

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND RATIONALISTIC BIBLICAL CRITIC

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Pomazansky's defense of Old Testament integrity against rationalistic criticism, addressing Christian attitudes toward the OT, examining critical theories about the Pentateuch, and demonstrating the spiritual value of OT Scripture when properly interpreted Christologically.

14 Chapters

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01 - The Nature of Contemporary Biblical Criticism

The Nature of Contemporary Biblical Criticism.

Western rationalistic biblical criticism is a phenomenon of long standing, dating back approximately 200 years. It flourished towards the end of the 19th century, and in our century has become only more widely popularized. It bears the title "scientific," but, we know how often - especially in the field of history - the personal, predetermined conceptions of a world-view are reflected in the conclusions of researchers who arrive at these conclusions ahead of time.

With what points of view do the people of this century approach the Bible, or, in this case, the Old Testament? For the intelligent Jew, it is his natural heritage, a source for the study of the ancient mode of life of his ancestors, his tradition, his history, instinctive thought patterns, his culture. For the non-believer, it is a book which elicits hostility and rejection. He is prepared to study this subject with the special intent of undermining belief in its very authenticity and, in general, in its truthfulness, its ideas, and its values. The inquisitive scholar, whose mind greedily seeks material for his work as the root of a plant seeks out moisture in the earth, approaches the Bible as a collection of literary monuments which is in need of an objective research in accordance with the principles of a scientific positivism which excludes from its field of vision the activity of the Providence of God. A person of faith, for whom the Bible is sacred, takes part in this work of criticism least of all, and if he does approach it, it is, as a matter of principle, with a different orientation which does not fit the methodological tracks of the exact sciences. It must be admitted that the historical research of the distant past, whose sources are only incidental and incomplete historical and archaeological data, which are often indirect, should generally be approached with caution, no matter how "splendidly served up" this data may be (as the late Prof. A. Kartashev of the Paris Theological Institute, a scholar of biblical criticism, himself stated concerning its findings). Before us lies the rich ground of observations of non-biblical, literary-historical criticism which forces us to be alert to the learned conclusions of criticism. The "Slovo o Polku Igoreve," Lay of the Hosts of Igor was long subject to rejection or to doubts as to its authenticity, and in recent times its authenticity was subjected to criticism by the French scholar, Dr. Mason. Yet Russian archaeologists are even now determining the boundaries of ancient fortifications and other sites for excavation according to the information contained in the "Slovo o Polku Igoreve." We see also how much error is stubbornly held onto in the scholarly works of the West regarding the history of 19th century Russia, not to speak of the great difficulty with which a true portrayal of the causes of the Russian revolution is coming to light. This so-called "scientific" biblical criticism is a product of the Protestant world. Such is the irony of fate - that the same religious movement in Christianity which rejected the living voice of the Church which is contained in its sacred Tradition, and recognized the Bible as the sole source of the teaching of the Faith, which saw divine inspiration in each letter of the Scriptures, specifically took upon themselves the task of dismantling of their own foundation. Feeling for the sanctity of the Scriptures grew cold among these theologians. It was left for them only to ponder: whence and when came each stone of the foundation, with what is it cemented, what renovations have been carried out on this mass, additions thereto, etc.?

Hypothesis followed hypothesis. For the work to be accepted it was necessary to employ "scientific methods of research." But scientific methods are based on the principles of positivism, one of whose principles is the rejection of the supernatural element in the life of the world, and especially in historical events. Willingly or unwillingly, for Protestant theology, which was included as one of the faculties of university sciences, this meant accepting the methodological principles common to all the other sciences. Thus, for example, if in the sacred books one or another prophecy is given, and then the fulfillment of that prophecy is indicated, the researcher of the text feels he has every right to conclude that the prophecy was written after the event it concerns. This is one of a series of factors which have determined the direction of contemporary biblical criticism. Even one such detail in the methods of research should warn us ahead of time against completely trusting the conclusions of this criticism. For belief in the Providence and the foreknowledge of God is inherent in the Christian, and this means faith in the possibility of communications to people accounted worthy (the prophets), or knowledge of coming events, be they in the form of visible images, as clear premonitions, or as direct revelations. The negative side of contemporary biblical criticism lies in its offhanded dissection of the text of the Bible, and in this way the Bible itself becomes lifeless matter for its critics and those who follow them. A feeling for the sanctity of the Bible has already been killed in them. By destroying the integrity of the text of the sacred books, they deprive the Bible of its soul. Dissecting its physiological side, they are no longer capable of seeing its psychological influence. Will a person studying the physiology of the eye discern during his investigation that the eyes are an expression of the soul? That the eyes of another person can pierce straight through you? That eyes can be kind, evil, soft, sharp, insolent, envious, frightening, mad? That eyes hypnotize? Just as a physiologist cannot discover these characteristics in studying the eyes, so too the positivist critic cannot find in the Bible the confirmation of faith, a consciousness of Divine Providence, moral nourishment for his soul. With what they themselves breathe [i.e., their attitude], people naturally contaminate others, destroying in them the capacity for faith. The scholars themselves feel exalted far above the material, as above the naive primitive. In fact, their own era is negatively reflected in this criticism. Living as they do in an age full of falsehood in the mutual relations between people and between governments, under the cover of cultural conventions, critics are prepared to find the same hidden characteristics in the Bible. In their statements the religious leaders of the people are passing off what is new as ancient, the works of their own hands as the writings of great authorities, that which they themselves have perceived as the foresight of prophets. In the eyes of criticism, all of these tactics of craftiness, forgery, falsification, deception, were supposed to help attain noble religious, moral and political goals; and no matter how surprising, how strange it might seem, they have produced, as admitted by the same scholars, the most futile results! The Bible itself does not present its soul and its body to us in this way. It impresses upon us that nothing remains hidden from the eyes of God, nor, sooner or later, from the people: for there is nothing... hidden, that shall not be known (Matthew 10:26). The Bible constantly calls us to think and live in truth, righteousness, justice, purity of mind and senses, and in holiness of deed. It brands every lie, deception, wickedness, hypocrisy: A good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit (Matthew 7:18). It teaches that righteousness cannot be attained through falsehood, holiness through hypocrisy; that faith cannot be exalted or strengthened by deception. The sacred writers, in the depth of their own humility, never even thought of expressing their own thoughts or teachings: they transmitted only the will of God, believing that the voice of God spoke through their

humility; and the compilers of their writings approached their own task with the consciousness that they were touching holy objects. The critics' work of dissecting the Bible is very carefully divided. It comprises two levels - first, "lower criticism"; second, "higher criticism." The first concerns itself with philological aspects, the lexicon of the Bible, the material of comparative linguistics. The second concerns itself with researching the literary content of the Bible from the point of view of its sources, with questions as to the authorship of the books, with proposals of literary borrowing, with confirmation from the point of view of historical and archaeological data. Unfortunately, set on a ready-made track which leads in a particular direction, it rolls along without ever looking back. We should not be troubled that the conclusions of scientific criticism are accepted by today's learned Protestant theologians, and that lately even Roman Catholic theology has bowed down before it, and that they have even been sanctioned by the highest authority of the Roman Catholic Church, with the Nihil Obstat stamp in the recently published Catholic Encyclopedia of the Twentieth Century. But we cannot remain silent, for these conclusions are already invading Orthodox theological schools. The Orthodox Theological Institute of Paris has already approved them in the speech which Professor Kartashev delivered at the graduation ceremonies of the Institute "Academy" in the presence of Metropolitan Evlogy and honored guests in 1944, (published in 1947). In Professor Kartashev's speech these conclusions cast a shadow over New Testament Scriptures as well. One cannot but sense in these manifestations the tendency towards general disintegration and mass leveling which is apparent in all of the trends of modern civilization, including decisive steps towards widespread religious equalization and merging in the contemporary world, which can be attained only through the rejection of many values and dogmas that have hitherto been considered inviolable. The structure of biblical criticism is founded on a series of hypotheses, and up to now has in its details been continually rebuilt, leading ever further away from the truth. We believe that a time will come when one of its principal hypothetical supports will crumble and a long portion of the building will collapse. We do not say the whole building, as we do not deny that through research new historical data are found, to add to and to cast light on views on particular questions, and perhaps in some cases to replace inaccurate views on the period of time or the authorship of one or another of the books of the Old Testament. New opinions on determining the time of the writing of the various books of the Sacred Scriptures, or even, in some cases, the authorship, do not yet necessarily betoken the undermining of the sacred authority of a book of the Old Testament. The Church accepted the canon of the books of the Old Testament from the Old Testament Church as it was compiled and confirmed around the time of Ezra, without investigating the history of each book. What was important was that each book contained valuable material which teaches doctrine and morality and, most important, each confirmed the chosen people's expectation of the Messiah. As is known, in the greater part of the books of the Old Testament the author is not named in the text itself, and several books are called simply by the names of the individuals with whom they primarily deal. In the books of the holy writers there are chapters written by other people, in which we are told, for example, about the final testament, the death and the burial of the holy writer of the given book. As for what concerns the divine inspiration of the sacred books, their content itself bears witness to it. For us one thing is important: that these books were written by "holy men of God." In connection with what has been said, we trust it will not be superfluous first to outline briefly the Orthodox Christian attitude towards the Old Testament, then to put forth the content and character of rationalistic criticism, and afterwards to give an answer thereto which is governed by an Orthodox consciousness, derived

from logical and psychological considerations and archaeological data.

