virginity?

4. *Read I Corinthians, 13.* What qualities should our love of neighbor possess?
5. *Read II Corinthians 4:17 to 5:5.* What value does St. Paul attribute to suffering?
6. *Read Galatians 1:8-12.* According to this passage, are we to lend a willing ear to preachers of new religions?
7. *Read Galatians 5:16-26.* What are the works of the flesh? What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?
8. *Read Ephesians 5:22-33.* What analogy does St. Paul establish between a husband and a wife, on the one hand, and Christ and the Church, on the other?
9. *Read Philippians 2:5-11, Colossians 1:15-20 and Hebrews 1:1-14.* What does St. Paul say about the Person of Christ in these passages?
10. *Read I Thessalonians 4:15 to 5:3.* Does St. Paul say that we can predict the last day with certainty?
11. *Read II Peter 3:10-13.* What will happen to the material universe on the last day?
12. *Read James 3:1-12.* Why, according to St. James, are sins of the tongue so unbecoming?

Religious Practices

In the practice of charity I shall be guided by the following three principles laid down by St. John in his first Epistle:

1. "Let us therefore love God, because God first hath loved us" (4:19).

2. "God laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (3:16).

3. "Let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (3:18).

Chapter VIII

Prophetical Literature in the Bible

The Prophetical Office ⁽¹⁾

1. *Definition of a prophet.* A prophet is one who speaks for another or in the place of another. The prophets were the spokesmen of God and communicated God's message to men. This divine message could refer to the past, present or future. Because of the supernatural illuminations through which the divine message came to him, a prophet was also called a "Seer" (I Kings 9:9).

2. *The prophetical office.* The office of a prophet was twofold: first, as a *teacher* in Israel, the prophet explained the Law, insisted upon its observance, punished its transgressors, resisted idolatry and pagan infiltrations, warned against dangerous alliances with pagan kings, kept the idea of the one true God living in the minds of the people, preached penance, etc.; second, the prophet *predicted* the future lot of the chosen people, the coming of the Messiah and the blessings of the Messianic kingdom.

3. *Origin of prophecy.* The prophetical office was not hereditary like that of priests and kings. The prophetic call usually came suddenly: The prophet knew the day and the moment when revelation first came to him. Prophets came from all vocations in life; Some were priests, others princes,

(1) cf. H. Pope, "Catholic Student's 'Aids' to the Study of the Bible" (London, 1930) Vol. II.

others shepherds, others farmers, etc. The essence of the prophetic office consisted in a God-given message and mission: "For prophecy came not by the will of man at any time, but the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21).

4. *The channels of prophecy.* Revelation came to the prophets in three ways: a) by an *external image* perceived by the senses of the prophet; for example, the burning bush of Moses or the handwriting on the wall of Balthasar's banquet hall; b) by an *internal image* perceived by the prophet in a vision, dream or ecstasy; c) by *words* spoken directly to the prophet. The prophets frequently explained the message to the people or acted it out for them. The gift of prophecy was not habitual to them: They were not in constant communication with God. They distinguished their own concepts from the contents of the divine message, and when they had no illumination from God they were fully aware of the fact.

5. *Classification of prophets.* The prophets in the period after Moses are divided into groups: The Older Prophets and the Younger Prophets. The former preached orally, the latter not only preached but also wrote down their discourses and prophecies; the former aimed at the conversion of hearts, the latter, in addition, pointed to the future Messiah. The Older Prophets numbered such men as Samuel, Gad, Nathan, Elias, and Eliseus. The Younger Prophets are divided according to the bulk of their writing into the major and minor prophets. With the exception of Osee, Amos and Jonas, who lived in the kingdom of Israel, all the prophets exercised

their ministry in the kingdom of Juda. Scripture also mentions three female prophets: Mary, the sister of Moses (Exodus 15:20), Debhora (Judges 4:4) and Holda (IV Kings 22:14).

6. *Authority of the prophets.* How did the people know that these men had a divine mission? They were men of an irreproachable character and conduct; they performed miracles in confirmation of their teaching; they made predictions which came true; despite their severe denunciations, they were recognized as divine messengers by the people. Our Lord, the Apostles and New Testament writers also recognized them as men of God. *The false prophets*, on the other hand, were actuated by base motives, corrupted by pride, made fantastic predictions, prophesied for earthly gain, preached what was flattering to men's passions.

