

Response of the Pontifical Biblical Commission

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On the Tacit Quotations Contained in Holy Scripture February 13, 1905

Latin: ASS 37 (1904-05), p. 666 / DS 3372 / EB 160

English: D 1979 / RSS p. 117 / OCTBI 367-8, p. 228 / TSD p. 187

In order to establish a guide for students of Holy Scripture the following question has been proposed to the Biblical Commission: Whether it is allowable for a Catholic commentator to solve difficulties occurring in certain texts of Holy Scripture, which apparently relate historical facts, by asserting that we have in such texts tacit or implied quotations from documents written by a non-inspired author, and that the inspired author by no means intends to approve of these statements or make them his own, and that these statements cannot, in consequence, be regarded as free from error.

Answer: To this the commission judged proper to reply: In the negative; except in the case when, subject to the mind and decision of the Church, it can be proved by solid arguments, first, that the sacred writer really does cite another's sayings or writings; and secondly, that he does not intend, in so doing, to approve them or make them his own, in such a way that he be rightly considered not to speak in his own name.