02 - The Christian's Attitude Toward the OT

The Christian's Attitude Toward the Old Testament.

The Christian's attitude towards the Old Testament is determined by the teachings of the Saviour. In the Old Testament books, lost, as it were, among the Mosaic books that set forth the Law and determined the standards of everyday life, Christ has shown us a higher, unexcelled, eternal commandment: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind... and the second is like it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself (Matthew 22:37; Matthew 22:39). He also said: Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me (John 5:39). The unquestionable value of these Scriptures, for us Christians, even more than for the Jews, is determined by this testimony concerning Christ. As to individual books of the Old Testament, they acquire significance for us depending upon their relative worth as school masters which bring us unto Christ (Galatians 3:24), i.e., teachers who lead to Christ the chosen portion of humanity, as the Apostle Paul puts it. Some aspects of the Old Testament remained relevant only until the time of reformation, i.e., until the coming of the Saviour (Hebrews 9:8-10). The Apostle Paul writes that the establishment of the New Testament made the first old (Hebrews 8:13). We find the limitations of the Old Testament conception of God especially in those passages in the Old Testament books where, for example, God's allowing the cruel slaughter of foreigners by the people of Israel is taken as a command of God, as we read for example, in the book of Joshua. The weakness, the relativity of religious and moral conceptions corresponding to the infantile and youthful state of humanity and ancient Judaism, damaged moreover by sin from time immemorial, are frequently expressed there, even in those cases when they are sanctioned by the name of God. Nevertheless, even these facts do not mean that the Old Testament loses its value in Christianity. This can be seen by all in the way that the Church treasures the texts of the books of the Old Testament, how it guards their every letter. Two thousand years have passed since the Old Testament period came to an end. Yet still, unchangingly, the Psalter is read at all the divine services in Orthodox churches, and just as unchangingly, it would seem, are preserved words which are foreign to us - Israel, Sion, tribe of Judah, tribe of Ephraim, the names of various ancient peoples: Ammonites, Moabites and others, and also, expressions which one might think of as not being essentially Christian, such as, In the morning I slew all the sinners of the land (Psalms 100:8). However, the words and the expressions have remained, but their meaning has changed. Such expressions have acquired a new meaning - the spiritual Israel, the heavenly Sion, the battle against the spiritual foe, spirits of wickedness in high places. It can be said that the Psalter has become the model for Christian prayer, and all of our divine services are saturated with excerpts from it and other books. The content of the Old Testament Scriptures was Christianized by the Church. Within the Church the Old Testament Scriptures have been filled with the thought of Christ, of the Cross, of the Mother of God. "Having made the sign of the Cross with his staff, Moses straightway divided the Red Sea..." "Horse and rider did Christ cast down in the Red Sea..."; and the three youths of Babylon were saved by Christ from the fire in the furnace: "...Christ spread a spiritual dew upon the children that revered

God...” And the Prophet Jonah was saved through the Cross: “In the belly of the beast of the waters Jonah stretched out his hands in the form of a cross...” Only for the childish mind is the Old Testament set forth as “sacred history,” as if “history” comprises its essence for a Christian. However, for us adults, especially through the content of the hymnography of the divine services, a more lofty understanding of it is revealed, shadowy and prefigurative. Many of the Fathers of the Church teach us to prefer the spiritual aspect of the Bible to literal interpretation. Saint Maximus the Confessor teaches that: “In Sacred Scripture it is possible to distinguish between flesh and spirit, as if it were a person of sorts. And he that would say that the letter of the Scripture is its flesh, and its meaning its spirit or soul, would not sin against the truth. It is plain, then, that wise is he who, leaving the flesh as something corruptible, cleaveth wholly to the spirit, as something that doth not decay.” And Saint Maximus himself, in his interpretations of the Sacred Scriptures, emphasizes its mystical-kerygmatic meaning, leaving aside its narrative aspect as “flesh.” And the Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete chanted during the Great Fast provides us with an example of how persons and events of the Old Testament become symbols of the spiritual falls and rebirths of the Christian. However, if one does not know the contents of biblical history, one will not receive the intended edification from the elevated content of the Canon. Sacred Scripture is divinely inspired. But divine inspiration is not the same as omniscience. The authors of the sacred books were men who were raised above the common religious-moral level, capable of sensing and of absorbing the inspiration of the forces of Grace, and, especially at certain moments, of rising to spiritual heights, of experiencing the illumination of mystical light, and, finally, were capable of reaching moments when they could hear unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter (2 Corinthians 12:4), which were transmitted through them, or at other times remained unexpressed and inexpressible by words. But these same Scriptures contain an abundance of ordinary material: sacred and popular traditions, genealogies, religious and civil law, historical events, pictures of everyday life - in a word, that which the authors considered worthy of preservation in the memory of future generations as a support for their faith and spirit. In their entirety, the Sacred Scriptures are sanctified, overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, and each of their component parts corresponds to the sacred contents and holy aim of the whole, as, let us say, a bird’s feather to the bodily structure of the whole bird, or as every sacred object accepted for use in a church, for they serve for the greater glory of God. We are guided by these basic conditions when we approach the theories of so-called “scientific” biblical criticism of modern times.

03 - A Short Outline of the Conclusions...

A Short Outline of the Conclusions

of Rationalistic Criticism of the Old Testament.

To give a picture of the character of biblical criticism of the Old Testament, we will present a general outline of it, as it is presented in popular Protestant works, and lately in Roman Catholic ones as well; and then we will concentrate our attention on the Pentateuch [Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy] of Moses, since criticism of the Pentateuch is in essence the foundation of a series of critical theories regarding the Old Testament. A general outline of criticism which has arisen out of the Protestant-university sphere, is here set forth according to the following basic surveys: Old Testament History, by Iswar Perits, Ph.D., Harvard. (NY: 1915-16). The Growth and Contents of the Old Testament, by Charles Foster Kent, Ph.D., Litt.D., Yale University. (NY: 1925). The beginnings of Hebrew literary works, adapted later in literary monuments, comprise popular vocal musical compositions as, for example, the Song of Deborah, which became part of the fifth chapter of the book of Judges, the Song of Miriam in the fifteenth chapter of Exodus, and the songs mentioned in the twenty-first chapter of the book of Numbers. 1. During the reign of David the first official historical records were made, giving an account of events preceding the establishment of the monarchy, forming the basis of the book of Judges and of the second chapter of the first book of Kings. 2. In the ninth century B.C., about the year 850 - nearly six hundred years after the death of Moses - oral prophecies and the rudimentary records of the laws of the Jewish people were compiled by a certain individual, a type of the ancient prophets, which later became material for the first four Mosaic books. 3. About fifty to a hundred years later, in the eighth century B.C., a parallel work on the same sort of material was carried out by another person who belonged to a group of priests. In this manner, two versions of the narrative arose. The fairly frequent repetitions of what with slight variations was said previously were the initial stimulus for suggesting two versions in the first books of the Bible. The fact that the name of God "Elohim" is used in some parts or chapters of the Hebrew text of the Pentateuch, and Yahweh in others, brought attention to the possibility of two versions. Though both of these names frequently appear together, this did not hinder the conclusion that the text which we have today represents a union of the writing of two persons who lived at different times and different places; and that subsequently these two records, two versions, were combined conscientiously, often by verse, and even by lines, and interwoven with each other into a single text, with, however, new additions from the "editors." In conjunction with the characteristics indicated, one version was branded "Y" (Yahwist), for the compiler of this version, and the other was branded "E" (Elohist), for the compiler of the other version. However, more detailed study of the text brought critics to the realization that differentiating by the characteristics of the name of God was not exact; it did not always agree with the contents of each version. But then the opportunity arose to ascribe to them a different meaning, without changing the names of "Y" and "E:" meaning the representation of two geographical areas, where, as it is proposed, each version was compiled. Now "Y" is usually assumed to be the version of the tribe and kingdom of "Judah" (Yooda), and "E" as the version of