The Major Prophets

1. *Isaias.* The book of Isaias contains two parts: A book of judgments (1-35) and a book of consolations (40-66). The first describes the punishments which God will inflict upon pagan nations and upon the chosen people, though less severely upon the latter because of its Messianic faith; the second predicts the liberation of the Jewish people from Babylonian captivity and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom. In a historical section (36-39) the prophet describes the invasion of Juda by the Assyrian Sennacherib. Because of his minute description of the Person and work of Our Lord, Isaias is called the Evangelist of the Old Testament. Chapters 7 to 12 are described as the "Book of the Emmanuel."

2. *Jeremias.* Though wanting in chronologi-

cal order the book of Jeremias may be roughly divided into two sections: prophecies dealing with the punishment about to be inflicted upon Juda because of its ingratitude, infidelity, obstinacy, and lack of a true inward spirit in its worships (1-45); prophecies about other nations (46-51). In a historical appendix the author describes the capture and destruction of the Temple and of the city of Jerusalem.

The *Lamentations of Jeremias* are five elegiac songs in which the author laments over the fall of Jerusalem and the miseries of its people. In the original Hebrew each stanza begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The *Prophecy of Baruch*, a disciple and secretary of Jeremias, describes the grief, repentance and hopes of the Jews in Babylonian Captivity.

3. *Ezechiel*. Ezechiel was called to the prophetic office the fifth year of the Babylonian captivity, about seven years before the downfall of Jerusalem. The book of Ezechiel falls naturally into two parts: the first contains prophecies pronounced before the downfall of Jerusalem in 587 (2-32), the second (33-48), the prophecies pronounced after the destruction of the holy city; the first deals with God's judgments pronounced against the chosen people and the pagan nations because of their wickedness and impenitence, the second deals with the restoration of the theocratic kingdom of the new Israel, and with the new Temple and its worship; the first deals with divine justice, the second, with divine mercy.

4. *Daniel*. Daniel, of noble blood and of the tribe of Juda, was carried into Babylonian captivity

together with other prominent Jews in the year 606 B.C. Here he was educated at the court of Nabuchodonosor and, because of his wisdom, was highly regarded by the king. The book of Daniel tells us about his own life (1-6) and records his visions and prophecies (7-12). The concluding chapters narrate the story of the chaste Susanna and of Bel, the idol (13-14).

Minor Prophets

1. *Osee*. Osee preached and wrote in the kingdom of Israel in the eighth century B.C. In the first part of his book (1-3) he explains in symbolical language the relations and covenant between God and Israel, and in the second (4-14) denounces the idolatry, corruption and infidelity of the priests and princes, predicts God's punishment, the repentance of the people and eventual happiness.

2. *Joel*. In the first section (1 to 2:17) the prophet describes the evils that are about to befall Juda and urges the people to repent; in the second part (2:18 to 3:21) he predicts the blessings of the Messianic kingdom, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all flesh, and the final judgment.

3. *Amos*. The book contains the prophet's sermons against the sins and wickedness of the kingdom of Israel (3-6) and five symbolical visions (7-9) illustrating the evils about to come upon Israel.

4. *Abdias*. The prophet describes the destruction of Edom because of its iniquity and injustices to Jacob, and predicts the salvation of Israel.

5. *Jonas* describes the effects of the prophet's mission and teaching in the luxurious city of Ninive.

6. *Micheas*. The prophet Micheas lived in the

kingdom of Juda at the time of Isaias before the destruction of Samaria in 722. The book is divided into three parts each one of which begins with the word "Hear." The first part (1-2) contains God's judgments against Israel and Juda; the second (3-5), a condemnation of the sins of the false prophets and judges, and the third (6-7), God's expostulation with the Jews and the salvation of all mankind.

7. *Nahum*. Describes the capture and destruction of Ninive.

8. *Habacuc* predicts the destruction of Juda by the Chaldeans and describes the punishment that will be meted out to Babylon.

