

THE FOUNDATIONS OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
Ambassador College
Pasadena, California

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Ronald L. Dart
January 1968

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INTRODUCTION

Are the critics of the Bible sincere? Have the scholars really been searching for the truth with an open, unbiased mind and with a sound, logical approach? These are fair questions. Since critics have called Daniel a "pious fraud" and have implied that Ezekiel was a liar, can we not at least examine the accusers?

The very word "scholar" tends to intimidate the average layman. When we hear of the "assured results of modern criticism," or that "scholars are agreed," we are expected to bow before superior wisdom. Yet scholars are only men and are subject to human failings like the rest of us.

For too long now the critics have hidden behind a barrier of complexity which has frightened off the average man. The Hebrew language, the mysteries of Greek, the complexities of archaeology--all these things seem beyond our comprehension.

But the critics are not all that difficult to understand. When all the window dressing is removed and the foundation laid bare, anyone can understand them. The critics, their methods, their motives, their prejudices, all become absolutely transparent.

The purpose of this thesis is not to prove the Bible, but to examine the critics. Is there any foundation

at all to their theories? What real evidence do they have for their conclusions? What are their motives? Where are they leading us?

But by far the most important question we have to answer about any witness is the one we began with: Is he sincere? Can we detect any prejudice, any bias which would distort his conclusions? What assumptions has he taken for granted?

In this thesis you are going to be shocked to learn what the real foundations of Biblical Criticism are!

CHAPTER I

THEOLOGIANS REJECT AUTHORITY

The most serious assaults ever made on the authority of the Bible have NOT come from atheists, rationalists, or scientists. They have come from the "Christian" ministry.

An atheist haranguing against the Bible from a soapbox on Speakers' Corner would hardly receive a hearing from most Christians, but when a minister solemnly steps into the pulpit and begins to criticize the Bible, people are going to sit up and take notice! This is happening week after week in our western "Christian" world.

A Rector of the Church of England was quoted recently as saying that the Old Testament contains passages of "spiritual junk" and "poison" for the people (Daily Express, May 10, 1963).

Another, Dr. Leslie Weatherhead, former president of the Methodist Conference, said he would like to go through the Bible with a blue pencil and cut out certain sections. He said that in his opinion, the Old Testament was out of date and completely outmoded and that many of the psalms were nonsense (Sunday Pictorial, London, August 12, 1962).

One Vicar even went so far as to call the Ten Commandments the "Terrible Ten" and to say that it is

often right to break them.

With so many clergymen openly challenging the authority of the Bible, is it any wonder that a man was recently moved to write to the editor of his Sunday newspaper and complain: "I honestly try to live the right kind of life, but when you read that so much of what we used to think true in the Bible has been discredited, how do we know what is right?"

How indeed? When clergymen on every side are rejecting the Bible as the standard for human behavior, where can a man look for guidance? Certainly not to the clergy--they are so deeply divided on moral issues that they are becoming confused themselves. Abortion, teenage sex experimentation, trial marriages, divorce, drug addiction, adultery, homosexuality--all these are wide-open, controversial subjects among clergymen today.

Why No Agreement

But why is it that intelligent men are unable to agree on the right or wrong of such vital issues?

"Surely," we exclaim, "they must see from the fruits of these things that they are wrong!"

No, they don't. When they threw away the standard which defines right and wrong and attempted to become a law to themselves, they lost the only wisdom they ever had.

As a desperate world looks to these men for help, all they get are opinions. "There are no absolutes," says one minister. "There are no blacks or whites where morals are concerned--only shades of gray," says another.

Meanwhile a hopelessly confused people sink further into moral quicksand.

Well did Jeremiah prophesy of these men, "Lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?" (Jer. 8:9.)

God has clearly defined what is right and wrong for man. If clergymen would turn to the Bible, and accept its authority on the vital questions pertaining to man's life, all this confusion would disappear. God says: "But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings" (Jer. 23:22).

Assailed By Doubts

But the Bible is no longer accepted by many religious leaders as an authoritative standard.

Having rejected any Biblical authority, much of the "Christian" ministry has sunk into a morass of doubt and agnosticism.

One of the most eloquent spokesmen of the new

"theology of doubt" is Dr. John A.T. Robinson, Bishop of Woolwich, and author of Honest to God. His book has been described as saying "that the concept of a personal God as held in popular Christianity is outmoded--that atheists and agnostics are right to reject it."

Bishop Robinson was asked in an interview by Jack Lucas of the Daily Herald whether he believed literally in a virgin birth. He answered frankly: "I am prepared to be agnostic. I do not believe it matters very much. I think the evidence is pretty weak on the whole."

The evidence of the virgin birth of Christ is in the Bible; but it is clear that the Bishop does not accept that authority.

Bishop Robinson, of course, does not intend to speak dogmatically in his book, nor does he really intend to prove anything. In his own words, he is merely "thinking out loud."

He summed up the general confusion in theological circles by admitting to Mr. Lucas: "I do not fully understand myself all that I am trying to say" (Daily Herald, March 19, 1963).

These questions that have arisen in the mind of Bishop Robinson are by no means unique in theological circles. Reviewing the book, Honest to God, Canon Theodore Wedel said:

The Bishop is not committing a crime in revealing

to a wider public what has been going on for a generation and longer in the world of advanced theological learning Honest to God is simply a bold, and as some theologians may say, premature opening of a Pandora's box of theological novelties under debate among doctors of the schools BEHIND THE SCENES. (The Episcopalian, August, 1963, emphasis mine.)

No Authority

Very few theologians today will accept the Bible as an end to all dispute. In a major American city recently, a group of theologians appeared on television to answer questions about religion for people who telephoned them in the studio. One woman who called, after trying in vain to point out something she thought was very clear in the New Testament, became exasperated and said, "Can't you see it? It's in plain English."

"Well, no," was the theologian's reply, "it's in corrupt Greek."

His answer illustrates the attitude of the modern schools of Biblical Criticism. The Bible is not accepted as the infallible Word of God, authoritative in all matters of religion. It is looked upon as the work of men, subject to human error and therefore quite fallible.

A survey commissioned by Red Book Magazine in 1961 shows how far this has gone. They assigned Louis Harris and Associates, a public opinion research firm, to interview student ministers in eight leading theological schools. The results were shocking.

It was found that only 44 per cent of these future ministers believe in the virgin birth of Christ, only 29 per cent believe there is a real heaven and hell, and only 46 per cent believe that Jesus ascended physically whole into heaven after His crucifixion!

Of all the figures listed in the article, the most striking concerned the second coming of Christ: Only one per cent of these future ministers are convinced that there will be a second coming of Christ, even though Christ specifically said that He would come again to this earth (Acts 1:11, John 14:3).

Confusion Without Authority

A woman recently wrote to a minister who writes a column for The Birmingham Mail and asked: "If you reject the authority of Scripture, what authority can you speak with or appeal to? Or don't you think there is any need for authority today?"

His answer? "Your own mind is the authority!" Each of us must face any decisions that come our way and "hear again the inner voice, something in us that responds, that whispers 'This is true.' There is your ultimate authority!"

But what if the "inner voice" is wrong? What if it has been the victim of miseducation, misinformation, or outright falsehood? There are millions of people in the

world today telling themselves, "This is true" while, in fact, disagreeing with countless other people who are telling themselves, "This is false." Who is right? Is anybody right? It is this sort of confusion that has led to a sort of "Christian agnosticism" in our day.

Mankind needs a guide, an authority he can turn to with assurance. The Bible has that authority. Why have ministers rejected it? It's time you learned the real truth about Bible Criticism.

CHAPTER II

TRUST NO MAN

Are the critics honest? Can you rest assured that they have always approached the Bible with an open, unprejudiced mind--that their research has always been careful, thorough, well documented?

Unfortunately, you cannot.

Far too many of the objections raised against the Bible by critics are firmly grounded in sheer ignorance! Scholars do not always understand everything they write about. Even "learned men" are occasionally guilty of carelessness, deceit, false assumption, or even ignorance.

Take for example Thomas Paine who launched one of the most widely read attacks ever made on the Bible with his Age of Reason in 1794. Although Paine ripped apart the contemporary philosophy of the Bible held by some churchmen, he left the Bible itself virtually untouched.

He wrote:

From whence then could arise the solitary and strange conceit that the Almighty, who had millions of worlds equally dependent on His protection, should quit the care of all the rest and come to die in our world, because they say one man and one woman had eaten an apple? (Thomas Paine, Age of Reason, pp. 26, 27, emphasis mine.)

Notice that his objection is not to the Bible itself, but to what "they say" about the Bible. "They,"

in this case, were the "Christian" teachers whose doctrines he had sampled. The chances are he did not look any more deeply into their teachings than he did into the Bible. He admitted that when he wrote the first part of his book, he did not even possess a Bible! (W. Neil, Cambridge History of the Bible, p. 250.)

We might borrow a phrase from Paine and ask: "From whence then could arise the solitary and strange conceit" that leads a man to argue so confidently from a position of ignorance?

It seems strange to hear a man admit that he doesn't know what he's talking about, but we should at least be refreshed by his honesty. A great deal of criticism of the Bible is launched from a similar lack of knowledge but without the candor to admit it.

Check the Source

It is easy to see how Paine made his mistake. After all, if the clergy did not speak for the Bible, who did? It is always risky, however, to take another man's word for something. The unwary reader may very well find himself in possession of an opinion about the Bible which completely misses the point.

Thomas Paine simply failed to check up to see if the Bible really did say what he had heard that it said.

A good many errors result from just such a failure. For example, Robert Graves and Raphael Patai recently published a book called Hebrew Myths, the Book of Genesis in which they attempt to show the alleged mythological character of much of the Old Testament. In making a point on page 13, the writers state: "A Ugaritic deity worshipped as Baal-Zebub or Zebul, at Ekron was insulted by King Ahaziah (II Kings 1:2ff)."