“Ephraim,” in other words, of the Northern or Israelite Kingdom which after the death of Solomon was formed out of the ten tribes of Israel by Jeroboam, who belonged to the tribe of Ephraim. Critics find two accounts of the creation of the world in the book of Genesis; one is the Yahwist, from 2:4 to 3:24, and the other is Elohist, from 1:1 to 2:4. The story of the Flood is also spread between two versions, on the basis of the repetitions found there, and is divided into twenty-eight parts, fourteen for each version. An even more conscientious separation of verses into parts can be found in one critic’s investigation of the fourteenth chapter of Exodus, in the story of the crossing of the Red Sea. This theory is not called the “scissors and paste theory” in vain. The Yahwist version is characterized by a more earthly character, more picturesque, poetic. In it God is presented in human form, with human understanding and actions. The Elohist version is cleverly presented as being more elevated: God is the ruler of the world and creates by the word of His mouth, but it is poorer in images, drier. 4. Next in order, according to the time of the compiling of the Old Testament books, comes the historian “D.”- the Deuteronomist, author of Deuteronomy. The first through the eleventh, the twenty-seventh, twenty-ninth, and the successive chapters up to the end of the book are attributed to him. It is thought that he lived in approximately the seventh century; that means almost ten centuries after Moses. He wrote from the point of view of the great prophets, namely that the rise of faith leads to the prosperity of the people, and the decline of faith to tribulation. At about the same time, with the same aim, the history of the conquest of Canaan was written, which later became known as the book of Joshua and the first and second books of Kings. The compilation of Deuteronomy is ascribed to a time of religious renewal in the Kingdom of Judah, after the death of the Prophet Isaiah, among a prophetic faction, for use in the struggle against idolatry and other apostasies tolerated during the reigns of the Kings Manasseh and Amon (698-643-631 B.C.). The account contained in the book of Kings concerning the finding of a “Book of the Law” (621 B.C). by the High Priest Hilkiah during the reign of King Josiah, by common assumption, refers to Deuteronomy. Some critics think that it was actually hidden for a time to prevent it being stolen, and was then uncovered, while others presume that it was compiled by Hilkiah and only put forth by him as a Mosaic book (the opinion of Prof. Kartashev). The announcement to the people of the discovery of this book and the reading of it throughout the nation brought about a great religious reformation in the Kingdom of Judah. 5. The historian “P” (for “priest”) gave final shape to the entire Pentateuch and also to the book of Joshua. He combined the “Y” and “E” accounts into one narrative, choosing from each version (due to the similarity of the stories) that text which agreed more closely with his own ideas and, yet more often, including both versions, amalgamating them. When necessary for the continuity of thought, he connected texts of different origin with his own words. He wrote from the point of view of the priests of his time, emphasizing the ritualistic element of the laws, which had in fact evolved, as it were, in the course of eight centuries of the national-political life of Israel (during the era of the Judges), but which were attributed to the Prophet Moses. Complete agreement among the critics as to when the amalgam of the two versions was achieved has not yet been forthcoming. Some presume that it was carried out immediately after the fall of the Kingdom of Israel, when the Israelite priests, escaping thence in 722 B.C., brought with them to Jerusalem the version of the first four books of the Pentateuch that they had, and after the validity of the Ephraimite legends was recognized, the combining of the two versions was carried out in Jerusalem. According to another suggestion, the combining was achieved only after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity during the reign of Cyrus the Persian. 6. The “Ecclesiastical,” or church

historian, who labored at about 300 B.C., again edited legal and historical books, from Genesis to the book of Kings, and continued history to approximately his own time. Then the Bible included First and Second Chronicles, and also Ezra and Nehemiah. He used an already established method of historical research, citing a series of sources from which he himself drew information (see II Chronicles). He used the personal journals of Ezra and Nehemiah, and Aramaic documents (without translation). He introduced a new approach to the history of the Old Testament - the approach of a cleric. His own work can be called a "church chronicle of Jerusalem." Criticism places the origin of the Psalms, with the possible exception of several psalms from the time of David, in the time of Persian rule following the Babylonian captivity; this is the "Book of Psalms of the Second Temple." A whole series of books is ascribed to this same period: Judith, Esther, Ruth, Tobit, the Story of Susannah, the Story of Bel and the Dragon, and the third and fourth books of the Maccabees. Also included among these is the book of Job. 7. The final period is that of Hellenization. It includes the time of the Maccabees (175-63 B.C.). It is considered to be the time of the final shaping of previous writings of the Prophets, also of the books of Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah. The "wisdom literature" appeared. The impetus for it allegedly originated in contact with Greek philosophical thought; however, it is agreed that here Jewish thought followed its own path. The books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Wisdom of Joshua, Son of Sirach, are attributed to this time. A fragment of the Wisdom of Joshua, Son of Sirach, almost half of the book in the original Hebrew text, was found in Egypt. The first and second books of the Maccabees were compiled at that time. The book of the Prophet Daniel is ascribed to this period, the language of which contains many Persian and Greek words. Consequently, they attribute the prophecy concerning the seventy weeks to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, seeing in it a "reflection, directed towards an event which had already taken place," in the same manner as criticism reacts towards other prophecies.

04 - Roman Catholic Scholarship...

Roman Catholic Scholarship on the Derivation

of the Canon of the Sacred Books of the Old Testament.

It is especially interesting for us to see how Roman Catholic theology approaches the conclusions of the new biblical criticism. Among Christians of other confessions the Roman Church of the second millennium had and has a more complete and, in its own way, a more fully developed theological and church-historical science, in consequence of which its system of corresponding alterations found for themselves a visible reflection in Russian theology of the most recent centuries. But how far has it now departed from its own traditions! The basic tendency of Roman Catholic ecclesiastical thought has usually been conservative. This can be said of the leadership of the Vatican to an even greater degree. Until the last several decades it has always restrained tendencies towards liberal leanings. During the time of the religious reformation of Luther, the Pope, supported by the Council of Trent, forbade lay people to read the Bible. Now Roman theologians explain that this prohibition referred to "free translations which were not sanctioned by the Church." How has the See of Rome reacted to the conclusions of biblical criticism? In the first decades of our century, they were subject to condemnation. Subsequently, however, voices were raised proclaiming the necessity of making a wide opening into the sphere of Catholic thought and world-view for the achievements of the natural sciences in their various forms to enter. Along with this, a reversal took place in theological thought itself with the acceptance of new views on the content of the Bible and the origin of the Scriptures, in the spirit of the new biblical criticism. The Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism, projected at 150 volumes, with headings in 16 series, first began to see print in 1956, in French, English and other languages. The series "Nature and Man" included such headings as: "The Origin of Man," "Evolution," "What is Man?," "What is Life?," the aim of which was to reconcile the findings of contemporary natural sciences with basic Roman Catholic dogma. The sixth series of volumes deals with the subject of the "Word of God," in other words, the Bible as a whole, its parts and aspects, and it must be said that the conclusions of contemporary biblical criticism have been completely accepted. All of the volumes of the Encyclopedia bear the authorization and approval of the Roman Catholic censorship: the Imprimatur and Nihil Obstat. Here we see an agreement of views on the Old Testament of leftist-Protestant criticism and Roman Catholic theology on the main points. Are the foundations of these new views solid? Actually, they are completely hypothetical, and are rooted in their own sort of passion for discovery, for innovation and, at the same time, in a suspicious, skeptical attitude towards that which in the past was elevated, pure, and holy. These new views not only lessen the merit of the schoolmasters that lead men to Christ, i.e. those of the Old Testament Church, but also cast a shadow over the New Testament, over the writings of the apostles. The content of the Pentateuch is cited in the Psalms, by the prophets, in the preaching of the apostles, in the book of Acts (see the sermon of the Apostle Paul in ch. 13), and by the Saviour Himself, when, while instructing the Jews, He left these words for us as well: For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?

(John 5:46-47).

05 - The Sacred Value of the Pentateuch

The Sacred Value of the Pentateuch.

