

*The Holy Bible:
the heritage of...
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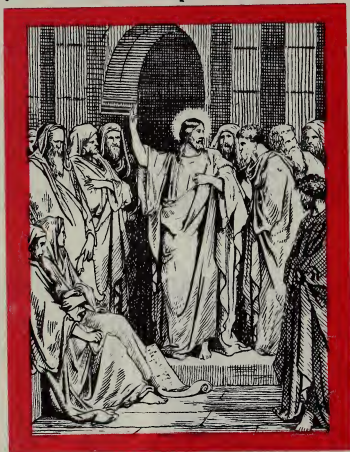
THE HOLY BIBLE

THE
HERITAGE
OF
CATHOLIC
FAMILY LIFE



The Catholic Biblical Association of America

In the Bible, declares His Holiness Pope Pius XII, "are laid open the fountains of Divine Guidance without which both peoples and their rulers can never arrive at, never establish, peace in the state and unity in the heart." Ever since the Bible was brought into being by the Church, the Church has expressed the desire that it be made "abundantly accessible to the flock of Jesus Christ." (Pope Leo XIII) ¶ This booklet aims to point



out afresh for Catholics what the Bible is and how it came to be. It takes up the questions raised by geological findings and evolution. It traces the Church's role in preserving Sacred Scripture and tells how the laity is re-discovering it today. In the final pages appear readings for the year selected from the most important passages of the Old and New Testaments.

Nihil obstat : Louis F. Hartman, C.Ss.R.
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Any part of this booklet may be used without permission to further the reading of the Bible.

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For Catholics, a Fresh Look at the Bible . . .

The Holy Bible, the Heritage of Catholic Family Life

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The Catholic Biblical Association of America

The Catholic University of America, Washington 17, D. C.



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An Open Book



SPREAD OPEN IN THE BIBLE, declares His Holiness Pope Pius XII, are "the fountains of Divine Guidance without which both peoples and their rulers can never arrive at, never establish, peace in the state and unity in the heart." Ever since the Bible was brought into being by the Church, the Church has expressed the desire that it be made "abundantly accessible to the flock of Jesus Christ." (Pope Leo XIII)

Yet not so long ago the friend of a devout Catholic woman made a startling discovery when she showed him the family Bible which had lain upon her parlor table for sixty years. Upon opening it, he found as the frontispiece a picture of coarse-looking monks dancing around a pile of burning Bibles. The pious family had been treasuring a version published by a Bible society with scant love of the Church, because in sixty years no one had opened it! Much

knowledge, much inspiration and much grace is lost to all of us because of a similarly closed book.

The spirit of the Bible is found at all times in the history of the Church. It pervades the very atmosphere of the Catholic home by the presence of the crucifix, the recitation of the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Rosary and the Angelus. In Catholic theology the Bible and sacred tradition are considered as the two sources of revealed truth. The Church makes frequent use of the Bible in her official prayers. The Mass Book, the Breviary and all the liturgical books are compiled almost verbally from the Holy Bible . . . the Bible is the official prayer book for our Sacrifice, our Sacraments and our Supplications. The Bible has also been an inspiration at all times for all the arts. The most famous masterpieces of the pictorial arts represent biblical scenes. Themes taken from the Bible have inspired some of the greatest music ever written. From the pages of the Bible poetry and prose have derived some of their noblest themes and grandest imagery and no doubt will continue to do so.

The Church Has Not Withheld It

The Church has never withheld the sacred volume from her children. After the Sacraments, which are the unfailing instruments of divine grace and the authentic means of holiness or its increase, prayer and spiritual reading, especially of Holy Scripture, are the most effective means for

approaching God, and for preserving and increasing our union with Him.

In reading the Bible, everyone should bear in mind this principle: Unless the context clearly limits the bearing or sense of a text or a saying to a particular person or situation we should take the words of the inspired writers—above all, the words of Our Lord—as addressed to ourselves individually. Thus we shall find that the New Testament in particular will have a special meaning and value for us, because it speaks to us directly of Christ and no longer in type or prophecy as in the Old Testament. At the same time, we shall find that Jesus Christ is also broadcasting to us and that His words are reaching our ears and stirring our hearts through the centuries, because we are tuned in to receive His message and are deriving spiritual profit from His words. Thus, we shall find that reading the Bible in the spirit of faith will effect enduring spiritual values in our souls, and will minister to many of our needs in these troublesome times, giving us inspiration, courage and hope.