If the reader simply accepts this without checking, he is going to be completely misled. If he checks, he will find the account in the Bible is clear and easy to understand. King Ahaziah sent to inquire of the god of Ekron whether he would recover of his disease. Elijah the prophet intercepted the messengers and sent them back to tell Ahaziah he would die. There is no indication that the messengers ever got to Baal-Zebub and certainly no insult to Baal-Zebub is mentioned in the text.

The book gives no indication and the reader cannot tell whether this represents an interpretation of the authors or a slip on their part.

This is a particularly interesting example, because the two authors have an impressive record of scholarship in their fields and list no fewer than seventy literary works between them! As one reads through the introduction, he cannot help being impressed by the

obvious scholarship, learning and confidence exhibited.

This impression, however, gets damaged a bit when he reads on page 15 a reference to the "feast of atonement." Anyone who is going to write with authority about the Old Testament ought to know that the Day of Atonement is a fast day, not a feast!

If the student has become a little cautious by this time and begins to check up on what he reads, he will find another error on the same page. Here the authors refer to the Jewish tradition of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac. They point out that tradition says this took place on the first of Tishri. A careful check will disclose that virtually all Jewish tradition places it on the 14th Nisan. Since the authors do not explain themselves, it is impossible for the reader to judge whether this is a case of carelessness, ignorance, or some new interpretation of the authors.

One thing is clear, however--we can't swallow everything we see in print! It is often necessary to go right to the source to see if it really does say what it is purported to say.

What Kind of God?

If Thomas Paine had done this, he could have saved himself a great deal of misunderstanding. Where did he

get his concept of God? He wrote:

When we read the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and torturous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness with which more than half the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent that we called it the word of a demon than the Word of God (Thomas Paine, Age of Reason, p. 7).

Of course, the careful student of the Bible already knows that the cruelty, barbarism, and vindictiveness which we do find in the Old Testament are not the will of God! They are the works of man contrary to the laws of God!

Nevertheless, far too many people who have read Paine's work still share his false impression of the God of the Old Testament. They look upon God as a harsh, hanging judge who is all too eager to descend upon man with great wrath every time he deviates from an "impossible" law.

As the new PLAIN TRUTH reader from Northampton, England, wrote:

I accept the ethical teaching of Jesus, but I cannot in any way reconcile the God Jehovah of the Jews as having anything in common with such a teaching. There is hardly a page in the Hebrew Scriptures which does not deal with murder, rape, pillage, etc. No loving or merciful God or being could have allowed or attributed to the acts as reported in the Hebrew Scriptures. I can't read it. It is too bloody. There is too much fear. Didn't Paul write perfect love casteth out all fear? (Emphasis mine.)

Of course, those who have more than a nodding acquaintance with the God of the Old Testament have encountered an entirely different God. They have found in

the pages of the Bible the God who takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. They have encountered the God who cried out, "Why will you die, O house of Israel!" These students of the Bible have encountered prophets whose main message was a plea to Israel not to destroy themselves.

For some reason, the reader was oblivious to this. Either he had not read the Old Testament carefully; or, like Thomas Paine, he had allowed his mind to be prejudiced against it before he ever started.

But what about you? To what extent have you allowed your opinions of the Bible to be formed by what others have told you? Have you checked the Bible to see what it really does say about God?

It is a shame, but all too many of the criticisms leveled at the Bible have little or nothing to do with the real message of the Bible. They deal purely with the false concepts and philosophies of man about the Bible.

Science Versus the Bible

Thomas Paine was certainly not the only one to make the mistake of assuming that the teaching of the Church was the teaching of the Bible. When the science of geology began to discover evidence in the rocks that the earth was more than six thousand years old, many jumped to the conclusion that the book of Genesis had been discredited. However, as one writer put it, their concept of Creation

was not so much that of the Bible as that of Milton's Paradise Lost.

In their minds, they had somehow developed a mental image of the creation of the earth out of nothing and the sudden shaping of the sun, moon and stars within a week of the creation of man.

When this idea clashed head-on with evidence that the earth may be millions of years old, the faith of some was shaken. It was unfortunate, because their faith in the Bible need not have been shaken at all. The Bible simply does not say that the earth is only six thousand years old!

It is not difficult to see how a superficial reading of Genesis might reinforce such an idea. But a careful study of the first chapter makes it clear that Genesis reveals nothing about the actual age of the earth.

The account starts simply in the first verse by saying: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The writer of Genesis does not tell us when "the beginning" was. The very language of it certainly implies antiquity, but it is indefinite.

The writer goes on to say: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

It is obvious from the wording of these verses that there is some time lapse between Verse 1 when God created the heaven and the earth, and Verse 3 where He said, "Let there be light."

How long did the earth lie without form, and void? How long was darkness upon the face of the deep? How long did the Spirit of God move upon the face of the waters before God finally took action, saying, "Let there be light"?

As far as the book of Genesis is concerned, the earth could just as easily be twice as old as the wildest estimates of geologists.

The Full Story

It is only after a careful investigation of the Bible that the full story of what is described at the beginning of Genesis comes to light. An examination of the original Hebrew of Genesis 1:2 reveals that the word rendered "was" by the translators of the Authorized Version should more correctly be translated "became."

Furthermore, the original Hebrew words for "without form, and void," were tohu and bohu. The words simply mean "chaotic," "in confusion," "waste," or "empty."

Then, we read in Isaiah 45:18 that when God created the heavens and the earth He did NOT create them TOHU--in vain.

God is not the author of confusion. When He created the heavens and the earth in the first place, He created them perfect and "to be inhabited" (Isa. 45:18). It was after this creation that the earth became chaotic and in confusion as a result of Satan's rebellion. We are not told in Genesis how this happened or how long it lasted. For the full story of the earth before Adam, see the article, "Did God Create a Devil?"

A Total Misconception

It is a fact that many of the criticisms leveled at the Bible have been made because the critic was misinformed, failed to check the source, misunderstood what the Bible said, or simply did not read it carefully enough. Yet many have read their works and supposed that the Bible couldn't be trusted.

Since the critics have taken it upon themselves to scrutinize the Bible, surely it is only fair that we scrutinize the critics.

What are they trying to prove and why? Do they back up their conclusions with facts, with proof, or only with opinions?

You may be in for a surprise!

CHAPTER III

JUST WHAT DO YOU MEAN "IMPOSSIBLE"?

"Jesus Christ I accept as a philosopher but I do not accept Him as God. Nor can any thinking man really believe in Virgin Birth or Resurrection." That statement was made by the resigning Vicar of Stalisfield, Kent, Dr. Alan Stewart (Daily Express, 26th November, 1963).

The only thing peculiar about this statement is that the Vicar was resigning. His feelings are by no means novel among theologians. They are quite tame by comparison to some of the pronouncements of clergymen who are continuing in their jobs and show no signs of resigning.

In these days when slogans and catch phrases like "God is dead" and "Christian Atheism" are bandied about among theologians, it is surprising that the Vicar even made news at all!

But why did he feel that no "thinking man" believes in the Virgin Birth or the Resurrection? Is there some evidence to the contrary? Does the man have sound, logical reasons for his disbelief or is it a purely emotional reaction?

The philosophy underlying this trend was expressed by Kuenen:

So soon as we derive a separate part of Israel's religious life directly from God, and allow the supernatural or immediate revelation to intervene even in one single point, so long also our view of the whole continues to be incorrect It is the supposition of a natural development alone which accounts for all the phenomena (Kuenen, Prophets and Prophecy, quoted by James Orr, The Bible Under Trial, p. 98).

In other words, whatever you do, leave God out of the picture.

If the writers of the various books of the Bible had omitted any reference to the supernatural, their work would surely stand today as the most valuable historical record in the hands of man. (Of course, if it were not for the miraculous element in the Bible, we would not have it.)

For some reason, man simply cannot bring himself to believe that anything supernatural could ever happen. As one scientist said: "Evolution is unproved and unprovable. We believe it because the only alternative is special creation, and that is unthinkable."

The Reason Why

Why is it that a "thinking man" cannot believe in either the Virgin Birth or the Resurrection? Why is special creation so "unthinkable?"

David Hume in his essay on miracles is generally recognized as one of the chief spokesmen for the argument against the credibility of miracles. He says:

A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle from the very nature of the fact is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined It is no miracle that a man seemingly in good health, should die on a sudden; because such a kind of death, though more unusual than any other, has yet been frequently observed to happen. But it is a miracle that a dead man should come to life; because that has never been observed in any age or country (Quoted by J. H. Bernard, "Miracle," Hastings Dictionary of the Bible).

This statement is characteristic of the arguments advanced against the miracles of the Bible, and it is worth examining because it contains three fundamental errors.

Violation of Law

First is the statement that a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature. What strange, narrow-minded reasoning! If Hume were still alive, it would be interesting to take him to a junk yard, point to a pile of scrap iron and volunteer to make it rise suddenly into the air. If anything would arouse his scepticism, surely this would. After all, it would be a violation of natural law--the law of gravity.

However, if we move up a large crane, swing an electromagnet over the pile of scrap iron, and lift it by the power of magnetism, has a natural law been "violated?"

Of course not.

Other laws were brought into play. The laws of

electromagnetism were responsible for holding the iron to the electromagnet, and the laws of wheels and pulleys made it possible for the crane to lift it off the ground and deposit it in another place.

No violation of laws is involved, but an invisible force, which is undetectable by the senses of man, has been at work!

In the same way, we are faced with a "violation" of natural law every time an airplane takes to the air. Of course, law is not violated; it is simply that the laws of aerodynamics overcome the law of gravity and lift the plane off the ground.

Would it seem impossible to Mr. Hume that a law which he did not understand and a force he was unable to see created an effect which he was unable to explain?

It might seem strange to him, but it happens to us all the time. We are not able to explain the laws of magnetism and do not really know what magnetism is, and yet we still consider them as natural laws. Since we have experienced the laws of magnetism repeatedly, we don't consider them a miracle and neither would Mr. Hume.