Among the questions raised by biblical criticism of the Old Testament based on the principles of positivism, the question of the Pentateuch and by whom it was compiled becomes, of course, the basic, or key issue. Of course it would be naive to draw a picture of the labor of the compiler of what is acknowledged as the most ancient of mankind's literary monuments in such a way as to portray it as taking place under the conditions of contemporary literary work, a developed technology of writing, and the other comforts of culture. It is not necessary to insist on ascribing the Pentateuch solely and literally to the hand of the Prophet Moses the God-seer. What is important is the recognition that all of it proceeds from the Prophet himself. For us and, in general, for people who approach reading the Bible without a preconceived suspicion, there can be no doubt as to its Mosaic authorship. Both textual and psychological reasons confirm this beyond a doubt.

We will make use of the voice of learned researchers who have not accepted and do not accept the conclusions of criticism on the given question. Yet, even if one were not to resort to learned authorities, a whole series of simple considerations, which turn us away from the conclusions of this criticism, occurs of its own accord to the ordinary reader of Scripture. The same thing could happen to the critics of the text who are enamored of their own hypothetical concepts, as occurs when one is in the thick of a forest for a long time; one can lose that spontaneous impression of a picture of the forest, which is received when viewed from a particular perspective.

06 - The Names of God: Yahweh and Elohim

The Names of God: Yahweh and Elohim.

It is sufficient to recognize, or at least assume, that both names, Yahweh and Elohim, were current in the time of Moses, to understand the impossibility for a writer completely to ignore one name of God, as if it were unworthy of being included in the book, and use the other exclusively. Thus, in their epistles the apostles call our Saviour either Lord, or Christ, or just Jesus, or they use all three names together. We see the same thing in our prayerful appeals to God: the appellations "God" and "Lord" are constantly interchanged. Criticism does not seem to make any effort to pause and consider what it was that must have motivated the Prophet Moses to use two names of God in turn. The name of God "Elohim" is exalted, primordial, ancestral, and at the same time deeply mystical. Its grammatical form in the plural (the singular form is Eloah), was obviously an expression of reverence with the Hebrews, as in Russian "В■" (you - polite form) shows respect for a person. However, on becoming part of the common speech of the people, this mystical plural form, which for Christians is a sign of the dogma of the All-holy Trinity, could then turn the thought of the Hebrew people in the direction of polytheism. It was important to make room for another name of God which would not even have a grammatical plural form. Evidently, it was not then foreign to Hebrew speech. In the revelation to Moses in the burning bush, God revealed Himself under the name of Yahweh - "I am He Who is." And Moses records the exalted meaning of the name in his book. Is Yahweh presented in the Pentateuch as the national God of the Hebrews? No; for in the book of Genesis Yahweh creates man not as the ancestor of the Hebrew nation alone, but as the ancestor of all mankind. Gradually Moses introduced this name into the narrative of the book of Genesis, and from the book of Exodus on it is used predominantly; undoubtedly it was introduced into the oral speech of the people to the same extent.

07 - Is There a Difference in Style?

Is There a Difference in Style?

The critics see a radical difference between the first and second chapters of the book of Genesis. However, in over two hundred years criticism has not reached any agreement as to when the first chapter was written: at the beginning of the era of the kings, or after the Babylonian captivity? Nevertheless, it is possible to indicate a convenient clue in the text which points to the antiquity and unity of origin of both chapters. This clue is the "giving of names." In the first chapter: "And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night," "And God called the firmament Heaven," "And God called the dry land earth, and the gatherings of the waters He called seas..." In the second chapter: "And God formed... all the wild beasts of the field, and all the birds of the sky, and He brought them to Adam, to see what he would call them, and whatever Adam called any living creature, that was the name of it. And Adam gave names to all the cattle and to all the birds of the sky, and to all the wild beasts of the field..." After woman was created for him, Adam said: "She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of her husband." It would seem that such details, e.g., the giving of names, indicated in the history of the creation of the world, are unessential. But we encounter them in both chapters, and this indicates a unity of thought, a tendency. What language for this name-giving did the author of Genesis have in mind? If we attribute the writing of these chapters to the most ancient times, to the age of Moses, then the author of Genesis obviously had in mind a time when the original unity of language was still sensed, when the traditions of the time before the construction of the Tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues, were kept - traditions which were brought from Mesopotamia by the Patriarch Abraham. How exactly is the unity of thought in both chapters demonstrated here, where in the first God gives the names; in the second, Adam? We answer: the unity is evident in the concept of the value of the word, the value of human speech, as a gift of God. Originally, in the first chapter, the naming of God's creations proceeded from the mouth of God Himself; and later, in the second chapter, the gift of speech is communicated by God to man. He is left to create names for the creations of God, but under the direction of God Himself. The form of the providential actions of God changes, but the thought of the author of Genesis concerning them continues according to a single, harmonious plan. This is no mechanical amalgam of two texts. We see the same close bond of concepts, not accidental but organic, between the first and third chapters of the book of Genesis. The problem of evil already arises in the first chapter. If, as we read there, everything left the hands of the Creator perfect; if "God saw that... they were very good," then from whence do evil, illness, suffering, death, arise? The answer is given immediately: the account of the fall into sin at the end of the second and in all of the third chapter. The difference of styles between the "two versions" is determined by the critics in the following manner: the "E" version is dry, but more elevated and intellectual; the "Y" version, while livelier and more concrete, is naive and worldly in spirit. But this absence of uniformity can be explained naturally. It is sufficient to assume that Moses had two sources for his narratives. One was oral traditions, more picturesque, the material for "Y"; the other sources were genealogical, ancient cuneiform inscriptions on tablets, legends

about events of the past that might have been preserved in the family of Abraham and brought with them out of Mesopotamia, comprising the material designated by critics as “E.” Besides which, is it at all possible to call simplistic or primitive the profound content that is hidden, for example, in the expression “the tree of knowledge of good and evil,” considered to be part of the “Y” version? This expression has retained its vividness for ages and millennia. All of mankind’s culture which always carries within itself two opposing elements - good and evil - can be defined by it, when access to the Tree of Life is so difficult and when the fruits of culture are so readily capable of leading to death, both spiritual and physical.

08 - On the Repetitions in the Pentateuch

On the Repetitions in the Pentateuch.

People repeat themselves for various reasons. The compiler of the Pentateuch need not have had only a single reason for his repetitions. If, because of the presence of repetition, the conclusion is drawn that later compilers of the present text had before them two sources, two versions, then why not assume that at times Moses had before his eyes parallel, fragmentary one, two or even three sources of Canaanite or Chaldean origin, since at that time ancient Chaldea, like Egypt, had its own writing? This is one possible reason for the repetitions indicated. Another reason could be the difficult technique of ancient writing: inscriptions on individual clay or wood tablets, on sheets of papyrus, which could later be transferred twice to parchment scrolls; then also the slowness of writing, during which the continuity of the narrative was broken, necessitating the return to details of an event already recorded. It is essential also to consider the psychological bases for repetition. The ancient writer, not having at his disposal either a sufficient variety of terms or force of expression due to the meager content of the vocabulary of an ancient language, resorted to the device of repetition to concentrate attention on his thought or on the importance of an event, emphasizing thereby the importance of the given statement. But the scrupulous critic, failing to take this into account, could possibly infer, for instance, while reading the title of the Russian Primary Chronicle, "This is the chronicle of past years, from whence came the Russian land, who first began to rule in Kiev, and from whence the Russian land came to be," that two versions are hidden in this heading, since it contains two subordinate clauses, of one and the same content. Repetitions for expressing the importance of an action are frequent in the Bible. Such are "And God said" in the description of the creation of the world; in the Psalms, With patience I waited patiently for the Lord (Psalms 39:2), and others. Let us here benefit from the thoughts of Metropolitan Macarius of Moscow, written more than one hundred years ago concerning the very same arguments which criticism uses today. He writes: "In it [the Pentateuch] repetitions of the same thought and sometimes seeming contradictions are encountered... very frequently narratives are interrupted by long speeches and other digressions; laws are laid down in the context of events, and not at all with the order and strictness that is found in exact codices. In general, no purposeful attention to the skillful arrangement and exposition of subjects is in evidence. And all of this should be in the Pentateuch if its author is Moses. He has described events as the events occurred. Therefore, it is natural, that when narrating something, he suddenly breaks off the story and inserts his speech to the people, as it was in reality; in the book he makes the same repetitions which really took place and, speaking about some event, then and there sets forth the law to which that event gave rise. Moses had no need to set down skillful transitions in his book... Frequent repetitions of the same statements, forceful discourses with the people, fatherly admonitions, reproaches and threats - all of this was in actuality quite characteristic of Moses in his relations with the Hebrews and, naturally, in his books as well" (Introduction to Orthodoxy Theology, Macarius, Archbishop of Lithuania and Vilno, DD, 4th ed. [St. Petersburg, 1871], p. 365).