9. *Sophonias* inveighs against the sins of the kingdom of Juda, predicts dire punishment for it, announces God's judgments against the outside pagan nations, prophesies a severe punishment for the city of Jerusalem but ends with a note of encouragement and hope.

10. *Aggeus* was active among the exiles who returned from the Babylonian captivity. He rebuked the people for their indifference and urged them to rebuild the Temple. He assured the people that the second temple would be more glorious than the first because it would be honored by the presence of the Messias.

11. *Zacharias* likewise worked among the returned exiles. In eight visions (1-6) he predicts the glory of the Messianic kingdom. He combats an incipient Pharisaism (7-8), and describes the victory of the Messianic kingdom over its enemies (9-14). The book contains interesting details about the Passion of Our Lord.

12. *Malachias* was the last prophet before

John the Baptist. He lived in the time of Esdras and Nehemias. He rebuked the priests for neglecting the worship of God and inveighed against mixed marriages. He predicted the coming of the Messiah and His precursor, and announced a new sacrifice and a new priesthood.

The Apocalypse

The Apocalypse is the only prophetic book of the New Testament. It was written by St. John on the Island of Patmos about the year 98. The theme of the Apocalypse is stated in chapter 1:19: "Write therefore the things which thou hast seen, and which are, and which must be done hereafter." The book then falls naturally into two sections, the first (2 to 3:7) dealing with the things that are, the second (4:1 to 22:5) dealing with the things that "must be done hereafter." The first describes the present conditions of the Church and contains the letters to the seven churches. The second comprises visions which deal with the Second Coming of Christ and the signs which will precede the final judgment. These visions are six in number: the book signed with seven seals; the angels with the seven trumpets; the two signs in the heavens; the seven angels with the seven vials; Christ's victory over the beast and the kings of earth; the new Jerusalem. In the epilogue (22:6-21) St. John says that his prophecy was approved by the Angel and by Christ Himself.

Messianic Prophecies in the Major and Minor

Prophets

1. Isaias

1. *Hope of a Redeemer:* "Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee! For behold darkness

shall cover the earth, and a mist the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising" (Isaias 60-1-3).

2. *Longing after the Saviour*: "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just; let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour" (Isaias 45:8).

3. *The Virgin-Birth*: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel" (Isaias 7:14). The following passage in Jer. 31:22, is also quoted in support of the virginal conception: "The Lord hath created a new thing upon earth; a woman shall compass a man."

4. *Christ's divine attributes*: "A child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace" (Isaias 9:6).

5. *The seven gifts*: "There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him: the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness. And He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord" (Isaias 11:1-3).

6. *The Precursor*: "The voice of one crying in the desert: prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God" (Isaias 40:3).

7. *The Messiah's exquisite gentleness*: "He shall not cry, nor have respect to person, neither shall His voice be heard abroad. The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not quench" (Isaias 42:2-3)..

8. *The Passion*: The most abject of men, a man of sorrows, "without beauty or comeliness," He was offered because it was His own will, and was led as a sheep to the slaughter and opened not His mouth (Isaias 53).

2. *The Other Prophets*

1. *The Messiah the proof of God's love for His chosen people*: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform the good word that I have spoken to the house of Israel, and to the house of Juda. In those days, and at that time, I will make the bud of justice to spring forth unto David, and He shall do judgment and justice in the earth. In those days shall Juda be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell securely; and this is the name that they shall call Him, the Lord our just one" (Jeremias 33:14-16).

2. *The years of His coming*: "Seventy weeks are shortened upon thy people and upon thy holy city, that transgression may be finished, and sin may have an end, and iniquity may be abolished, and everlasting justice may be brought, and vision and prophecy may be fulfilled, and the saints may be anointed.

"Know thou therefore, and take notice, that from the going forth of the word, to build up Jerusalem again, unto Christ, the prince, there shall be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks; and the street shall be built again, and the walls in straightness of times.

“And after sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain; and the people that shall deny Him shall not be His. And a people with their leader that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be waste, and after the end of the war the appointed desolation.

“And He shall confirm the covenant with many, in one week; and in the half of the week the victim and the sacrifice shall fail; and there shall be in the temple the abomination of desolation; and the desolation shall continue even to the consummation, and to the end” (Daniel 9:24-27).