Think for a moment. If you were seeing repeated healings day after day would you cease to call them miracles? Why not? Would you understand the forces at work any less than you understand what actually comprises the lines of force around an electromagnet? Is

experience what makes the difference between the working of a natural law and a supernatural occurrence?

Unalterable Experience

This brings us to the second point of Hume's argument. He said,

A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle from the very nature of the fact is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined. (Emphasis mine.)

Note that he refers to a firm and unalterable experience. If Hume had lived long enough, I'm afraid he would have had to eat those words many times over. He would, for example, have seen a good many concepts of law altered by the explosion of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima.

What a strange conceit to assume that man already knows it all--that his experience is unalterable! So much change has taken place in our world in the past few years, that no scientist or philosopher would dare to make such a statement today!

If then, we do not fully understand the physical laws surrounding us in our world, why should it be so strange to us that there might be spiritual laws as well which we do not understand? Is it reasonable to deny their existence because we haven't experienced them?

The Resurrection

When Hume came to the subject of the resurrection from the dead, he commented simply that this has never been observed in any age or country. This is supposed to be "proof" that miracles don't happen.

Now that is a remarkable statement!

That a resurrection has been observed is the very case in point.

How much evidence do we need of Christ's resurrection from the dead? We have the word of no less than five competent eyewitnesses, plus one contemporary historian, who said that it has been observed.

Matthew, Mark, John, Peter and Paul all saw Christ after His resurrection and have given us a written record of it. In mentioning his own experience, Paul includes a list of the others who had seen Christ after His resurrection:

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again according to the scriptures; and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all He was seen of me also, as one born out of due time (I Cor. 15:3-8).

Luke--a physician, scientist, and meticulous historian--had ample opportunity to interview other

eyewitnesses and conduct a thorough examination. What he found certainly convinced him.

It is a fact that men have been hanged on considerably less evidence than we have of the resurrection of Christ.

Those who deny the resurrection are faced with the alternative that five clever liars and one incompetent historian started the greatest religious movement in the history of man and then gave their lives for it, going through great privation and suffering death for the sake of a fraud which surely could easily have been exposed at the time by any competent private investigator.

What Is Left

Look again at Hume's argument against the credibility of miracles.

First of all he said that a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature. We have shown that this statement was not very well thought out.

Secondly, he stated that a "firm and unalterable experience" had established these laws and had given us as good a proof against miracles as could possibly be imagined. We have seen that man's experience is far from unalterable.

Finally, he said that the resurrection had never been observed in any age or country. We have seen good,

solid evidence that a resurrection has been observed.

Now what happens to the argument that "miracles are impossible"?

For many, nothing happens to it. They still will refuse to believe that miracles have happened. They don't need any evidence to prove that miracles are impossible. They just "don't believe it."

Strange as it seems, many of these would laugh at a Christian because he has "faith."

But upon what foundation is this faith that miracles are impossible based? As Sir Robert Anderson said about the turn of the century: "The assumption that miracles are impossible indicates merely the stupid tendency of the human mind to become enslaved to the results of experience" (The Bible and Modern Criticism, p. 57).

Can we reject the existence of something merely because it is beyond the rather meager limits of our own experience?

The Real Reason

When we see the appalling lack of either evidence or logic in the reasons for man's rejection of miracles and the supernatural, we are led to wonder if this isn't a cover-up for a deeper reason for rejecting them.

The Apostle Paul who also lived in an age of

skepticism, wrote to the Romans:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress [margin] the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has shown it unto them (Rom. 1:18-19).

These were men who had access to the knowledge of God and could have understood the truth. They turned their eyes, however, away from those things they could have understood. They suppressed the truth.

In Verse 28, Paul gives us the true reason for skepticism: "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge" This is really the crux of the whole matter. Men have used every sort of perverted reasoning and twisted arguments to try to get rid of the knowledge of God. It isn't miracles that are the issue in this case, it is the existence of God!

Once man admits that God exists, miracles cease to be a problem. As Paul went on to explain in the first chapter of Romans, "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20).

The Proof

Let those who stand in doubt of miracles take a good look at irrefutable proof of a miracle. Life has not always existed on this planet. If ever man's "firm and

unalterable experience" has established anything, it has established this. This earth has not always existed, and it is abundantly clear that in its birth throes--when it was in a molten state--no life could have existed on it.

Not only is there no natural law known to man to account for the existence of life on this planet, there are definite, known laws which must somehow be "violated" for life to exist.

It is a law, known to science, that life only comes from preexisting life. We have no experience to the contrary!

There are any number of theories to account for life on this planet, but they all degenerate into foolishness when they are examined carefully in the light of cold reason.

Take for example the idea that life somehow spontaneously generated in some kind of ocean "slime." I've always been intrigued by this hypothesis, because "slime" must certainly have been the result, not the cause of the existence of life. When we encounter a slime, soup, or scum on a stagnant pool of water, we find it is alive. It is actually composed of microscopic forms of life. Where there is no life we get sediment at the bottom of clear water--not soup or scum.

Some scientists have been experimenting with the idea that volcanoes may have belched out methane gas which

made possible the synthesis of certain amino acids which later "developed" a spark of life. Strangely, however, when we find methane gas in nature, we find it comes from the decomposition of living matter.

Is it not strange that scientists are unable to do deliberately in a laboratory what they claim happened accidentally and spontaneously in a hostile environment?

The existence of life on this planet is a miracle! It is not a violation of natural law, but natural law had to be overcome by a greater law for life to exist.

The Apostle Paul asks us to look at the creation of God and understand His power and divinity. When we see that God was able to override the "laws of nature" and create life on this planet--when we see the fantastic, unfathomable design in nature, we begin to see an intelligence and a power far superseding anything that man has ever known.

If we can understand that God was able to create life on this planet and that He then had the intelligence and the power to design the fantastically complex system of interdependent life that we see, why doubt that God is able to heal the sick, raise the dead, or divide a sea to allow people to walk dry-shod across the bottom of it?

One thing becomes very clear. Man's rejection of the miracles of the Bible is not based on evidence, facts, logic, or reason. It is a purely emotional reaction

against the control of the Creator. If it were based on evidence, that evidence should lead the scholars to the same conclusions. A solid foundation of fact should lead to greater unity as evidence accumulates.

What is the foundation of criticism? Has it produced this unity?

CHAPTER IV

THE TRUNK OF THE TREE: EVOLUTION

At no time in the history of Christianity has theology been in such great confusion as it is today! The Protestant Reformation was a great upheaval and a turning-point in theological thought, but it merely divided the mainstream of theology into two branches. Today, theological thought seems to be flowing in every direction at once.

Professor H.H. Rowley of the Victoria University of Manchester said of Modern Biblical Studies:

In contrast to the large measure of unity that prevailed a generation ago, there is today an almost bewildering diversity of view on many questions On a number of subjects contrary tendencies have appeared in various quarters leading to a greater fluidity in the field as a whole than has been known for a long time. (H.H. Rowley, The Old Testament and Modern Study, pp. xviii-xix.)

George Mendenhall of the University of Michigan put it more bluntly:

The "fluidity" in this field referred to by Rowley may with perhaps less courtesy but with more accuracy be called chaos (G.E. Mendenhall, "Biblical History in Transition," The Bible and the Ancient Near East, p. 33).

But why is it that at the very time of the most powerful movement toward Christian unity in modern times we should be faced with the greatest-ever measure of

theological disagreement? What happened to the "unity" that prevailed a generation ago?

To grasp this we must first come to see the foundation upon which this "large measure of unity" was built.

Challenging the Assumptions

The rationalists and critics of the Bible began by challenging the assumptions of the traditional ideas about the Bible. There was no reason, the critics thought, why they shouldn't check up on the assumptions of centuries and see if they were true.

That's fair enough. After all, the Apostle Paul exhorted the Thessalonians to "prove all things," and not merely to assume that they were true.

Unfortunately, however, too many of the critics side-tracked their own work right from the start by beginning with false assumptions of their own!

Assumptions come and go, of course, but a generation ago one stood head and shoulders above them all. This presupposition--almost universally accepted by Biblical scholars at the time--was the platform from which they chose to view the very small amount of evidence they had. This presupposition is best expressed by a critic named Kuenen in his book, Prophets and Prophecy:

So soon as we derive a separate part of Israel's religious life directly from God, and allow the supernatural or immediate revelation to intervene even in one single point, so long also our view of the whole continues to be incorrect It is the supposition of a natural development alone which accounts for all the phenomena.

Kuenen's "natural development" is merely the application of the philosophy of evolution to the study of the Bible.

Kuenen, Wellhausen, and others ruled out any possibility of the miraculous, the supernatural, or of immediate revelation by God, right from the start! The next step was to apply the philosophy of a natural development to the religion of Israel.

Most Biblical scholars, having planted their feet firmly on the evolutionary platform, had little difficulty maintaining a semblance of unity.

As Mendenhall and Rowley point out, however, something happened to shatter that unity! In the last generation the field of Biblical studies has been absolutely inundated with new evidence--evidence which has absolutely cut the ground from under the evolutionary concept!

Could Moses Write?

One of the best illustrations of this is seen in the once commonly held belief that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch because writing was unknown in his day. When we look for evidence upon which such a belief

could have been founded, we are left empty-handed. The only evidence at hand was the Bible which clearly and flatly contradicted any such belief.

Not only did Moses write down God's law (Exod. 24:4, Deut. 31:9), along with a detailed account of the travels of the children of Israel after they left Egypt (Num. 33:2), but all the Israelites were commanded to write God's commandments upon the posts of their houses (Deut. 6:9). The Bible tells us that not only did Moses write, but that the population of Israel in general was literate.

The very idea that Moses couldn't write seems a bit ludicrous looking back from our vantage point. Since the time this theory was in vogue, whole libraries have emerged from the sands of Babylonia, Assyria, Palestine and Egypt. Many of these not only go back to Moses' time, but all the way back to Abraham's day and before.

The theory has been so thoroughly exploded that we are led to wonder how any intelligent person could have developed such an idea in the first place.