The History of the Bible



THE Roman Catholic Church considers the Bible the greatest Book in the world. The word Bible means simply "the book." God is the Author. From time to time, during a period of about 1400 years, He inspired men whom He chose to write the different smaller books which compose it. Those written before the birth of Christ are called the Old Testament; those after His birth, the New Testament. The word "Testament" which means will or inheritance, indicates that these are God's legacy to us.

The New Testament

The New Testament contains the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, twenty-one Epistles or Letters, and the great book of the Apocalypse. The Gospels, which mean good tidings, are four short records of the life and teachings of Our Lord Jesus Christ. All of them were written within sixty-five years after the death and resurrection of Christ, and are His earliest and original biographies. They are also a summary of His teachings and His instructions to us — His Will, which He wishes us to cherish and fulfill.

The Acts of the Apostles were written at about the same time as the Gospels. This book records the work of the Apostles during the first thirty years after Christ's Ascension, especially that of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. In that time they established and organized His Church in many countries of the known world by constant travel and labor.

During their travels, the Apostles and their companions wrote numerous letters to their Christian communities and their friends. These are filled with the inspiration of their zeal to do what Christ asked them to do; that is, to preach His Gospel over all the world. Twenty-one of the Epistles, or Letters, are included in His Testament to us.

Christ wished us to know something of the end of the world, of His return to it, and of heaven. He entrusted this knowledge in a vision to Saint John and commanded him to record it in a book. This book, called the Apocalypse, was written about 96 A.D. and concludes the New Testament.

The Work of Saint Jerome

In the first four centuries of the Christian era, the books of the Bible were translated and copied and recopied many times, with the result that a number of errors crept in and were carried along. In about 390 A.D. Saint Jerome started his retranslation of the Old and New Testaments from the original languages. The work was accomplished in about fourteen years, and the resulting version, which became known as the Vulgate, has been

the basis for the services of the Roman Catholic Church ever since.

The First Printed Bible

The Latin Vulgate Bible was the text chosen by Johann Gutenberg in 1450 A.D. to demonstrate his new discovery—the art of printing from movable type. Gutenberg was cited by the Archbishop of Mainz for his services to the Church in making the Bible available to an increasing number of people, and as knowledge of printing spread, hundreds of editions of the Bible were published.

There can be no doubt that the world must thank the Catholic Church for the Bible—if only to account for 1500 years that elapsed before the first of the Reformers appeared on the scene. Who spanned the gulf? The monks who copied for centuries, working from dawn to dark, certainly gave the world the only copies that were available until the invention of printing. But for them we would have no Bible today.



The Bible and Science



FTEN when a Catholic opens the Bible at the very first page he thinks of the "conflict" between the Bible and "Science." Here is a chapter that presents formidable difficulties. Ever since Galileo it has been the object of learned discussion. Moses describes God creating the universe in six days. But science has proved that our earth broke off from the sun millions of years ago. The gradual cooling and hardening of this earth, the formation of continents and seas, the invasion of the glaciers, form an epic narrative of staggering time-proportions. Only in quite recent times did this earth bring forth the animals and vegetation of today, these having evolved gradually from different forms. Can the six days of which Moses speaks be these long periods described by geologists?

Certainly they are not. Moses knew nothing of modern science; his picture of the universe is quite naive, no further advanced, in fact, than that of the people among whom he lived three thousand years ago. But no human mind has ever surpassed him in the ultimate explanation which he

gives of the universe in his first words: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth . . ." (Gen. 1:1). The full realization of this truth has made saints. And Moses wants us to realize it fully, to ponder it in detail. That is why he goes on to list everything in the universe, as he knew it, and insist that it all sprang from a mere word of God. God's creation, moreover, is not haphazard. Inanimate creations are made before living things and are subordinate to them; irrational living things are created before man, because they are to serve him. Man is the last and noblest of God's creatures. To him the rest of creation is given to use, to enjoy, and through it, to reach God and everlasting life in Heaven. Thus man is to render God the ultimate veneration.

The Seventh Day Calls Us to Worship

There is yet another lesson. With consummate skill the tableau of creation is arranged in the framework of six days of work and a seventh day of rest to remind the reader that he must consecrate this seventh day to the Creator of all. We should not think, however, that Moses believed the events of creation actually took place in the sequence and time-limit that he uses in this narrative. He was speaking figuratively.