To understand this prophecy it is well to keep in mind that the week of years (seven years) was in current usage among the Jews. The Prophet says that in consequence of the order of Artaxerxes to Esdras the Holy City will be rebuilt—although under constant fighting against the Samaritans. From this time to the coming of Christ seven weeks of years (49 years) and again sixty-two weeks of years (434 years) shall elapse. After this period Christ shall be slain. In the middle of the seventieth week the victim and sacrifice shall fail because Christ's death will put an end to the Old Testament sacrifices.

3. *His Birthplace*: “And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Juda; out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be the ruler in Israel; and His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity” (Micheas 5:2).

4. *Messias' Precursor*: “Behold I send My angel, and He shall prepare the way before My face” (Malachias 3:1).

5. *Entry into His Temple*: “And presently the

Lord, whom you seek, and the angel of the testament, whom you desire, shall come to His temple. Behold He cometh, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Malachias 3:1). AND THE DESIRED OF ALL NATIONS SHALL COME; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Aggeus 2:8).

6. *Flight into Egypt*: "I called My son out of Egypt" (Osee 11:1).

7. *Christ's Priestly Dignity*: "And thou shalt speak to him (Jesus the son of Josedec, the high priest), saying: Thus saith the Lord of hosts, saying: BEHOLD A MAN, THE ORIENT IS HIS NAME; and under him shall he spring up, and shall build a temple to the Lord. Yea, He shall build a temple to the Lord, and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit, and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zachary 6:12, 13).

8. *Title of Son of Man*: "I beheld therefore in the vision of the night, and lo, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and He came even to the Ancient of days, and they presented him before him" (Daniel 7:13).

9. *Shepherd of the flock*: "I will set up one shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, and He shall be their shepherd" (Ezechiel 34:23).

10. *Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem*: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy King will come to thee, the Just and Saviour; He is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zachary 9:9).

11. *The Betrayal*: "They weighed for My wages thirty pieces of silver" (Zachary 11:12).

12. *The Passion*: "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced" (Zachary 12:10). "What are these wounds in the midst of Thy Hands?" (Zachary 13:6) "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered" (Zachary 13:7).

13. *The Resurrection*: "Jonas was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights" (Jonas 2:1; Matthew 12:40, 16:4); "I will deliver them out of the hand of death, I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy death; O hell, I will be thy bite" (Osee 13:14; I Cor. 15:54).

14. *The Holy Eucharist*: "From the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation; for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts" (Malachias 1:11).

15. *The Holy Ghost*: "And it shall come to pass after this, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Moreover upon My servants and handmaids in those days I will pour forth My spirit." (Joel 2:28-29).

16. *Entry of Gentiles into the Church*: "In that day I will raise up the Tabernacle of David that is fallen, and I will close up the breaches of the walls thereof and repair what was fallen; and I will rebuild it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all nations, because My name is invoked upon them, saith the Lord that does these things" (Amos 9:11-12; Acts 15:16).

17. *Last Judgment*: "I will show wonders in heaven; and in earth, blood, and fire, and vapor of

smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord doth come. And it shall come to pass that everyone that shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Joel 2:30-32).

Discussion Aids

Set I

1. Define a prophet.
2. What was the twofold office of a prophet?
3. How did the prophetic office come to the prophet?
4. In what three ways did revelation come to the prophet?
5. How are the prophets classified?
6. How was their divine authority determined?

Set II

1. Did any nation ever have prophets comparable to those of Israel?
2. St. Matthew's Gospel quotes the Old Testament about seventy times. Which of these quotations are from the prophets?
3. From the Messianic prophecies listed in the lesson construct a short Life of Christ.
4. Isaias has been called the Evangelist of the Old Testament. Why?
5. Read Isaias 6:1-8. What words from this section have been incorporated into the Ordinary of the Mass?
6. Jeremias is called the "man of sorrows of the Old Testament." Explain.
7. In what way do Jeremias's disappointments over the Jewish people resemble those of St. Paul? (read Romans 9).