But Not Israel

There were some, however, in spite of all the evidence, who were still unwilling to believe that a "tribe of Semitic nomads" like the Israelites invading Palestine would have been literate enough to have produced

the Pentateuch. They admitted that writing was known in Egypt--no one could deny that--but they refused to admit that it was known among the Israelites.

They refused to admit it, that is, until about 1904 when Flinders Petrie began to decipher some ancient tablets found at Serabit el-Khadem, in the Sinai Peninsula. This was near the route the children of Israel took in coming out of Egypt. After careful examination of the tablets, he concluded that:

Workmen from Retenu, who were employed by the Egyptians and are often mentioned, had this system of linear writing. The inference that follows from that is extremely significant, mainly that about 1500 B.C. these simple workmen from Canaan were able to write and that the type of writing is independent both of hieroglyphics and cuneiform. Further, it invalidates once and for all the hypothesis that the Israelites that came through this area from Egypt were at that stage still illiterate. (Werner Keller, The Bible as History, p. 134, emphasis mine.)

This provides proof positive that literacy in the time of Moses was not the exclusive property of a group of privileged scribes. These were working-class individuals who must have taken some of their spare time to prepare tablets and carve inscriptions in their own script.

Also of interest are the discoveries at Ras Shamra. Over a thousand tablets written in an old cuneiform alphabet have been discovered. The language is an old Northwest Semitic dialect "which was very closely related to the Hebrew of the time of Moses" (W.F. Albright, New Horizons in Biblical Research, p. 6).

Notice that Dr. Albright--the recognized leading authority in archaeology today--refers to the Hebrew language at the time of Moses. Not only was writing known in the time of Moses, but the Hebrew language was already a separate, recognized tongue.

Still another authority tells us that during the time Moses was in exile from Egypt, "the Canaanites were familiar with at least eight languages recorded in five completely different systems of writing" (G.E. Mendenhall, "Biblical History in Transition," The Bible and the Ancient Near East, p. 50).

Proof Moses Wrote

Not only is there no obstacle to believing that Moses could have written the bulk of the Pentateuch, there is every reason to believe that he did.

First and foremost, there is an ancient historical record which says that he wrote at least some portions of the Pentateuch. In Exodus 24:4, we read that Moses wrote all the words of the Lord that he had received on the mountain and later (verse 7) he took the book or scroll in which he had written God's Law and read it in the audience of the people.

Why argue with the author of Exodus? The writer makes a simple statement of fact. Moses, having been

reared in Pharaoh's court, was obviously a literate man living in a literate age--an age prolific with written records. It is totally illogical to assume that Moses would not have recorded the Law of God as it was given to him or that he would not have written or had written a history of the Exodus and the wilderness wanderings of the children of Israel! This is precisely what he did: "And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the Lord; and these are their journeys according to their goings out" (Num. 33:2).

Literary Style

Even in the face of evidence and logic, some critics still maintained that the first five books of the Old Testament were composed as late as 700-800 B.C. from oral tradition. The reason they put forward for their position is that the literary style is too highly advanced for an early stage in Israel's history.

On the other hand, even such higher critics as Kautzsch, Ewald and Delitzsch place some of the "best of the poetry" from Genesis, Exodus and Judges back to 1250 B.C. and earlier--within 200 years of Israel's conquest of Jericho. (See James Orr, The Problem of the Old Testament, p. 76).

Dr. Kautzsch calls the Song of Deborah in Judges 5 "a poem of priceless worth," "genuine, splendid poetry."

The Hebrew language, then, was a fully-developed, highly-expressive language when the Song of Deborah was written. Such a highly-developed poetic style as one finds in the Song of Deborah does not spring up overnight. What man, having never seen a poem or heard a song and writing in a primitive language, is going to become an accomplished poet overnight?

The works of Shakespeare were not the first important works in the English language. In the opinion of some, they represent a high-water mark in the development of the English language and in the power of poetic language, but it came after a long period of literary development.

The point is this. Since it is an established fact that the literary style of the Old Testament represents a very highly-developed language, then there must have been a foundation of earlier Hebrew literature. Since this is so, why assume that the Pentateuch was composed quite late from oral tradition?

It is an absolute certainty that previous written records were extant. Any other conclusion denies the evidence, flouts logic and displays an ignorance of the highly developed culture in the Fertile Crescent prior to the time of Moses!

Of course, the evidence is so conclusive that no competent scholar bases his conclusions today on the

misconception that there was no writing in Moses' time.

Yet, the fundamental premise which led to this mistaken idea is the very concept which underlies most of current Biblical Criticism--the concept of the evolution of culture and religion.

Which Came First?

Long cherished ideas die hard. So it has been with evolution. Having assumed that man evolved, it was not illogical to assume that Moses could not write. However, once it was proved that Moses could have written, the theory that spawned the idea still did not die. It continued to form the basis of Biblical Criticism for nearly one hundred years.

Having assumed a natural development for the religion of Israel, a plausible theory to account for the development of that religion was necessary. Fertile minds evolved one.

The philosophers looked at the religions extant in the world and drew their conclusions--conclusions, remember, based upon the assumption that religion evolved. Having started with their assumption, their quite logical minds led them to a plausible theory for the development of religion from the primitive to the highly developed.

Primitive man supposedly observed the forces of nature around him--wind, fire, rain, thunder, etc.--and

attributed these powers to spirit beings. In the passage of time he found that certain actions of his either pleased or irritated these gods and brought favorable and unfavorable results. Worship involving propitiation of the spirits was a natural result.

From this early beginning, it is theorized that religion developed along the way to polytheism, and from there to monotheism--monotheism, apparently, being the highest plane of religious development.

It all seemed fairly logical, and so ethnologists, anthropologists and archaeologists set themselves the task of finding out whether it was so. If the theory were true, one would expect to find absolutely no monotheism in the earliest religions. Upon finding polytheism existing at a certain time in a tribe's history, we would not expect to find monotheism preceding it.

Belief in a Supreme Being

As a result of the exhaustive effort of an army of scientists, the question is no longer in doubt.

Even among the most primitive peoples on the face of the earth--including the Bushmen of South Africa, most of the Aboriginal tribes of Australia, all of the Arctic cultures except one, and virtually all of the primitive peoples of North America--we find a belief in a Supreme Being! (Short, Modern Discovery and the Bible, p. 23.)

In fact, it is precisely among the three oldest primitive peoples in North America that "we find the religion of a high God established with the greatest clearness and in quite characteristic forms" (W. Schmidt, High Gods in North America, p. 22).

A comparison of the beliefs of these very old tribes with the Bible is eye-opening. Going to the very oldest section of the oldest tribe, we find that they have a belief in a "Supreme Being" who is invisible (ibid, p. 28). Compare this with Paul's first epistle to Timothy: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God . . ." (I Tim. 1:17).

Schmidt goes on to say of this Supreme Being of the Yuki religion:

He existed before all other beings and possesses unlimited powers. The highest of these is the power of creation by which he creates heaven and earth and all that it contains especially men. One of their creation myths states formally that he created everything merely by his own will Before creation he meditates and plans his work; and after it he expresses loudly his joyful satisfaction in its greatness and beauty (W. Schmidt, High Gods in North America, p. 28).

A student of the Bible immediately hearkens back to the first chapter of Genesis: "And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31).

Beliefs of Early Tribes

Turning to another of the early tribes (the Kato),

Schmidt gives us the contents of their creation myth.

In this myth the culture hero is present at the same time with the Supreme Being. But the Supreme Being alone commands and directs everything, including the culture hero. Together they make the wide stretched vault of the sky and support it on four great pillars at the cardinal points; they make a way for the sun, openings for rain and mist. The body of man is molded out of clay. Wind and rain, sun and moon are not created until after man. Then comes a narrative of a great flood in which all men and animals perish (W. Schmidt, High Gods in North America, p. 29).

Remember that all this forms a part of the religions of the two oldest tribes of North America. It is remarkable that a purely oral tradition would stay so close to the written record of the Hebrews.

However, these tribes did not retain this form of religion. As their religion "developed" their concept of God degenerated into polytheism and animism.

This picture is repeated in other parts of the world as well.

Dr. John Ross wrote of early religion in China:

A "ghost theory" of religion would hardly have been broached, or the statement made that the spiritual form of religion known to us is the result of a long process of evolution from an original image worship, had the story of the original religion of China been generally known We fail to find a hint anywhere as to the manner how or the time when the idea of God originated in China, or by what process it came into common use. The name bursts suddenly upon us from the first page of history without a note of warning. At this point, the very threshold of what the Chinese critics accept as the beginning of their authentic history, the name of God and other religious matters present themselves with the completeness of a Minerva. (John Ross, Primitive Monotheism in China, pp. 18, 23, 25.)

A noted Assyriologist claims that the Sumerians were probably the first people to "emerge from barbarism" some time before 4000 B.C. Some of the oldest writings in the world have been found in the ruins of Sumerian cities, and "the facts point unmistakably to monotheism, and a sky god as the first deity, from whom descended the vast Sumerian pantheon" (A. Rendle Short, Modern Discovery and the Bible, p. 26).

One thing becomes abundantly clear. The very oldest religious concepts known to man were monotheistic and the tendency has consistently been toward greater corruption and degeneracy in religion.

Evolution No Longer Accepted

Until shortly after the beginning of the twentieth century, it was commonly held that the culture (which includes the religion) of man had followed certain evolutionary lines. This was held not only by theologians, but by anthropologists, ethnologists, etc.

A change in thinking, however, began to be evident almost immediately after the turn of the century. By 1920, we are told: "The voice of evolutionism is muted to the work of a few diehards, notably Fraser" (Felix M. Keesing, Culture Change, p. 20).