The second story of Genesis, with its detailed description of the creation of Adam and Eve, may awaken in the mind



of the Catholic reader still more bitter controversy. Here is the problem of evolution! Can evolution be found described in the narrative? Certainly not! Can it be reconciled with the teaching of this chapter? Yes, if it is that form of evolution which recognizes the action of God both at the beginning and throughout the evolutionary process. Is evolution a fact? We shall never find the answer to this in the Bible. What we shall find in this second chapter is a lesson in humility. What are we? Like the beasts around us, physically we are mere earth, to which death once more reduces us.

Moses Shows the Dignity of Womanhood

This bit of earth, however, is the object of God's special action, which raises it above the rest of creation. The first chapter said simply that God created man in His own "image and likeness" (1:26). The second chapter expresses the same truth by means of a picture: God breathes into man the breath of His own life. And to be sure that woman, whom the ancient Oriental looked down upon as little more than chattel, would be known to share in this dignity, Moses shows her community of nature with man and shows how man and woman are destined for each other in marriage: "the two become one flesh" (2:24) to play their part in the creative work of God: "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it" (1:28).

Bible Discussion Groups



SHORTLY after ascending the Chair of Peter, Pope Pius XII wrote: "The needs of our age demand that the laity too should be able to give assistance to the clergy; and that not on a small and grudging scale; they should equip themselves . . . by reading, by discussion, by circles that meet for study." Since then tens of thousands of the laity have been learning every year of the power and the majesty of the God-Man who changed the face of the earth.

By reading and discussing the New Testament in Confraternity discussion groups they discover the personality of Christ, see Him establish His Church and vest in it authority in all matters of faith and morals. By reading and discussion they discover the Christian's obligation to live by the truths of the Gospel, become convinced that grace is a free gift of God, working in man's soul, however, only when man's soul works with grace.

The laity are leaders as well as learners in these informal groups. At meetings, which are usually held in homes, mem-

bers in turn read aloud a brief passage from the text while the others follow silently. Then discussion is developed by carefully prepared questions, which encourage members to re-tell in their own words what they have read. In the beginning expression is limited and halting. Eventually all acquire a religious vocabulary and discuss the matter with the ease that accompanies an act performed instinctively.

Husbands and Wives Meet Together

Our bishops have encouraged and directed organized effort on the part of the laity to meet in circles to read and discuss the doctrine of Christ and His Church; to discipline their lives by this doctrine; to equip themselves to spread it wherever they go. Men, women and youth from every walk of life are forming circles or clubs of from six to ten members to steep themselves in Christ's doctrine. Husbands and wives meet together; non-Catholic parties of mixed marriages join their groups. Young men and women form clubs separately and jointly. Out-of-school and college youth assemble in homes, clubrooms or wherever they can conveniently come together. Informally and cooperatively the members of each small group read and discuss the Gospel truths. Catholic students in secular high schools, under the guidance of an adult leader, relate and dramatize the Divine Saviour's inspiring deeds, miracles and parables. They learn to apply them to the problems of today.

Fifteen-Minute Readings from the Bible

Each of the selections listed here takes about a quarter of an hour to read with the thoughtfulness and devotion that befit the Sacred Scriptures. They thus are of the approximate length required for gaining the Indulgence granted by the Church. See the reference on page 20.

They cover most of the highlights of both the Old and the New Testament, and will therefore be found useful not only for the general reader but also for students and study clubs. In Part I these selections lay stress upon those incidents and revelations which pointed toward the coming of Christ to redeem men. Part II focuses upon the most important phases of the Saviour's life and teachings. In Part III the selections mark out some of the most valuable lessons in both the Old Testament and in the writings of the Apostles in the New Testament. Apostles in the New Testament.

In each selection a comma between numbers means that the preceding number refers to the chapter, the following number to the verse; different passages are divided by semicolons.