09 - What Does the Terseness...

What Does the Terseness of the pre-Abrahamic Narratives in the Book of Genesis Signify?

If the story of the fall of Adam and Eve and the history of Noah and the flood are set aside, the brevity of the narratives of the first chapters of the book of Genesis attracts our attention. Subtracting the period of 2000 years from Abraham to the New Testament from the conventional Old Testament chronology which determines the period from the creation of the first man to the birth of Christ to be 5508 years, we are left with a period of 3500 years, which is dealt with in eleven chapters of the Bible; and if we bypass the chapters which contain the accounts of the fall and Noah and the flood, we have only seven chapters. Three and a half thousand years in seven chapters which contain little more than genealogical tables and the story of the construction of the Tower of Babel and the dispersion of the nations. This is the sort of caution, the sort of strictness in selecting sources for the narrative that we observe in the compiler. Would it be the same if he had taken to including current popular legends, heroic epic and popular, oral or recorded religious myths? We do not have the facts to judge how the names of the ancient patriarchs could have been preserved in Mesopotamia, escaping oblivion in the days of the flood, and how far we can today construct a chronology of the antediluvian era according to them; but undoubtedly these names acquired a fixed form somewhere in one way or another (perhaps they were not as difficult to assimilate orally as they are for us; perhaps they were recorded at burial sites; perhaps their preservation was, as it were, a religious responsibility of the heads of families - the patriarchs themselves; these are complex and independent questions which belong to the domain of archaeology). But these Chaldean genealogical records were available for the early inclusion in the first pages of Hebrew literature. The other accounts of the first chapters of Genesis are of similar origin, of course, but through the illumination of the Holy Spirit in the consciousness of the sacred writer they were cleansed of the dross of polytheism which constitutes the essence of myths. And we have no right to speak of myths in the Bible; we have full license to speak only of demythologization, of a return of the myth's content to the original, monotheistic, holy traditions. The divine inspiration of the sacred author, the God-seer Moses, worthy of a series of direct revelations from God, lies in this very selection, purification, examination of oral material and material written in cuneiform; in this labor carried out in the fear of God, with the constant elevation of thought to God, with the immediate awareness of the Providence of God which is unceasingly active in the world. Could the compilers of the legends, songs and laws of the people in the period around 800 or 1000 years after Moses have carried out such a task and, moreover, nearly simultaneously in two kingdoms? Why would the compilers who, as the critics insist, belonged to the class of priests and prophets, even begin to include in the book of Genesis elements of Jewish traditions which in their time would already appear to be temptations, if the reason for this work was for them the moral elevation of the people? Concerning the understanding of "myth," let us make use of the words of the outstanding French Roman Catholic exegete, F. Vigourue. He writes: "The meaning of myth has been contrived by rationalists to deny miracles and to deface the true character of revelation. The word "myth," contrary to actual history, is a type of fictional and

imaginary history, a sort of fable that is used as a cloak to cover the expression of religious and metaphysical ideas and theories, or even physical phenomena. Nothing is as contrary to myth as Holy Scripture. One of the immediate goals of the Old Testament was the establishment of a barrier against a mythical trend which drew all of the peoples of antiquity to polytheism and its fables. As for the New Testament, the tendency towards mythicism, after the age of Augustus, when these books were written, came to an end among all pagan peoples of the civilized world, not to mention the Jews" (Instructions for Reading the Bible, vol. I, F. Vigourue, [Trans. from the 9th French ed., Moscow, 1897], pp. 176-177) Unfortunately, those French exegetes who collaborated in the Catholic Encyclopedia of the Twentieth Century have departed far from the position of their authoritative compatriot, F. Vigourue, one of the oldest laborers in the scientific study of Holy Scripture. "De-mythologization" means that the revelation of God, drawn from mankind's common tradition but already dimmed by political additions, was re-established in its original purity of monotheistic truth; however, in verbal expression the truth continues to remain represented figuratively, the actions of God being depicted as human actions. All of this is because of the paucity of words in primitive language, which correspond to elevated and abstract concepts. Even in contemporary, highly developed languages we observe a similar insufficiency of words.

10 - Could the Hebrews have been Acquainted...

Could the Hebrews have been Acquainted with a Culture as Technical and Intellectual as is Presented in the Book of Genesis and the Rest of the Books of the Pentateuch?

Even if animal husbandry was the ancient basis of the way of life of the forefathers of the Jews, this does not provide sufficient grounds for calling the Jews a herding, wandering tribe, or nomads who were unacquainted with the interests of a more settled people. The emigration of Jacob and his sons to Egypt in and of itself already acquainted them and their descendants with Egyptian culture, especially while they enjoyed freedom and even concessions. The elevation of Joseph to his influential position in Egypt put him personally, and perhaps the Jewish people closest to him, on the same level as educated Egyptians. The interest of the Egyptians in their past, which we know of, even then served as an example to the emigrants to Egypt, and provided them with the possibility of returning to memories of both their near and distant past, of life in Palestine, and of trying to preserve those memories for their descendants. Such memories could have been put into writing in part even before Moses' time. One cannot presume that Moses, the leader of Israel, limited himself to leading his people out of Egypt, and then left them to the mercy of fate thereafter. Can one permit the presupposition that he did not elaborate some sort of political plan for his people; that he did not give any thought to what might await them in the future; that he did not outline those means that would be necessary to unify his people, nationally and religiously? This would not have been difficult for him to accomplish, because a) he had a complete understanding of Egyptian culture; otherwise he would not have won the trust of the people; b) in compiling special laws for Israel, he had before him a parallel in the laws, customs, and methods of influence of the Egyptian state upon his people which he discarded in some instances, and in others used as ready examples. He could not have done otherwise. Living in the desert with his father-in-law Jethro, Moses was wholly immersed, mind and heart, in the plan with which God inspired him, and which, according to human reasoning, was extremely uncertain. When it was necessary to overcome by the strength of his spirit and the strength of his faith both the stubbornness of Pharaoh and of his own people, he had to consider everything which would be necessary in the future for his people's homeless wandering, and then for the Hebrew nation, the territory of which would have to be paid for with their own blood. Yet, it was difficult for him to foresee how the life of the nation would be established on that territory. The Hebrew people, while despising the Egyptians as their oppressors, nevertheless observed and assimilated their customs; they saw the Egyptian religious cult, the multiplicity of their priests, temples, and sacrifices, and because of this, in their exodus from Egypt, they zealously applied themselves to the formation of their own national-religious cult. "Criticism" considers the Pentateuch a late work, and thus, Moses, "magnified" and "glorified" with the passage of time; i.e., invested it with an exaggerated greatness and glory. But the writings of Moses do not present such an image; they do not hide his failings, his moments of near despair, the fact that he did not expect the wandering to be so very long; neither do they hide his physical defects, his being a man "slow of speech and a stammerer," as the church hymn puts it. Was it necessary to wait 800 or 1000 years after Moses to compile all the

particulars of the precepts and directions and the minutest details of the journey, going so far as not to forget the decree that each participant in the exodus was to take his own little shovel along for his personal hygienic needs? Arising out of the customs of antiquity, when education and, specifically, the keeping of chronicles were to be found in the hands of those serving religion, it is natural to think that it was established as the duty of Aaron, the brother of Moses, as the high priest, and his sons as the first priests, both to keep the chronicles of events, and also to make a record of laws and orders promulgated by Moses during the forty years of wandering. One need not understand the authorship of the Mosaic books as a record from his own hand. Side by side with his personal manuscript his dictation to scribes had its place. As for current events, they were more likely to have been recorded in response to directions or assignments given to trusted persons to carry out. The birth of Moses and his upbringing at Pharaoh's court were most likely to have been described to his brother. The record of Moses' deathbed instructions and the description of his repose must have become the moral obligation of Joshua, whom Moses had chosen as the leader of the people after him. Thus do the exegetes also depict this labor. For a leader of the people, such as Moses remained to the last days of his life, the most difficult task was that of compiling the first book, Genesis, and it could have been carried out only sporadically, just as a feast day falls among regular days. Thereafter, repetition could have appeared, and at times, certain discrepancies could have begun to creep into the records.

11 - Moses, a Historical Novel by Sholom Ashe

Moses, a Historical Novel by Sholom Ashe.