As more evidence was assimilated into the study of anthropology, the concept of evolution in the change of the

culture of various peoples faded even further. By 1930 we are told:

Writings in the evolutionist tradition are thinned to a trickle, and are marginal to professional work in anthropology. The vocabulary and assumptions involved in the evolutionary concept continue to make anthropologists unhappy by having some vogue in works by occasional students, especially in other fields as religion, when they write on so-called primitives or cultural origins and early development By this time, however, use of the term "evolution," shorn of its old unilinear framework, occasionally creeps back into the vocabulary of some anthropologists to express the larger perspectives of culture process. (Felix M. Keesing, Culture Change, p. 25. Emphasis mine.)

By 1940 so much change had taken place that the concept of evolution was referred to as having been "long since dead so far as professional anthropologists were concerned." In 1943, there was something of a one-man revival of the idea, but he gained no professional following. (Felix M. Keesing, Culture Change, p. 39.)

It is strange how such concepts survive even when they have been rejected by competent scholars on the basis of evidence.

Unity Gone

Now we begin to see what happened to the unity theologians enjoyed a generation ago. Since that time literally floods of information have been made available which absolutely destroy the foundation upon which the majority of critics had built their theories. The result

has been a complete reshuffling of virtually every idea they ever held.

But why no unity now? The reason is simple. The evidence now becoming available universally points to the fact that the Bible is what it says it is. The critics simply have not been willing to accept this, and the result is that there are almost as many theories current today as there are critics to put them forward.

Small wonder that George Wright was moved to say: "If the ability to command general assent among those who are competent be the criterion of the scientific, it must now be admitted that a science of Biblical studies does not exist." (G.E. Wright, "Biblical History in Transition," The Bible and the Ancient Near East, p. 32. Emphasis mine.)

CHAPTER V

PROPHECY DEMANDS AN ANSWER

The Bible demands an answer from the reader. It has proved to be impossible for modern man to dismiss the Bible with a wave of the hand as he would most of the religious writings of the ancient world.

He has largely ignored the Rig Veda of the Brahman religion; the Code of Manu; the story of Ramayana; the Mahabharata poem (seven times as long as the Iliad and the Odyssey combined); the Upanishads or the Puranas of the Hindu religion which comprise something in excess of a billion lines of poetry; the Cyclopedia of Tibetan Buddhism comprising 225 volumes, each two feet long and six inches thick. Nor has he devoted much time to the writings of Confucius and Zoroaster along with the Zendavesta, and the Koran (H.L. Hastings, The Higher Critics Criticized, pp. x-xi).

It is a remarkable fact that the Higher Critics of the present day have hitherto failed to thoroughly explore these vast and inviting fields, but have mainly devoted their attention to the examination and discussion of sixty-six little, insignificant pamphlets, the sacred literature of a small, isolated, scattered, and persecuted nation, which in numbers is positively insignificant in comparison to the vast multitudes which accept the voluminous sacred books we have mentioned. And it is a somewhat remarkable fact that this mighty Mass of Assyrian, Babylonian, Chinese, Hindu, and Thibetan sacred literature escapes criticism, while the only documents which are especially criticized, and whose errancy and mythical

and unhistorical character is pointed out with unsparing zeal, are the records and laws of a nation which has had no political existence for nearly two thousand years [this was written before 1895], which does not control or possess a government, a city, a country, or even an island on the face of the earth (ibid, pp. xi-xii).

The Bible has drawn absolutely unparalleled attention from the critics. Nothing in the history of literature can begin to compare with it. It has been examined, dissected, pulled apart and put back together, reviled, defended, through literally thousands of volumes.

For some reason, man has not been allowed to simply say, "I don't believe it!" and then carry on as always.

There are many reasons for this, but head and shoulders above all the rest stands prophecy!

Prophecy Demands an Answer

Even a superficial reading of the prophets demands a reaction from the reader. The sheer power and reality of the message make it impossible to ignore.

It is significant that no critic has ever attempted to deny the divine origin of these prophecies while leaving them in their own time-setting. It has been universally recognized by critics that the human mind, even gifted with the greatest insight and sagacity, can only go so far in predicting future events. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the minor prophets have gone further than man can go. The critics have either had to admit that a power

and intelligence greater than the human mind had given these prophecies, or have had to find some other explanation.

Their "explanation" is simple in the extreme--they simply shove the date forward a few centuries. The dates advanced for Ezekiel, for example, vary between 400 and 230 B.C.

Can we know with any certainty the date of the writing of a prophecy?

We certainly can!

Date of Ezekiel

Let's take a look at the evidence concerning the date of Ezekiel and see if the dates assigned by the critics have any basis in fact.

Ezekiel is actually one of the easiest of the prophets to date. No one was any more thorough than Ezekiel in dating his prophecies--he gives us no less than twelve specific dates for his prophecies. He dates his prophecies from the year of "Jehoiachin's captivity" which is a fairly well established date. As a result, we can compose the following list of dates for Ezekiel:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Chapter 1:2 | 5th day of the 4th month in the 5th year (592 B.C.) |
| Chapter 8:1 | 5th day of the 6th month in the 6th year (591 B.C.) |

- Chapter 20:1 10th day of the 5th month in the
7th year (590 B.C.)
- Chapter 24:1 10th day of the 10th month in the
9th year (587 B.C.)
- Chapter 26:1 1st day of the ? month in the 11th
year (586 B.C.)
- Chapter 29:1 12th day of the 10th month in the
10th year (586 B.C.)
- Chapter 29:17 1st day of the 1st month in the
27th year (570 B.C.)
- Chapter 30:20 7th day of the 1st month in the
11th year (586 B.C.)
- Chapter 32:1 1st day of the 12th month in the
12th year (584 B.C.)
- Chapter 32:17 15th day of the ? month in the
12th year (584 B.C.)
- Chapter 33:21 5th day of the 10th month in the
12th year (584 B.C.)
- Chapter 40:1 10th day of the ? month in the
25th year (572 B.C.)

Now that's evidence! We cannot just toss aside such careful, meticulous dating. Not without mighty good reason.

Where Critics Go Wrong

What, then, is the reason the critics place the dates of Ezekiel between 400 and 230 B.C.? The answer is twofold. Firstly, it is assumed without proof that the prophecy is not of divine origin. Then, proceeding from this assumption, they "know" that Ezekiel had to have certain historical information available before he could

have written these prophecies. The prophecies concerning the fall of Tyre, for example, were still being fulfilled in fantastic detail until almost 320 B.C. Consequently, some critics reason that Ezekiel couldn't have written it before that time! (We won't go into the fact that the prophecy concerning Tyre is still being fulfilled.)

Ezekiel, then, we are asked to believe, was an out-and-out fraud! After all, he lists twelve specific dates when he said he wrote his prophecy. Furthermore, we are asked to believe that this fraud went undetected until the present day.

Now let's consider the facts. Even during the time of the Babylonian captivity there was a recognized religious authority among the Jews. Ezekiel refers to them as the "elders of Judah" (Ezek. 8:1).

Later, when Cyrus decided to give permission for the Temple to be rebuilt, "then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites . . . to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem" (Ezra 1:5). The leaders of this expedition were Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest.

A little later in 457 B.C. Ezra comes on the scene. Ezra is called "a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given" (Ezra 7:6). Ezra "had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do

it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (v. 10). Notice that Ezra was not a lawgiver, but a scribe--a writer--of an already existing code of law.

Throughout Ezra and Nehemiah it is quite obvious that there is a ruling body of Jews concerned with ecclesiastical affairs and that there is a "holy scripture"--an authoritative body of religious writings (see Neh. 8:1).

There can be no question that this "law of Moses" was the Torah.

Pentateuch Already In Existence

An interesting sidelight on this is found in Ezra 4:1-2. The adversaries of Judah and Benjamin (who were Samaritans) heard that the Temple was being rebuilt. "Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto Him since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither."

These, of course, were the Samaritans (v.10) whose ancestors' arrival in Samaria is recorded in II Kings 17. What is significant is that these people called themselves worshippers of God and had a sacrificial system. In fact, we know that they had the entire Pentateuch in their hands--known as the "Samaritan Pentateuch." It had to be

so, since the Jews refused to have anything to do with the Samaritans who came down and would certainly have been unlikely to supply them with a copy of the law.

The Samaritans, of course, already had it--this was the point in coming down to assist in the building of the Temple. Even down to the time of Christ, we have the woman at the well commenting: "The Jews have no dealing with the Samaritans," (John 4:9). The Samaritans by this time had broken with the Jews completely--even to the question of where to worship. In the time of Ezra and Nehemiah they even wanted to help build the Temple in Jerusalem. But by the time of Christ this woman could say: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship" (John 4:20). With this kind of a relationship the Samaritans would hardly have taken a totally new book--manufactured by the Jews at this time as their own sacred writings. No, they had had these writings ever since they had moved into Samaria.

This proves conclusively that the Pentateuch, or Torah, was in the hands of both Jews and Samaritans long before Ezra. There was a "holy scripture" and there was an authority responsible for copying and preserving it!

Ezekiel's Book Had to be Authentic

Now consider the problem of a pseudo-Ezekiel. He had the problem of palming off on a group of Jewish

priests, Levites, and governors, a totally new book which none of them had ever heard of before and convince them that it was written during the Babylonian captivity by Ezekiel.

Now the Jews have always been an intelligent, practical people with a great deal of hard-headed business sense. Are they going to accept out of a clear blue sky a book purporting to have foretold in advance the history of the last few years? Would you? Wouldn't it have seemed a little bit obvious to them? If it looks impossible from our point of view, how much more from theirs?

During the time when the schools of Hillel and Shammai flourished [starting about 50 B.C.], Ezekiel belonged to those books which some wanted "to hide," the others being Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Esther and Canticles. In these discussions the question at issue was not the reception of the book into the Canon, which was rather presupposed, nor again any effort to exclude them from the Canon again which thought could not be reconciled with the high estimate in which it was known that Esther was held, but it was the exclusion of these books from public reading in the divine service which project failed. The reasons for this proposal are not to be sought in any doubt as to their authenticity, but in reference to their contents There is no doubt, however, that the difference of this book [Ezekiel] from the Torah was the reason that made it unadvisable to read it in public. (Wilhelm Moller, "Ezekiel," International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, p. 1073. Emphasis mine).