8. Compare the book Ezechieel with the Apocalypse.

Religious Practices

1. The prophets constantly warned the Jewish people against dangerous pagan alliances. If the prophets lived today, would they reprove me for certain pagan practices in my life?
2. Despite their severe denunciations, the prophets were accepted by the people as men of God. Am I inclined to minimize the divine authority of the Church when I cannot square my conduct with her teachings?
3. I shall make the ardent longings of the prophets for the Promised Messiah my own when I am to receive Him in Holy Communion.

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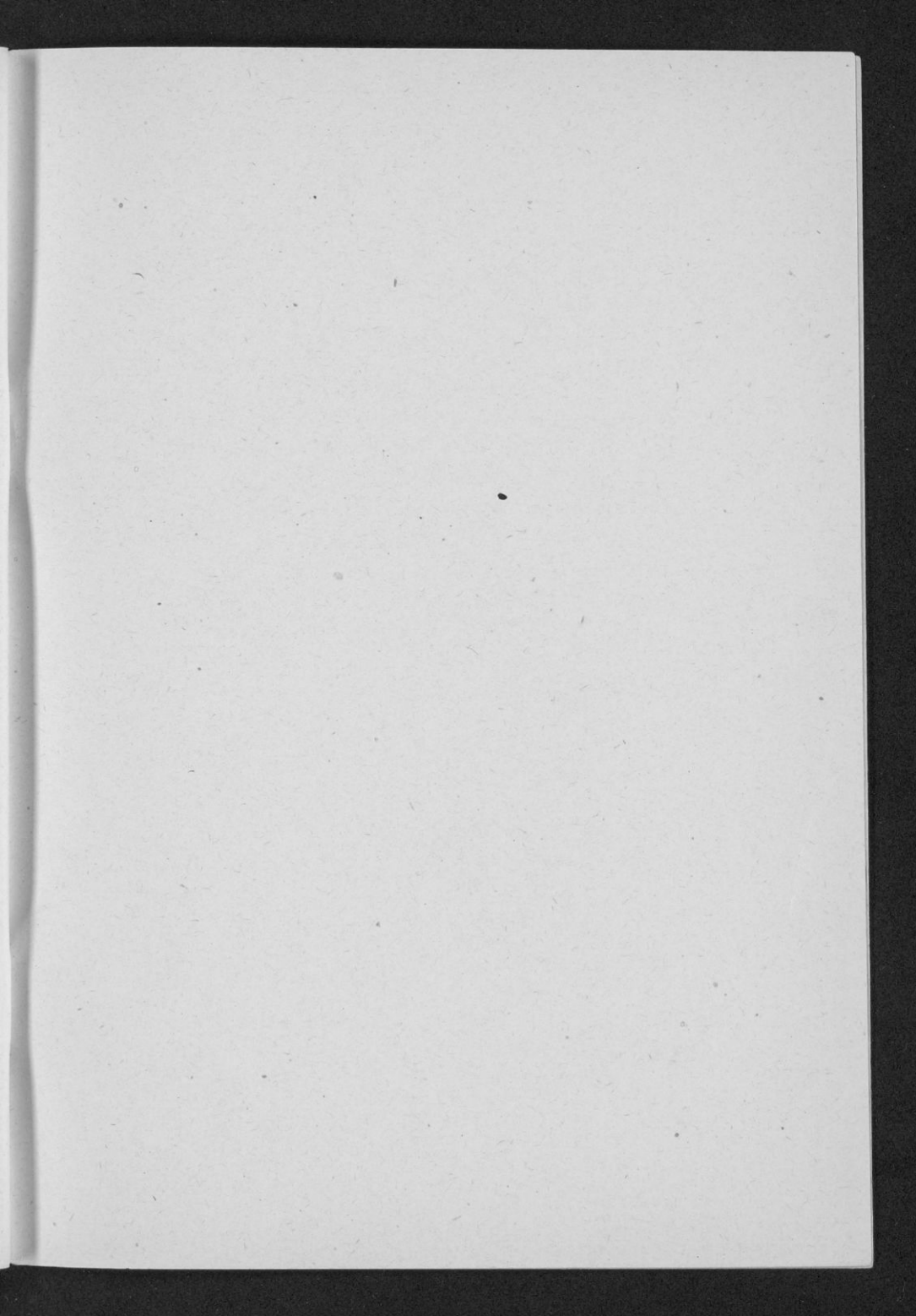
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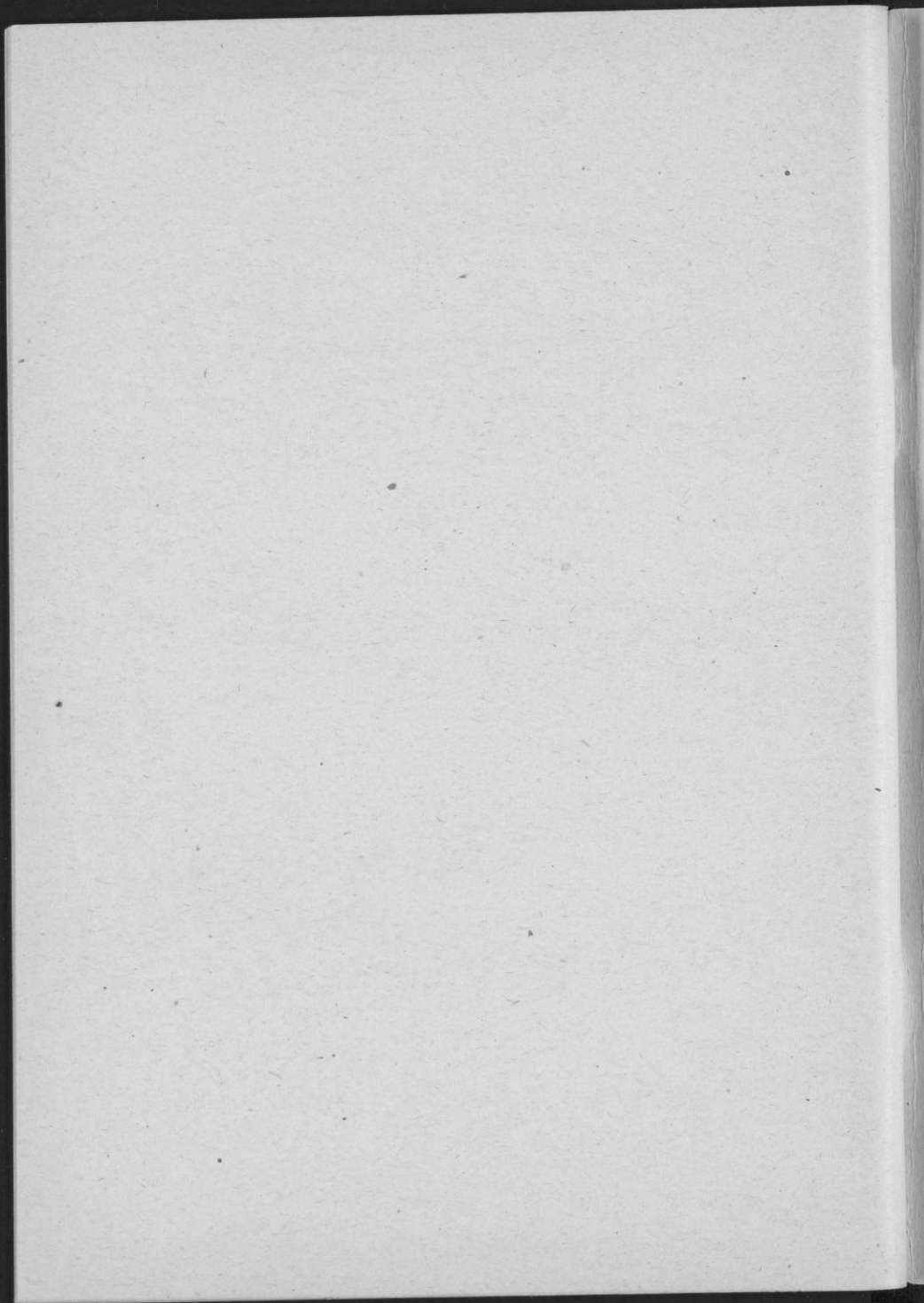
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