Among recent creative literature there has been a successful attempt at retelling the story of Moses, the exodus and the wandering in the desert of the Jewish people, by Sholom Ashe, a twentieth century Jewish writer. The name of this writer is well known because of the part he took in several Russian periodicals of the pre-revolutionary period, and now, from a whole series of novels dealing with American life, written in English. The long work Moses (comprising some 500 pages) merits our attention because it shows the naturalness and the quite viable possibility of the entire course of events which are set forth in the books of Moses. The value of this work lies in that the author does not depart from the text of the Bible but fully preserves the idea of God leading the people of Israel in those days, concerning himself only with enlivening the narrative with a picturesque rendering of events which are given in compressed form in the sacred account in the Bible. In particular the author sets before the reader a method for the technical organization of notes for the future Pentateuch which was feasible at that time: the preparation of solid material for writing, the obtaining of inks from seaweed or shells; further - the collection of sacred traditions from the lips of the elders of Israel, the selection of scribes. In like manner, described on a large scale, is the possible picture of the preparations for equipping the tabernacle during the people's annual sojourn at the foot of Sinai, and the works of the equipping itself: how Moses, ascending Sinai, amid the outcroppings of copper ore, discovers an area covered by thick vegetation which has a wonderful aroma and a thicket of huge acacias; how later this costly wooden material is fashioned into parts of the tabernacle, and the aromatic plants into fragrant incense for the services; how the collection of gold and silver objects is conducted so that they may be worked into utensils for the services of the tabernacle; the temple - a free labor, not carried out under the whips of overseers, a labor for their own people, not for their oppressors; with what diligence master craftsmen took to their specialities which they had acquired in Egypt - some men took to the dry reworking of metal, beating gold into sheets with stone hammers, others to smelting silver, having obtained it locally on Sinai, and to smelting copper; others were masters of woodworking and of the tooling and cleaning of leather; women, according to their skill, labored in preparing and dyeing wool, in spinning thread, and those skilled in fine work were found as well, for embroidering designs after the spinning, for preparing vestments and objects for the services. Everything took place under the observation of directors of labor who were chosen by Moses and the council of elders. Later comes the description of the sanctification of the tabernacle and the organization and consecration of the Aaronic priesthood, etc. In a word, all that which has been considered unfeasible in those far-away times and under those conditions by some critics of the Bible is not disregarded. The testament and vows of Moses, and his death, as they are set forth in the book of Deuteronomy, end the account.

12 - About Works of Science and Scientific Data...

About Works of Science and Scientific Data Which Confirm the Authenticity of the Pentateuch of Moses.

The defense of the sacred value of biblical criticism was worked out at the same time as the destructive, and in general, critical theory reached its full development at the end of the 19th century. It is not possible for us at the present time to delve deeply into the vast scientific fields of philological and other research. We will point out only the previously mentioned work by the French biblical exegete F. Vigourue, which belongs to the same final years of the last century: A Guide to Reading and Studying the Bible, which went through a long series of printings in France and was translated into Russian. In it is given a bibliography of Western negative criticism and positive anti-criticism of the Old Testament before the twentieth century. The author sorts out all of the arguments advanced in his time by rationalistic criticism. He proves the authenticity of the Mosaic books by evidence contained in the Bible itself, by the parallel "Samaritan" Pentateuch discovered in modern times, by the evidence of Egyptian monuments, from which it is clear that the author of the Pentateuch was well acquainted with Egypt, even down to various trivial details, namely Egypt as it was under Ramses and even earlier, and finally, it is confirmed by an analysis of the language of the books themselves. In particular, F. Vigourue points out that there are no grounds for separating the Pentateuch into two versions corresponding to the names of Yahweh and Elo-him, citing all of the passages where they are used apart and together, and he investigates the question of "discrepancies" in the Pentateuch, and of the possibility of later individual additions to the text to explain certain historical, geographical, and other names and indications. Since critical reviewers of the text of the Bible see great exaggeration in its description of the tabernacle (A. Kartashev speaks of its "fairy-tale splendor"), and also point out the exaggeration of numbers (in the census of the people, the number of sacrificial animals, the amount of gold and silver collected for decorating the tabernacle), and see in this proof of the later origin of biblical stories, we here provide some scientific information. From the article "Gold" by A. Miklashevsky (in the Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary): "Judging from the results of excavations and archaeological research, gold was one of the first metals which mankind turned to its own use. Easily found and processed, it was from ancient times used in fashioning all sorts of objects. Excavations of extremely ancient burial mounds in Denmark have shown that arms and objects for domestic use were made principally of gold; only certain parts were of iron" (in one museum, for example, one can see the entire shaft of a spear made of gold, and only the spearhead of iron). Under "Mining" in Vol. XVII of the same work we read: "Mining had developed up to the year 3000 B.C. in Upper Egypt; it reached its height under the Ptolemies. According to the testimony of Strabo and Pliny, the Phoenicians (Phoenicia was a neighbor of Palestine) were able to smelt ores and organized the mining of gold and copper in Thrace (an area in what is now Greece), and around 1100 B.C., in southern Spain as well." - Gold is always found in its natural state: in powdered form in sand or in the veins of quartz. For this reason it is comparatively easy to obtain. Let us add a note from the contemporary press: In Erevan (in Georgia), on the mound of

Mestsamor, a very large metal-working center dating to 3000 years before our era was disclosed. Excavations on this mound began some years ago. Archaeologists, astrophysicists and art historians worked together there. Besides smelting furnaces, foundry areas were found, approximately fourteen types of bronze workshops, and innumerable foundries carved in the basalt. Concerning the numbers and calculations in the Bible, in some cases it is very natural to consider the possibility of an incorrect reading by the copiers of the original text, and mistakes in copying, especially when the text was transferred from one type of writing to another. The cuneiform of Mesopotamia, the hieroglyphics of Egypt, the circular writing of the Phoenicians, and the square Aramaic script all had their peculiarities in rendering numbers, and this could have paved the way for unintentional mistakes. By way of comparison, for example, let us recall that in our written Church Slavonic, it is sufficient to add the symbol “1” to the sign for one, a, and thus one becomes one thousand (Compare the Greek numerical system and Church Slavonic system which was borrowed from it in total: they are identical, but the numbers from 11 to 19, the tens, and the units are in reverse order; for example, the number fifteen is “ι■” in Greek, but in Church Slavonic is ****“Ei”). The Babylonian cuneiform system of symbols is curious. “One wedge meant one, two wedges two, etc., up to ten, which was expressed by joining two wedges in an angle, “<“; twenty - two such angles, thirty - three, etc. One hundred was expressed by means of two wedges - a vertical and next to it a horizontal, “l-“; one thousand by the symbol often before the symbol of one hundred, “<-“. An example of abbreviation: instead of writing the numeral 90 by means of nine signs (10 by 9), it was possible to write one special symbol in large calculations meaning 60, and with it three symbols for ten (“Babylonia,” an article by A. Lopukhin. Encyclopedic Dictionary of Brokhaus and Efrori). This system was convenient; however, it was quite easy for a person not familiar with it to become lost in it! F. Vigourue cites several examples which support the possibility of the presence of mistakes in the contemporary text of the Bible, no matter how carefully throughout the history of the Bible the text was guarded after copies had been made from the only copy left after the Babylonian captivity. Thus, according to the Hebrew text of II Chronicles, Solomon had 4000 pairs of horses (in the Slavonic version: mares; in the Russian: stallions); but according to III Kings, he had Matthew,000. According to I Kings, David demanded 700 Syrian horsemen, but according to 2 Chronicles, 7,000. II Chronicles says that Jehoiachim was eight years old when he ascended the throne, but IV Kings says eighteen (Vigourue, A Guide to Reading and Studying the Bible, Vol. I, p. 109). It is clear that these disparate calculations are a result of scribal errors of translation. The critics point out that the Hebrews wandering in the desert could not have had with them certain materials necessary for equipping themselves. But there are grounds for suggesting that they could have obtained these materials by means of trade or purchase from passing caravans travelling from the East to Egypt. In such a way Joseph became a slave in Egypt, when he was sold by his brothers to the merchants of a caravan, as we read in Genesis: And they [the brethren] sat down to eat bread; and having lifted up their eyes they beheld, and lo, Ishmaelish travellers came from Galaad, and their camels were heavily loaded with spices, and resin, and stacte; and they went to bring them to Egypt (Genesis 37:25).

13 - New Horizons in Biblical Research

New Horizons in Biblical Research.