Part I. The Old Testament Story

God Reveals His Will to the Patriarchs and to Israel

1. Creation and Fall of Man.....Gen. 1, 1—3, 24
2. Noe and the Deluge.....Gen. 6, 1—9, 17
3. Call and Promise to Abraham.....Gen. 12, 1-7; 13, 14-17;
15, 1-18; 17, 1-22
4. Isaac, Child of the Promise.....Gen. 21, 1-21; 22, 1-18;
24, 1-67
5. Jacob and Esau.....Gen. 25, 19-34; 27, 1-45; 28, 10-22
6. Joseph of Egypt.....Gen. 37, 1-36; 39, 1-23; 41, 1-57
7. Birth and Call of Moses.....Exod. 1, 1—4, 18
8. Passover and Paschal Lamb.....Exod. 11, 1—13, 16
9. Exodus from Egypt.....Exod. 13, 17—14, 31; 15, 19-27
10. Covenant at Sinai.....Exod. 19, 1—20, 21; 34, 1-35
11. Prophecies of Balaam.....Num. 22, 1—24, 25
12. Josue's Conquest of Chanaan.....Jos. 1, 1—3, 17; 6, 1-27
13. Gedeon and the Madianites.....Judges 6, 1—8, 35
14. Ruth, Grandmother of David.....Ruth 1, 1—4, 17
15. Samuel, Last of the Judges.....1 Sam. 1, 1-28; 3, 1-19; 7, 1-17
16. Saul, First King of Israel.....1 Sam. 9, 1—10, 27; 15, 1-35
17. Early Life of David.....1 Sam. 16, 1—18, 30
18. King David at Jerusalem.....2 Sam. 5, 1—7, 29
19. David's Sin and Penance.....2 Sam. 11, 1—13, 38
20. Solomon, the Wise.....3 Kings 3, 1-28; 8, 1-66
21. Elias, Foe of Baal.....3 Kings 18, 1—19, 21; 21, 1-29
22. Eliseus, the Miracle-worker.....4 Kings 2, 1-25; 4, 1—5, 27
23. Ezechias and Sennacherib.....4 Kings 18, 1—20, 20
24. Fall of Jerusalem.....4 Kings 22, 1-20; 23, 29—25, 21
25. The Temple Rebuilt.....Aggeus 1, 1—2, 24; 1 Esdras 5, 1—6, 22
26. Tobias and Raphael.....Tob. 5, 1—8, 24; 11, 1-21
27. Judith and Holophernes.....Judith 8, 1—13, 26
28. Esther, Queen of Persia.....Esther 2, 1—9, 4
29. Daniel at Babylon.....Dan. 6, 1-24; 13, 1—14, 42
30. Machabean Martyrs.....2 Mach. 6, 1—7, 42

Part II. The Gospel Story

God Sends His Son to Establish His Kingdom on Earth for All Mankind

1. Prophecies of Emmanuel Isa. 6, 1—7, 16; 9, 1-7; 11, 1-10; 40, 1—41, 29
2. Salvation Through Christ Isa. 53, 1—55, 13; 60, 1—62, 12
3. The New Covenant Foretold Jerem. 23, 1-8; 31, 1—34; Ezech, 34, 1-31
4. Birth and Boyhood of Christ . . Luke 1, 5—2, 52; Matt. 1, 18—2, 23
5. John the Baptist John 1, 1-34; Luke 3, 1-20; Mark 6, 17-29
6. Christ's Ministry Begun Matt. 3, 13—4, 17; Luke 4, 14-44; John 2, 1-11
7. The First Disciples Matt. 4, 18-22; Luke 5, 1-32; John 1, 35-5
8. Sermon on the Mount Matt. 5, 1—7, 29; Luke 6, 17-49
9. Miracles of Jesus Matt. 8, 1—9, 8; Mark 5, 1-43; John 4, 46—5, 47
10. Parables of the Kingdom Matt. 13, 1-52; 20, 1-16; 21, 28—22, 14
11. Christ's Mercy to Women . Luke 7, 36—8, 3; John 4, 1-45; 8, 1-11
12. The Good Shepherd Matt. 18, 10-14; Luke 15, 1-32; John 10, 1-18
13. Danger of Riches Mark 10, 17-31; Luke 12, 1-34; 16, 19-31
14. Doctrine of the Cross Matt. 10, 16-39; 16, 21—17, 22
15. Palm Sunday and Holy Week . . John 11, 1—12, 19; Matt. 21, 1-27
16. End at Hand—Vigilance . . Matt. 24, 1—25, 46; Luke 12, 35—13, 9
17. Last Supper Matt. 26, 1-35; John 13, 1-38
18. Last Discourse and Prayer John 14, 1—17, 26
19. The Sacred Passion Matt. 26, 36—27, 30; John 18, 1—19, 16
20. The Crucifixion Matt. 27, 31—28, 66; Luke 23, 26-56; John 19, 17-42
21. The Resurrection . . Matt. 28, 1-20; Mark 16, 1-20; Luke 24, 1-53
22. Primacy of Peter Matt. 16, 13-20; John 20, 1—21, 25
23. The Holy Spirit's Descent Acts 1, 1—2, 47
24. Early Church at Jerusalem Acts 3, 1—5, 42
25. Martyrdom of St. Stephen Acts 6, 1—8, 3
26. Conversion of St. Paul Acts 9, 1—11, 30
27. First Journey of St. Paul Acts 13, 1—15, 35
28. Second Journey of St. Paul Acts 15, 36—19, 22
29. Third Journey of St. Paul Acts 19, 23—21, 16
30. St. Paul's Arrest Acts 21, 17—24, 27