When one comprehends the exalted position of the Torah among Jews past and present, the obstacles that a "pseudo-Ezekiel" would face become formidable indeed. There are some marked differences between Ezekiel's references to the sacrificial worship in the Temple and

those of the Pentateuch. This presents no problem, of course, because Ezekiel is looking ahead to a millennial Temple. However, this didn't alter the fact that Ezekiel differed from the Torah. During part of their history, the Jews would not allow any man under the age of thirty to read Ezekiel. This was not because they didn't think it was authentic, but because they didn't want the Torah de-emphasized in any way.

Why was Ezekiel Accepted?

Why were they willing to accept Ezekiel at all? The answer becomes obvious when we understand that the Canon of the Old Testament was complete by the end of the fifth century B.C. Ezra and the Jews with him in Babylon were already familiar with Ezekiel when they returned, and Ezekiel had been part of the succession of prophets. He held an office which was honored and respected by Jews. His prophecies had already begun to come to pass. And as they continued to be fulfilled before their very eyes while the book was in their possession, there could be no question of excluding it from the Canon. It is significant that Ezekiel has never been seriously questioned as to its position in the Old Testament Canon.

When one adds to this the strong Jewish tradition, amounting to history, of the completion of the Canon and

Josephus' clear statement of fact regarding the books of the Bible and their compilation into the Canon about the end of the fifth century B.C., there can be no question of a late date for Ezekiel.

Absolutely the only evidence that can be seriously advanced to question Ezekiel's own date is the fact that no man could have made the prophecies that Ezekiel made. This, however, is not evidence for a later date, but evidence of a divine origin.

Only One Ezekiel

In some of the prophets an attempt is made by the critics to bring in an editor who amended earlier prophecies to include later events. However, the book of Ezekiel has not been amended by a later editor. It is the consensus of present-day critics that the book of Ezekiel is the work of a single author. This admission is made by critics who have been quite free to attribute other books of the Bible to as many as half a dozen different authors, editors, redactors, etc. In general, among theologians, "the conviction obtains that the book is characterized by such unity that we can only accept or reject it as a whole, but that for its rejection there is not the least substantial ground." (Wilhelm Moller, "Ezekiel," International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, p. 1072.)

Strangely, the critics who have attempted to place

later dates on Ezekiel have not been willing to call Ezekiel an out-and-out fraud. The reason is obvious. A fraud would have had a motive which would have been transparent throughout the prophecy. No such motive can be found in Ezekiel, and no fraud writes like Ezekiel writes. Ezekiel rings true. Literature with such a powerful moral force as that found in Ezekiel simply does not arise from a hypocritical mind.

Daniel

But let's consider another example. Daniel claims to be a contemporary of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He was carried into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar in about 606 B.C. and continued over seventy years after that time.

The critics, however, often date Daniel between 165 and 175 B.C.! Surely, there must be some good reason for such an accusation. Again, however, it is assumed that the Book of Daniel is of purely human origin.

The fundamental axiom of criticism is the dictum that a prophet always spoke out of a definite historical situation to the present needs of the people among whom he lived and that a definite historical situation shall be pointed out for each prophecy. (George L. Robinson, "Isaiah," The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, p. 1505.)

Consider what this means. It is a "fundamental axiom" that every prophet always spoke purely to the present needs of the people among whom he lived.

Why Daniel Is Challenged

In other words, Daniel is not seen by the critics as a prophet contemporary with Nebuchadnezzar, but as a "pious fraud" writing about 175 B.C. and directing his prophecies to the current needs of the people among whom he lived.

When one understands what was going on about 175 B.C., the critics' motives become transparent. This was about the time of the Maccabean revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes. The historical details of the breakup of Alexander's empire into four divisions and the subsequent war between the king of the north and the king of the south climaxing in Antiochus Epiphanes' invasion of Jerusalem is well known. Daniel's prophecies of the details of all this are far too accurate to have been written hundreds of years before they took place. Too accurate to have been written by man, that is. Therefore, the fundamental axiom of criticism is applied and an attempt is made to set his prophecies into the historical situation of the Maccabean revolt.

There are two things wrong with this hypothesis.

First of all, Daniel did not really understand the things which he wrote. When he asked for further understanding of it he was told: "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed to the time of the end."

Daniel's words were not directed at the people of his own time but to those living at the time of the end. We have this witness out of Daniel's own mouth.

Of course, some will argue that this was an attempt to make the people of the time believe that the end was near. Fair enough, but why, then, did they accept the book into the Canon when the end didn't come at that time?

Another Critical Theory

Consider another aspect of this. One critic tells us:

At this juncture [about 175 B.C.], a pious man resolved to avail himself of the traditions regarding Daniel, and apply them to the circumstances of his own time, and, in the name of that prophet, proclaimed words of admonition and prophecy to the faithful around him.

In other words, a pious fraud deceived the people around him in order to admonish and encourage them.

Now consider this picture. Some Jew, living long after the time of Daniel, decided to attempt to palm off his spurious prophecy on his contemporaries. He then proceeded to give them a detailed description of life in Nebuchadnezzar's court, including punishment given for certain crimes, details of the religious leaders and customs of the time, etc.

The critics have generally felt that many of these details were fanciful tales, since a Jew living so much

later would have had no direct knowledge of these times. He would have had to be something of a "historical novelist."

The third chapter of Daniel is thought by critics to bear this out. The "story" of Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego has seemed absolutely preposterous to some. The very idea of throwing men into a furnace seems strange, and foreign to them. It simply doesn't fit the normal pattern of executions.

A letter, however, has been found and is in the Nies Babylonian collection at Yale University which contains a royal decree ordering the death of a slave by burning in a furnace. The message is very short and reads as follows: "Since they have thrown a young slave into the oven, do you throw a slave into the furnace." (John B. Alexander, "New Light on the Fiery Furnace," Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 69, 1950, p. 375-6.)

Daniel's Accuracy

Daniel's records of the details of Nebuchadnezzar's court including the magicians in Babylon have been found to be remarkably accurate. Sir Henry Rawlinson has found that the findings on the magicians in Babylon at that time correspond exactly to the three classes of Chaldean doctors which Daniel enumerates.

The fact of the matter is that Daniel knew far too much about the details of Babylon to have been writing at any other time or situation or place than that which he described himself.

Another thing of importance in this context is that Daniel's prophecies did not finish in 175 B.C.

Having had Daniel's prophecies in hand since the sixth century B.C., it must have been quite an experience for the Jews of the time to see these things being fulfilled before their eyes. The prophecies of Chapters 2, 7 and 8 were proving to be fantastically accurate. The Babylonian Empire was succeeded by the Medo-Persian Empire, which was in turn conquered by Alexander.

When Alexander came to Jerusalem, we are told:

He went up to the temple, where he sacrificed to God under the direction of the high priest, and showed due honor to the priests and to the high priest himself. And, when the book of Daniel was shown to him, in which he had declared that one of the Greeks would destroy the empire of the Persians, he believed himself to be the one indicated. (Josephus, Antiquities, XI, pp. 335-337.)

With Alexander's fantastic rise to power at such a young age and his unbelievable march across the civilized world, it must have seemed impossible to those who were holding the book of Daniel that his kingdom could be broken at its peak of strength as Daniel had prophesied it would (Chapter 8:8). Yet it happened! Not only was his empire broken, but it was--as Daniel had said--divided into

four divisions.

Daniel's Prophecy for Rome

A person living at the time of the degeneration of these four kingdoms and the rise of Rome in the west, should have had no great difficulty in forecasting what was about to take place. This, of course, is what the critics believe a pseudo-Daniel did. A man could at that point in time logically predict that Rome would become the fourth great world empire. What a man could not have predicted at that time, was that Rome would be the last!

This Daniel did.

However, Daniel did not stop there. He went on to describe the nature of the Roman Empire, what it would be like, how it would develop and what it would do before it finally came to an end.

The story is worth reading.

It would have been logical in 165 B.C. to look at the lesson of history and to assume that Rome was going to be just like all the rest--another fighting, conquering, pillaging, destroying world empire. Daniel, however, emphasizes that this fourth kingdom--which he doesn't name--would be different from all the kingdoms that had preceded it (Dan. 7:7, 19, 23).

What Historians Say

The comments of historians about Rome and its diversity are remarkable.

Guizot speaks of Rome as "the most extraordinary dominion that ever led captive and oppressed a world."

"Now for the first time," says Heeren, "appears on the page of history the fearful phenomenon of a great military republic."

"I confess that my own imagination," writes Mr. Merivale, "is most powerfully excited by the visible connection between moral influence and material authority which is presented, to an extent never realized before or since, by the phenomenon of the Roman Empire."

Niebuhr expresses still more fully this same sentiment. "The history of Rome has the highest claims to our attention. It shows us a nation which was in its origin small as a grain of corn; but this originally small population waxed great, transferred its character to hundreds of thousands, and became the sovereign of nations from the rising to the setting of the sun. The whole of Western Europe adopted the language of the Romans, and its inhabitants looked upon themselves as Romans. The laws and institutions of the Romans acquired such a power and durability, that even at the present moment they still continue to maintain their influence upon millions of men. Such a development is without a parallel in the history of the world. Before this star all others fade and vanish." (John Urquhart, Wonders of Prophecy, pp. 154, 155.)

The unique strength of Rome, its terrifying nature, its twofold division and later history are told by Daniel with stunning accuracy. The successive revivals of this "Beast" and its tenfold last revival are explained elsewhere. (See Mr. Armstrong's booklet, "Who is the Beast?")

Where does all this leave the theories of the

critics? How could such "obvious frauds" as Daniel and Ezekiel have gone undetected by the best Jewish minds of the day? Why should these books have been accepted into the canon when they had never been seen before the prophecies were fulfilled? On the other hand, how could two "pious frauds" have foretold the future even beyond the latest dates given by the critics?

But we still haven't seen the complete picture!

CHAPTER VI

HOW MANY ISAIASHS?