A book by this title was published W. F. Albright, one of the foremost biblical archaeologists, and contains a series of popular accounts related to new findings in the realm of biblical archaeology (In the introduction by the English publishers of the book we read: "William Albright is one of the most outstanding biblical archaeologists, a world-renowned scholar, whose works are read and studied wherever the history of the Holy Land is studied. He is the author of more than 800 articles and books and has received more than 20 scholarly awards. His knowledge of languages, both modern and ancient, the solidity and variety of his scholarly credential, make him an important participant in the study of the Bible and all its aspects. He was the first among scholars with a theoretical knowledge of the Aramaic language to recognize the value of the Dead Sea scrolls, and pointed out their importance in resolving a number of disputed Biblical questions.). The information presented by this author is valuable for us in that in its principal tenets it runs in opposition to the theory of rationalistic criticism. Also important is the fact that the author writes as a representative of "free science," and in keeping with this does not overstep the boundaries of the method of scientific realism, i.e., of the method that perhaps does not deny the divine inspiration of Scripture, but leaves it aside, so as not to violate methodological principle. In the above-mentioned book, in the account "Archaeology and the Tradition of Israel," the author firmly states his view of the book of Genesis on the basis of written materials of antiquity, newly discovered at excavations at four sites outside of Palestine: namely, two in Mesopotamia and two in Syria. "Mari" (today Tell-EI-Harim), situated half-way up the Euphrates, was excavated in 1933 by M. Andre Parrot. There the remains of a palace were found, dating from the period between 1730 and 1695 B.C., i.e., the period of the post-deluvian Patriarchs of the Bible. Many thousands of cuneiform tablets were found there, written by the king and those close to him, and also by the rulers of neighboring provinces, most of which were settled by north-western Semites who spoke a language almost identical to the biblical language of the time of the Patriarchs - in terms of vocabulary, expressions, syntax and personal names. Thus, a great amount of material is available which casts light on the life of the ancestors of Israel in the first half of the second millennium B.C. Biblical archaeology, as our author stresses, is not limited to excavations in Palestine, but is broadened by archaeological discoveries in lands far removed from Palestine. Another site, even farther to the East, is Nuzi, where those who carry on the search, mostly Americans, have found the remains of estates and the citadel of an ancient city. There in the ruins many thousands of tablets with cuneiform writing were preserved, illustrating customs so similar to those found in Genesis that one can speak of them as being identical. All of the obscure passages in Genesis which have not yet been explained in the Hebrew text as it has come down to us, began to disclose their meaning from 1925 on, with the help of the studies of the tablets from Nuzi. The location Alalakh in northern Syria was excavated by the late Leonard Woolley in the course of scientific expeditions. Now the name of this site is not Semitic and it belongs, apparently, to one of the ancient languages which was neither Semitic nor Indo-European, whose type has yet to be determined. However,

cuneiform tablets of great value were found there which describe the theory and practice of laws among the Canaan-ites and their neighbors in the seventeenth, sixteenth and fifteenth centuries B.C. More important than these sites in northern Syria, however, is Port Ugarit, now Ras Shamra. There, from 1929 to the present day, work is being carried out by Claude Schaeffer, and it has yielded rich material of various sorts: art objects, architectural works, and special inscriptions in a half-dozen languages, as well as much writing, predominantly in Babylonian cuneiform script and in the local Canaanite alphabet. Things were found here that were not dreamed of before 1931: more than a thousand whole and fragmented tablets inscribed in the ancient cuneiform alphabet of twenty-seven letters (plus three others not comparable to any of the ancient linear alphabets), representing the ancient northwestern Semitic dialect, i.e., essentially the pre-Phoenician Canaanite language which was very close to the most ancient poetic forms of the Bible, not to mention grammar and vocabulary. Of course, all of this material is fully accessible only to a few persons who are quite knowledgeable in the field of history, archaeology, philology and linguistics, in their historical perspective. The comparative study of ancient languages according to ancient sources provides us with an opportunity to understand the most ancient traditions of the Jews. It shows that a clear line has to be drawn between Hebrew cosmogony and popular traditions in Genesis on one hand, and the same sort of material from Canaan, Phoenicia, and Egypt on the other. Comparison reveals that religious traditions here and there had nothing or very little in common, though at the same time both traditions undoubtedly arose from a certain single Mesopotamian tradition of great antiquity. In particular, the story of the Flood according to Genesis has its parallel in the Sumerian-Akkadian histories of Mesopotamia. The author of the above-mentioned survey gives his personal opinion on the contents of the book of Genesis as follows. The first eleven chapters of the book are political in character, enveloped by a religious spirit; the next part presents history, but history which has been preserved in the form of oral traditions. As for the first chapter of Genesis, the author confesses that he is awed by the fact that it is in several respects a great improvement over everything that was said about the origin of the world in written form prior to the beginning of the nineteenth century. The author of the survey gives as examples a series of obscure passages of the Bible that have been clarified as a result of excavations. Thus, in Genesis 15:2 we encounter a certain Eliezer of Damascus, about whom Abraham complains he will be forced to leave him his whole estate at death, not having a son as his heir (this was before the birth of Ishmael and Isaac). We now know, writes Professor Albright, that according to the ancient practice of the Patriarchs, property was not supposed to leave the family, but a legal "loophole" was devised. If someone was forced to mortgage his property to a creditor because of a bad harvest or for any other reason, he had to adopt his creditor, and the latter became the heir to his property. Such circumstances obviously arose in this case: Eliezer, a rich merchant from Damascus, who, like other merchants of Damascus, lent money to the surrounding landholders and cattle breeders, became a great creditor of Abraham, and could have become his direct heir through adoption. Another story, related in Genesis 21:1-34, describes the occasion when Rachel, the daughter of Laban and the wife of Jacob, before leaving the house of her father, stole the images of his household deities, the "teraphim," and succeeded in hiding them despite the search conducted by her father. In the texts of Nuzi there is a law that when doubt arises as to the rights of inheritance, for example, if there is no formal will, possession of idols of the household deities is considered to be the primary evidence to the right of inheritance. Hitherto it was not clear what purpose this theft served, and why this trivial event was included in the

history, but the scribal copyists preserved this story, keeping in mind that it must have had some real significance. The meaning of Rachel's actions is now explained. There are a number of other examples where mysterious passages in Genesis are made clear thanks to the findings at Nuzi and other sites. Because of this, almost all learned biblicists now acknowledge that the book of Genesis constitutes a written narrative of factual events which were preserved by the Hebrew people in the form of oral traditions. Furthermore, the religious, educational, and literary value of the narratives of the Bible is much greater than if the wars of those days, the migrations of tribal groups, etc., had been described there. If, as we said, the legal customs of the book of Genesis present an authentic reflection of the laws of society at that time, if the social and juridical practices described in the book of Genesis correspond exactly to those of the age of the Patriarchs and not to the post-Mosaic period, then it follows, writes Professor Albright, that we have no right a priori to relegate the patriarchal chronicles to a later date. One cannot call them the result of retrospective points of view which were current during the time of the Prophets, but should consider them to be actual oral traditions, only slightly modified with the passage of time as regards the removal of mythical elements from the traditions, the emphasizing of certain points, which were held to be significant, etc.; but on the whole, one should see their value as an authentic chronicle of the distant past. The attempts of certain critics of the biblical text to transfer the time of the life of Abraham and the time of the Exodus of the Jews out of Egypt to later centuries are unjustified, writes the author. Keeping to the point of view of a scholar who obviously accepts biblical material as one of the phenomena of human culture, namely religious culture, Professor Albright does not deny the possibility of any sort of additions or deletions made in the course of the centuries of the Bible's history, just as he does not express himself opposed to the designation of such phenomena by the signs Y, E, P, etc. But he does definitively state that "attempts to break up the text of the Bible into small pieces, sometimes dividing up the text into individual verses or lines ascribed to three different sources [as rationalistic criticism does] are quite futile - empty, groundless; persons holding to the principles of higher criticism are completely mistaken in their assumptions. "From this," he writes, "it does not necessarily follow that the hypothesis of the documents is false in principle, but it must be treated with much greater critical caution than has hitherto been done" (pp. 14-15). What place does Moses occupy in history? Comparing the cultic, ritual, and civil prescriptions in the Pentateuch with both earlier and later developments, one can fix the final prescriptions of the Pentateuch close to the period between the fourteenth and eleventh centuries B.C. In the same way we have ground for stating that the religion of the Pentateuch stands between the patriarchal religion on one hand and the religion of the epoch of the Kingdoms on the other, and that it can be called monotheistic in the broad sense of the word. As for details, and mainly those of the construction of the Tabernacle as described in the Pentateuch, the author thinks that its appearance was perfected gradually, and parallel to this, a series of corresponding additions could have been inserted into the text comparable, for example, to the way in which the original American Constitution of 1789 was amended, "though it lost neither its original unity, nor the wholeness of its character." Let us leave these opinions of the author as his personal ones. Professor Albright is decidedly opposed to the application of the understanding of "myth" to the narratives of the Bible. To him, in fact, belongs the introduction of the term "demythologization" in its proper understanding into the language of modern exegesis. He writes: In Genesis and in several poetic images of the Bible there are a number of passages where a clearly mythological element was demythologized. For example, in Canaanite mythology there is

