



The Holy See

**DISCORSO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII
ALLA DELEGAZIONE DELLA
«SOCIETY FOR OLD TESTAMENT STUDY»***

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When We come to expressing a word of welcome and encouragement to such an elect group of Scripture scholars, Our memory goes back at once to what Our saintly Predecessor, Damasus, well on to sixteen centuries ago, wrote to the learned St. Jerome. « I do not believe there can be a subject more worthy of conversation between us than the Scriptures ». (*Ep. XXXV - Migne P. L. vol. 22, col. 451*). Nothing could be truer, when one reflects that from the IN PRINCIPIO of Genesis to the VENI, DOMINE JESU of the Apocalypse the Holy Scriptures contain the word of God. What a precious vein of untold riches is opened up by almost any of its sentences. But We must be brief. « Pleasant is a meadow », wrote Chrysostom, « a garden is fair; but still more pleasant is the study of Holy Scripture. In the meadow we find flowers, but they quickly fade; in Holy Scripture we hear words that have the power of immortal life. In the meadow the zephyrs blow; in the Scripture the Holy Spirit breathes... In the meadow there is the passing pleasure of the senses; the reading of Scripture procures advantages of lasting value to the soul ». (*Migne P. G. vol. 52, col. 395-396*).

But those spiritual advantages will be genuine and solid in proportion to one's certain and accurate knowledge of what the sacred author has said. Hence the ever-present need of devoted scholars, who in their tireless research to unfold the exact meaning of the divine word will be equipped to make wise and judicious use of that vast apparatus of biblical philology, geography, history, archaeology, textual criticism and the natural sciences, so that Eternal Truth in all its splendour may shine forth to enlighten and warm the minds and hearts of men.

It is gratifying to note from a perusal of your program, that such scholars are not lacking today in the various parts of the world, and We fondly hope that many others, who have been blessed by God with large measure of natural talent, of piety and learning, will follow you in the same praise-

worthy apostolate.

You are closing your study-week on a day hallowed by the memory of the glorious triumph of Him, whose sacred person hovers over all the pages of the Bible. Its different parts like so many converging rays, focus their light on His radiant figure, the promised, the long-expected One, who at the appointed time came to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of all mankind for life eternal. His proffered gift was peace, - peace with God, the Father of all. This, too, is the burden of Our daily prayer, the aim of all the toil and sufferings of the Church. When all men have sought and found peace with God, they will have come a long way to enjoying the blessings of a true peace between nations.

May the peace and joy of the risen Christ fill your own hearts and the hearts of those who are near and dear to you.

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