In the preceding chapter the anti-supernaturalistic prejudice of biblical critics is shown in its application to two prophets. No reference was made in Chapter V, however, to the prophet Isaiah. Since Isaiah is probably the most important prophet in the Old Testament, it is necessary to take a more careful look at that book on its own. It has posed special problems for the critics.

Isaiah is handed to us as the work of a single author, and is dated by Isaiah himself somewhere between 750 and 690 B.C. However, critics have attempted to place dates on Isaiah as much as 300 years after his death. One even went so far as to place Isaiah in the first century B.C., but was rather embarrassed when archaeologists discovered a complete scroll of Isaiah--carefully copied and preserved--dated at 125 B.C.

When we examine the reasons for the difficulties critics have with Isaiah, we come to the same answer we came to on Ezekiel and Daniel--Isaiah is just a little too accurate for the taste of the critics.

But with Isaiah, the problem was not solved by merely pushing the date forward. The critics have had to dissect the book, and have attributed it to between two

and five authors!

But why? To understand, we must return to "the fundamental axiom of criticism":

The dictum that a prophet always spoke out of a definite historical situation to the present needs of the people among whom he lived, and that a definite historical situation shall be pointed out for each prophecy. (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, p. 1505.)

The fact that Isaiah specifically designated many of his prophecies "for the time to come" is apparently neither here nor there.

Isaiah Taken Apart

Having decided that a prophet cannot foretell the future, it is essential that he be writing for his own generation. When we have begun with this assumption, it is only natural to begin to look in history to try to find a historical context into which we may fit a prophecy. What is strange about Isaiah, however, is that there is no historical situation into which Isaiah as a whole can be put!

The solution? Isaiah must be taken apart.

According to some, "the conversion of the heathen" lay quite beyond the horizon of any eighth century prophet; consequently, Isaiah 2:2-4 and all similar passages which foretell the conversion of those outside the chosen people are to be relegated to an age subsequent to Isaiah. (George L. Robinson, "Isaiah," The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, p. 1505.)

Other ideas which are supposed to be beyond the

scope of Isaiah are those of "universal peace," "universal judgment," "the Apocalyptic character of chapters 24-27," the "return from captivity," and even the poetic character of some passages. All this, according to some critics, means that Isaiah couldn't have written the entire book. Therefore, they have searched diligently to try to find some evidence to back up their beliefs.

We'll come to this evidence used to back up this theory a little later, but first let's consider the evidence at hand.

Could Isaiah Have Known?

The whole question we have faced in Ezekiel, Daniel, and Isaiah is whether they were written by man, or whether they could have been divinely inspired. The only evidence advanced by the critics to prove a later date of these prophets is the "evidence" that no man could have written the prophecies when these men said they did. That isn't proof! That's begging the question! We all agree that the concept of the conversion of the heathen might have lain completely beyond the horizons of an eighth century prophet. But it didn't lie beyond the horizons of God, nor did it lie beyond the ability of God to convey this concept to a prophet who otherwise could never have understood it!

Now, what evidence do the critics have to indicate

that Isaiah may have been written by more than one prophet?

In the Journal of Biblical Literature (Vol. 68, 1949, pp. 225-230) appears an article by Helen Genevieve Jefferson entitled "Notes on the Authorship of Isaiah 65 and 66." The article is devoted to an enquiry into a possible division between a Second and Third Isaiah. Three characteristic traits of writing style were advanced by a critic in an attempt to show a significant difference in style between Isaiah 40-64 and Isaiah 65-66. These are analyzed by Miss Jefferson.

Literary Criticism

The first characteristic study is the number of times the definite article is used, not counting the cases where it is represented in the vowel pointing. That table is reproduced below:

Ch.	40--16	times in	31	verses	Ch.	54--4	times in	17	verses
"	41--10	"	"	29	"	55--9	"	"	13
"	42--11	"	"	25	"	56--7	"	"	12
"	43--7	"	"	28	"	57--11	"	"	21
"	44--4	"	"	28	"	58--0	"	"	14
"	45--8	"	"	25	"	59--3	"	"	21
"	46--4	"	"	13	"	60--13	"	"	22
"	47--3	"	"	15	"	61--3	"	"	11
"	48--6	"	"	22	"	62--8	"	"	12
"	49--2	"	"	26	"	63--3	"	"	19
"	50--0	"	"	11	"	64--1	"	"	11
"	51--15	"	"	23	"	65--28	"	"	25
"	52--5	"	"	15	"	66--27	"	"	24
"	53--1	"	"	12	"				

She concludes: "Although the incidence of the article is not uniform in 40-55 or 56-64, it is strikingly

higher in 65 and 66." (p. 226.) It is higher, yes, but is it any more strikingly high than Chapters 50, 53, 58 and 64 are strikingly low? Also, notice that she says that the use of the article is not uniform in the remainder of the chapters. No conclusions can be drawn from the use of the definite article.

The next characteristic listed is the "sign of the accusative," which we are told that Second Isaiah omits except for euphony. It appears as follows:

Ch. 40--	2	in	31	verses	Ch. 54--	0	in	17	verses
" 41--	5	"	29	"	" 55--	1	"	13	"
" 42--	0	"	25	"	" 56--	2	"	12	"
" 43--	0	"	28	"	" 57--	4	"	21	"
" 44--	1	"	28	"	" 58--	0	"	14	"
" 45--	2	"	25	"	" 59--	2	"	21	"
" 46--	0	"	13	"	" 60--	0	"	22	"
" 47--	1	"	13	"	" 61--	0	"	11	"
" 48--	1	"	22	"	" 62--	4	"	12	"
" 49--	7	"	26	"	" 63--	3	"	19	"
" 50--	2	"	11	"	" 64--	1	"	11	"
" 51--	4	"	23	"	" 65--	4	"	25	"
" 52--	2	"	15	"	" 66--	13	"	24	"
" 53--	2	"	12	"					

The author admits that the above table does not show sufficient difference to make it useful as a means of distinguishing a Third Isaiah from a Second Isaiah. In this case, note that Chapter 65 falls right in with the rest while there is some difference with Chapter 66--still not enough, however, to prove anything.

The third characteristic listed is the omission of a relative particle. The following table shows the number of times it is used.

Ch. 40--	0	in	31	verses	Ch. 54--	1	in	17	verses
" 41--	3	"	29	"	" 55--	5	"	13	"
" 42--	0	"	25	"	" 56--	3	"	12	"
" 43--	2	"	28	"	" 57--	0	"	21	"
" 44--	1	"	28	"	" 58--	2	"	14	"
" 45--	1	"	25	"	" 59--	1	"	21	"
" 46--	1	"	13	"	" 60--	1	"	22	"
" 47--	3	"	15	"	" 61--	0	"	11	"
" 48--	0	"	22	"	" 62--	2	"	12	"
" 49--	4	"	26	"	" 63--	2	"	19	"
" 50--	3	"	11	"	" 64--	1	"	11	"
" 51--	2	"	23	"	" 65--	7	"	25	"
" 52--	3	"	15	"	" 66--	7	"	24	"
" 53--	1	"	12	"					

Now all this is included so you can see for yourself the kind of technical details critics have gone into in a vain attempt to show that Isaiah was written by more than one author. The real crux of the matter is not writing style. Nothing definite can be determined by counting particles, articles, conjunctions, or any other "characteristic trait" of a man's writing. The fact of the matter is that a given man's writing style will change through the years and any evidence based upon writing style is tenuous at best.

Furthermore, this analysis of writing style fails completely to take into account the possibility of a change in form of the literature in question--i.e. a switch from prose to poetry, or a switch from one form of poetry to another in which the writer is forced into using or omitting words for the sake of euphony, rhythm, etc.

The real criteria for breaking Isaiah down into sections are the prophecies themselves. Any man who wrote

them would have had to be present in several eras of Israel's history.

Duality

One reason for the critics' confusion in the prophets is their failure to understand the simple principle of duality in prophecy.

In the 40th and 41st chapters of Isaiah, God is challenging Israel to prove their idols and false gods. The test He proposes is one of prophecy--foretelling the future. In the process of challenging the idols to prove they are gods, an important principle of prophecy is expressed:

Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen [in the future]; let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come (Isa. 41:21, 22).

This is something which God does repeatedly in prophecy. In preparing to give us understanding of the latter end of a thing, He gives us a prophecy which will have two fulfillments. The former is not the real goal of the prophecy but is merely a prototype--a model which we can examine to understand the latter fulfillment.

When an automobile manufacturer decides to make a major change in his product, he will often build what is called a prototype. The prototype is not an end in itself,

but is a means to an end. It is the means whereby the manufacturer is able to get a look at the new car as a whole to catch any mistakes in design before the car goes into production and a lot of money is spent on it. The prototype is inevitably altered, resculpted or changed before the final product comes out.

There is an analogy here with prophecy. Instead of calling it a prototype in prophecy, we refer to it as a "type". While the final fulfillment of a prophecy ("antitype") will be very much like the previous fulfillment ("type"), it will be far more comprehensive than the "type."

Isaiah Understood Duality

Isaiah's prophecies are this way, and Isaiah himself understood it to be so.

He not only understood that prophecy was dual, but he understood why it was dual--it was not purely so we could understand the latter end of these prophecies. It was also to confound and to confuse the skeptics. In Isaiah 28:9, Isaiah asks: "Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts."

The immature will not understand. Isaiah goes on to say:

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little . . . that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.
(Iss. 28:9-13).

God did not intend for scornful men to understand. Therefore, the prophecies of God are not laid out in simple, straightforward form, but are found "here a little and there a little." They are dual, and it takes a keen and discerning eye to understand what deals with the former fulfillment and what deals with the latter fulfillment.

An excellent example of the duality of prophecy is found in the interesting but difficult section running from Issiah 7 through Isaiah 12.

Virgin Birth

The prophecy is set in a time of conflict between King Ahaz of Judah and a confederacy between Damascus and Samaria in the north. The initial purpose of the prophecy is to inform Ahaz that both Damascus and Samaria would be broken within sixty-five years. God then told Ahaz through Issiah to ask a sign--a model or type-- having to do with the fall of Damascus and Samaria!