a huge creature called 'tanin,' which is rendered in the Authorized Bible by the word 'whale.' 'Tanin' was a prehistoric monster which existed even before the gods, and was destroyed by the great god Baal, or his sister Anat, or by another Canaanite deity. But in Genesis it says that on the fifth day of Creation God created 'Taninim gedolim,' the first gigantic creations out of chaos [in the Slavonic and in the Authorized version: "great whales"]. They were not the predecessors of the gods, they were creations of God: this is the process of demythologization at first hand. It is also impossible to consider correct the proposition, for example, that 'tekhom' - 'the great deep' - in the first chapter of Genesis is a monster such as 'tekhmatu' was in early Canaanite mythology. Such allusions to Canaanite mythology also show little indication of belief in the reality of the original bearers of these names, just as our use of the word 'cereal' scarcely expresses our faith in the goddess Ceres. The Bible uses a number of names of ancient gods and goddesses as ordinary names: the name Astarte took on the meaning of shepherd; Shumen, the god of health, became 'to your health'; one divinity lent its name to the oak tree, another to the turpentine tree; yet another to wine. All of these are examples of demythologization.

(W.F. Albright, "The Ancient Israelite Mind,' from a survey in *New Horizons in Biblical Research*). In actuality, in essence, it is quite clear that the task of Moses consisted in rejecting pagan mythical legends of gods and goddesses, and confirming a monotheistic world view among his own people, as the one intentionally called to preserve and preach faith in the One God, the Omniscient Creator.

14 - A General View of the Results...

A General View of the Results of So-Called Scholarly Biblical Criticism.

Limiting this survey to the subject of the Pentateuch, let us in conclusion express our principal ideas regarding the character of the work of biblical criticism and its goals. For the early Christian Church all of the rabbinical determinations relative to the books of the Old Testament Scriptures were, apparently, not dogmatically necessary. However, it did preserve them to a great degree. But why? This springs from an understanding of the spirit, the religiosity of Old Testament man, in whose consciousness the "righteousness of God" had preeminence, for the Lord Himself is righteous and hath loved righteousness; upon righteousness hath His countenance looked (Psalms 10:7). Hence, the religious Jew had a dread of any falsehood, deceit, injustice, and whatever else elicits the disclamation: If in my heart I regarded unrighteousness, let the Lord not hear me. Wherefore God hath hearkened unto me, He hath been attentive to the voice of my supplication (Psalms 65:18-19). Fret not thyself so as to do evil. For evil doers shall utterly perish (Psalms 36:8-9). Set not your hopes on injustice (Psalms 61:11). I have hated the congregation of evildoers (Psalms 25:5). I have hated every way of unrighteousness (Psalms 119:104). The principle of righteousness was so bound up with the understanding of "faith" for the Old Testament Jew that it was in fact Old Testament religion that developed the idea of "a righteous person," and "a righteous one," to signify a religious man, and this it passed on to Christianity. "Scholarly criticism" all but constructs its hypotheses on a contradictory supposition: it is inclined to see the falsification, the forgery, and the artificial creation of ancient authorities and the deceitful utilization of these authorities everywhere among the collectors and preservers of the books of the Bible, the spiritual leaders of Israel. If this were so, then whole series of misunderstandings arise. How could this artificial, untruthful approach to the matter coincide with the personal, lofty, spiritual animation, with the great enthusiasm in the souls of the directors of the Hebrew people - and finally, simply with the thought of the fear of God? From whence was the zeal for their religion, and their boldness, those "scourges" directed to the people, the readiness for self-denial, for self sacrifice generated in them? The same contradiction is met in passages about the people. Let us pass on to a specific occurrence. How could a forgery, alleged to have been produced by the High Priest Hilkiah (We read in Prof. Kartashev's article, "How can we accept with a clear conscience the completely incredible story (chps. 22-23 of IV Kings) of the supposedly chance discovery of the 'Book of the Law' or 'Book of the Covenant,' found during the renovation of the Temple of Jerusalem - a book totally unknown both to the High Priest Hilkiah who found it, to the righteous King Josiah, who was faithful to Yahweh, and to the whole nation? And this was barely one thousand years after Moses. It took place in the year 621, thirty-six years before Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar. No, this can only be comprehensible by admitting that it was not a new, strangely forgotten, neglected book that was found at the time of King Josiah, but a totally new one. The delusion that the Pentateuch existed from time immemorial thus goes up in smoke. Indeed, the Pentateuch did not yet exist" [this means from Kartashev's point of view, that a crude and extremely dangerous forgery was made]), even if he had passed off a new work as an ancient

one, have produced that religious revival among the Hebrew people which in the history of the Jews is called the "first rebirth?" A similar question arises concerning the activity of Ezra. If Ezra, calling upon the blinded people to walk in the law of God, which was given by the hand of Moses, the servant of God (Nehemiah 10:29), basing himself upon the authority of Moses, was either hiding the truth or was himself led into error, was it that the people did not suspect this possibility, but gave the oath demanded by him which compelled them to such great sacrifices and self-restraint as, for example, the mass removal of those of their wives who were of non-Jewish blood? Could a "second rebirth" have take place in history on such dubious grounds? Criticism maintains that from the time of the Babylonian captivity in the religious sphere the Jewish people fell increasingly under the influence of foreign peoples - the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks - and that this influence is reflected, on one hand, in the appearance of a great number of books of the Bible which have hitherto been accepted as dating from an earlier period, and, on the other hand, in the borrowing of a number of religious beliefs from the peoples that oppressed them. Thus criticism sees an instability and mutability in Old Testament Jewish beliefs. Are there sufficient grounds to confirm this? Does not oppression create an opposing tendency in the ideological response of a nation? Does it not incline more towards rejection [of the oppressors] and self-determination than to borrowing from foreign peoples? An indication of the type of reaction that involuntary subjection elicits in a nation can be seen in Psalms 136:1-26 : By the waters of Babylon. An enslaved people can to a certain degree forget its language, but this comes about independently of its own will. On the other hand, in the area of religion, a sense of national self-preservation inspires the oppressed to fear especially the intrusion of an alien spirit in the spiritual domain. We have examples from a time nearer to our own. The Greeks and Western Slavic peoples, throughout many centuries of Turkish suzerainty, preserved Orthodoxy unchanged; those that did not remain faithful to it became denationalized. The Russian people preserved their faith just as strictly under the Tatar yoke. But the victorious ancient Roman Empire created within itself a religious eclecticism which assimilated the various religions of the subject nations of which it was comprised. What is characteristic of a people applies to its leaders as well. The autonomy, stability, and independence of biblical religious understanding and even of corresponding terminology is gradually being confirmed by the study of the ancient Hebrew manuscripts, found in our times, in Palestine, and particularly by the "Dead Sea Scrolls." This refers not only to the books of the Old Testament, but, to a lesser degree, to the Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament as well. Here again let us refer to the testimony of archaeology, according to the information of Professor Albright:

They maintain that Greek philosophical thought had a marked influence on a portion of the Old Testament, especially on the books of Job and Ecclesiastes. I date the book of Job to approximately the seventh century B.C. The more deeply that its problems are studied, the clearer it becomes that there is no trace of a Greek philosophical treatment of these problems. As for Ecclesiastes, one can now more or less definitely date it towards the end of the fifth century B.C. Though I recognize the similarity of thought between the writings of the Prophets and that of many Greek thinkers of the sixth century B.C. and also the Phoenician written material we have from this same general period, I cannot see a trace of the influence of Greek philosophical thought, as many have once done, myself included. Hebrew literature is as old as Greek literature and is comparable to it in content. Generally speaking, nowhere before the sixth century - not in the pagan writings of the Near East, or in the Old Testament, or in Homer, Hesiod, or the early Greek poets - is it

possible to find traces of authentic philosophical thought.

(W.F. Albright, "The Ancient Israelite Mind"). The same author writes about the independence of biblical understanding from Greek influence, on the basis of research done on the Dead Sea Scrolls. But this material pertains to the New Testament.

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