Part III. *Spiritual Wisdom of the Bible*

A. *The Teaching of the Old Testament*

1. Fidelity to God's Law Deut. 4, 1-40; 6, 1-25; 7, 6-26
2. Punishment for Infidelity Lev. 26, 14-45; Deut. 28, 15-68
3. Blessings of Obedience Deut. 10, 11—11, 32; 28, 1-14
4. The Call to Wisdom Prov. 1, 20—4, 27
5. Excellence of Wisdom Prov. 8, 1—9, 6; Eccus. 1, 1-32
6. Eternal Wisdom Eccus. 24, 1-31; 42, 15—43, 37
7. In Praise of Wisdom Wisd. 7, 1—9, 19
8. Vanity of Vanities Eccles. 1, 1—3, 22; 12, 1-13
9. Good and Bad Women Prov. 7, 1-27; 31, 10-31;
Eccus. 9, 1-13; 25, 17—26, 24
10. Isaias' Mission Sermons Isa. 1, 2-31; 5, 1-30; 28, 1-22
11. Jeremias' Preaching Jerem. 2, 1—4, 31
12. The Wages of Sin Jerem. 8, 1—10, 25
13. Brevity of Man's Life Job 7, 1-21; 10, 1-22; 14, 1-22
14. Confidence in God Job 16, 1—17, 16; 19, 1-29
15. God's Wisdom and Power Job 26, 1-14; 38, 1—39, 35

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B. The Teaching of the Apostles

16. Humanity Without Christ Rom. 1, 1—3, 31
17. Salvation Through Christ Rom. 5, 1—8, 39
18. Our Union In Christ Ephes. 1, 1—4, 32
19. Living In Christ Philip. 1, 1—3, 21
20. Charity in the Mystical Body Rom. 12, 1-21; 1 Cor. 13, 1-13; Col. 3, 1-21
21. Labors of the Apostolate 1 Cor. 2, 1—4, 13; 2 Cor. 4, 1—6, 10
22. Apostle of the Gentiles 2 Cor. 10, 1—13, 13
23. Christ, Our High Priest Heb. 4, 14—5, 10; 7, 26—9, 28
24. Perseverance in Faith Heb. 10, 19—12-29
25. Good Works James 1, 17—5, 20
26. Christian Virtues 1 Pet. 1, 1—4, 11
27. Love for God and Man 1 John 3, 1—5, 21
28. Second Coming of Christ 1 Thes. 4, 13—5, 11; 2 Thes. 2, 1-17; 2 Pet. 3, 1-18
29. John's Visions at Patmos Apoc. 1, 1-20; 4, 1—6, 17
30. The New Jerusalem Apoc. 19, 1—22, 21



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The Pope Endorses Catholic Bible Week

A Pontifical Letter of the Holy Father was sent to the Most Reverend Edwin O'Hara, Bishop of Kansas City and Chairman of the Episcopal Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, for the occasion of Catholic Bible Week, September 28 to October 5, 1952, from which the following excerpt is taken.

It is indeed a source of consolation to learn of the marked progress being made by the Confraternity, with the cooperation of learned Scriptural scholars, in the publication of the new English language edition of the Holy Bible; and also of the stimulation being given to a more widespread reading of the Holy Scriptures through Catholic Bible Week. Against the dangers of disillusionment and despair at the failure of worldly remedies in the present crisis affecting all of mankind, there ever remains a shining beacon, a sure source of hope and solace in the unchanging inspiration of the Word of God.

That the faithful of the United States . . . will give themselves in increasing numbers to a more frequent reading of the Bible and draw from meditation upon its eternal truths spiritual light and strength for the salvation of their souls in Jesus Christ Our Lord, is Our fervent and confident trust, in pledge of which We impart to all who generously cooperate in this high purpose, Our paternal Apostolic Blessing. Given at Castelgandolfo, July 30, 1952.

(signed) Pius P. P. XII