

Knowledge of the Mystery:
Louis Bouyer's Theology of Sacred Scripture

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Dissertation Abstract

This dissertation explores, through the thought of Louis Bouyer, the meaning of Sacred Scripture – its nature and interpretation. The fundamental argument is that Scripture, like the liturgy, assumes the symbolic structure of man and the cosmos as articulated through ancient myths, even as it critiques and transforms those myths from within. Scripture does not so much demythologize, just as Christian worship does not de-ritualize but transfigure ancient cosmology and anthropology.

Tracing Bouyer's theology of Scripture from nature to grace, the dissertation begins with its anthropological and mythopoetic foundations in chapters one and two, then moves to his understanding of biblical inspiration and interpretation in chapters three and four. The **first chapter** focuses on the dialogical and religious nature of human language as a fruitful response to the gift of itself from the one who is its source. Human language is fundamentally open to God. The **second chapter** explicates Bouyer's theology of mythopoetic inspiration, which serves as a primordial prolegomenon for the act of inspiration under grace. Through mythopoetic inspiration, the soul becomes attuned to the analogical structure of the cosmos, participating in realities beyond its control and, in turn, expresses those realities through the symbolic structure of myth. The **third chapter** takes up the question of biblical inspiration by observing the allegorical transposition of archetypal themes within the canon. It also extends the incarnational analogy of biblical inspiration to a Marian analogy, where the biblical authors give birth to the Word in words simultaneously human and divine. The **fourth chapter** moves from the question of inspiration to that of interpretation by focusing on Bouyer's understanding of spiritual exegesis. By its nature, Scripture requires spiritual exegesis guided by the maternal pedagogy of the Church, namely the liturgy.

The dissertation concludes that the key to understanding the meaning of Sacred Scripture is knowledge of the mystery, knowledge of the wise plan of the Father to adopt all men as his sons and unite them to his Son so that they might return to him in the Spirit and participate in the eternal love of the Triune God.