Ahaz refused to ask for a sign, so Isaiah, under instructions from God, gave him a sign anyway. What follows in Verse 14 is the very familiar prophecy: "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel."

As we all know by now, the fulfillment of this prophecy is cited in Matthew 1:23.

But how could the birth of Christ be a sign to Ahaz? He had been long since dead. The answer is given when we look at the prophecy in its context. Isaiah goes on to say:

Butter and honey shall he eat, when [margin] he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that you abhor shall be forsaken of both her kings (Isa. 7:15, 16).

Not only was the birth of this child to be a sign to Ahaz, the child was to be born before the fall of Samaria--less than two or three years before it, in fact. The child was not to be old enough to know the difference between good and evil by the time this event took place.

Obviously, then, the child which was to be born almost immediately before the fall of Samaria was a type, sign, or model of that child which would later be born--the Messiah.

Butter and Honey

The statement that the child will be eating butter and honey by the time he gets old enough to know the difference between good and evil is also enlightening.

The power which was going to be responsible for the fall of Damascus in Syria was the King of Assyria. Unfortunately for Judah, however, the Assyrian was not going to stop with the conquest of the north. Verse 17 tells us he is going to come into the land of Judah:

The Lord shall bring upon thee [Ahaz], and upon thy people [Judah], and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes (Isa. 7:17-19).

All this happened. The Assyrians and the Egyptians made a battleground out of Judah, and actually destroyed a number of cities.

Even though the city of Jerusalem survived, the constant fighting back and forth between Assyria and Egypt was devastating to the land. Crops were stolen, burned or destroyed, and the inhabitants of the cities that were left were shut up and unable to go out and plant crops. Hence, when the Assyrians left the land there was no opportunity to grow a crop that year. It came to pass (v. 21), "that a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep: And it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk that they shall give, he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land." This and following verses give us the picture. Crops had been destroyed, the land had lain idle and was fit for nothing but grazing land. People had to make do with wild honey and animal products, because they had been unable to grow anything else.

A Type of Christ

All this prophecy was to be fulfilled within months of the birth of "the child." This child could not possibly be Christ. It wasn't Christ, of course; it was a type of Christ.

The birth of this child which was to be the type is recorded in Chapter 8. Here, the child has a different name and the imagery is slightly different. The name is Maher-shalal-hash-baz (v. 3), and Verse 4 tells us that before the child is old enough to cry, "My father, and my mother," the cities of Damascus and Samaria would be taken by the king of Assyria.

This child was not, however, born of a virgin. The "prophetess" (v. 3) was Isaiah's wife, and since we see from Chapter 7:3 that Isaiah already had a son, then it's logical to conclude that Maher-shalal-hash-baz was his second son and that his wife was not even a virgin at the time the child was conceived.

There are, then, three basic differences in these two children--the name, the mother, and the historical setting. All we have given to us up through Chapter 8:4 are the types.

Isaiah understood quite thoroughly that his prophecy was not merely for his contemporaries. Notice his comments beginning in Chapter 8:16:

Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwells in mount Zion.

The things that took place in Isaiah's own day were the former fulfillment, and we are urged to look to this former fulfillment and consider it that we might understand the latter end thereof (Isa. 41:22).

Isaiah then concludes the eighth chapter with more remarks about the time of famine and difficulty the people were going to have in Judah at the time of the Assyrian and Egyptian invasion.

A Time Shift

As he continues into Chapter 9, however, we seem to find ourselves in a totally different time without any warning whatsoever. Actually, the prophecy of Isaiah 7-12 begins with the war between Judah and Israel and ends with the Millennium. At no time are you given any warning of this. Isaiah simply begins at the beginning and carries through with fascinating overlapping prophecies and winds up at the end. It is a beautiful example of the "line upon line, precept upon precept" principle which he expounds in Chapter 28.

As he continues talking in Chapter 9 about the difficulties people are going to be having during the

Assyrian invasion, he says:

Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations (Isa. 9:1).

This verse is interesting, because it speaks of two afflictions of the area of the northern tribes. One of them is that caused by the Assyrian invasion.

What is especially interesting about this verse is that part of it is quoted by Matthew as having been fulfilled in Christ's earthly ministry! (Matt. 4:14-16.)

Was Matthew misapplying this Scripture? Not at all! Notice the context in Isaiah 9:6, "For unto us a child is born . . ." Now which child did Isaiah think this was? His own or the one to be born later of a virgin as latter fulfillment of the prophecy? Read on:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6, emphasis mine).

Suddenly, without any warning, we have been transported across seven centuries of time to the birth of the Messiah and His earthly ministry.

Assyrian Captivity

Now we would expect the prophecies following this to be in a later time-setting. They are and they are not!

The prophecies following Isaiah 9:7 are dual! God continues to talk about the imminent fall of Israel and Judah and the subsequent destruction of Assyria at the hands of Babylon. Although these two events took place, the events of the latter part of Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 don't really fit the historical fulfillment of these events --the former fulfillment is only a type!

There is to be a yet future captivity of Israel and a yet future destruction of Assyria. Assyria, the leading nation of a latter-day Babylonish system, will be destroyed just before the return of Christ and the establishment of His Kingdom.

Now, notice Chapter 11 of Isaiah:

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse (Christ), and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him . . . The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, ~~as~~ the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:1-9).

Then, God speaks of the recovering of the remnant of His people out of captivity and Chapter 12 follows with the millennial hymn!

Isaiah Is Ageless

It is impossible to date Isaiah's prophecy in any

kind of historical context. The prophecy is deliberately dual and is obviously intended for people of other ages in addition to Issiah's own.

When the facts are considered, the criticism leveled at the prophets becomes absolutely transparent. The critics have not made a careful evaluation of the available evidence and reached a logical conclusion. They have started with an assumption--that the authors of the prophets were completely human and had no divine inspiration. From this point on, all criticism of the prophets degenerates into a simple effort to explain away the fact that the prophets foretell the future with stunning accuracy and condemn the moral degeneracy of successive ages with a power that transcends the human capacity for righteous indignation.

CHAPTER VII

WHO WROTE THE LAW?

Did Moses write the Pentateuch? Tradition and history say he did. The Bible specifically states that he wrote "the law," made a book of it, and put it into the ark (Deut. 31:24-26). We know that Moses could write--that there is no historical, archaeological, or literary reason for denying it.

Moreover, it is inconceivable that a literate man, as educated as Moses must have been, would not have written a chronicle of the Exodus and wilderness wanderings. It is just as inconceivable that his works would not have been retained by Israel and held in high esteem. There is no more venerated figure in all Israel's history.

It is reasonable that Moses was the author of virtually all of the Pentateuch.

But what difference does it make?

It makes so much difference that the critics have devoted more attention to this subject than any other in the Bible. In spite of all the evidence pointing to the Mosaic authorship, they have chopped the Pentateuch up, giving it to at least five authors dating from about 700-900 B.C., and delayed the final compiling of the book until after the Babylonian captivity!

Why? On the basis of what evidence?

Consider the Evidence

The critical theories generally deny that Moses wrote even the Law. It is supposed to have been written over a period of centuries divided into three main periods of religious development. Since the Bible makes it quite clear that Moses wrote the Law, we must surely expect the critics to have very good reason for disputing this.

It's worth taking the time to examine these reasons, and the foundation upon which the theories are built. If we find the foundation makes sense and is true, we can go on from there. However, if the foundation is wrong then any theories built upon it will fall with the foundation.

The critics advance three main "clues" from which they derive their theories.

Clue No. 1

Astruc's Clue (1753). Certain passages in Genesis call God JHWH (Jehovah) and in others He is referred to as Elohim. This is interpreted to mean a difference in authorship (A. Rendle Short, Modern Discovery and the Bible, p. 167).

Virtually all of the literary analysis of the Pentateuch has proceeded from this observation. How much, however, can really be learned from a purely literary analysis of a document?

The reader can easily judge this for himself by a simple examination of his own Authorized Version of the Bible. In it the word YHVH, or YAHWEH, (incorrectly pronounced Jehovah) is usually rendered by the word LORD in capital letters, and occasionally by the word GOD, also in capital letters. The word Elohim in all of its forms is simply translated "God." By going through and marking the words it becomes quite simple to get an overall view of the distribution.

The first thing Astruc noticed was that the first chapter of Genesis used the term Elohim exclusively.

It must be remembered that Astruc was a Frenchman, and had for ten years resided in Paris, at a time when the niceties of style were as much studied as the punctilios of etiquette. We can hardly be surprised, then, that he should conclude that an author who used the name Elohim thirty-one times in a chapter containing only thirty-one verses, must have known no other name for God. For how otherwise could he have inflicted or endured what to the sensitive Frenchman was so frightful a monotony? (John Urquhart, The New Biblical Guide, Vol. I, p. 22.)

In Genesis 2, however, Moses combines the two words into "YAHVEH Elohim." For Astruc this was inconceivable. It seemed impossible to impute to Moses "a fault which no other writer has ever committed." He asked:

Is it not, on the contrary, more natural to explain this variation by supposing, as we do, that the Book of Genesis is formed of two or three memoirs, joined and stitched together in fragments, the authors of which had each given to God always the same name, but each a different name--one that of Elohim, and the other that of Jehovah or Jehovah-Elohim? (Astruc, quoted by John Urquhart, ibid., p. 43.)

The Divided Kingdom

Why these alleged authors only knew one name for God isn't explained, but later critics have attempted to show that the writers of the two documents (called J and E) lived during the time of the divided kingdom after the death of Solomon! One of them was supposed to live in the north and the other in the south--hence their lack of knowledge of the other name for God. How they could have known about the same God without having a common knowledge of names isn't clear.

It is clear that the writer of Genesis 2 uses an additional name to that used in Chapter 1. It is important to notice that he uses both names together and also uses them separately. In Chapters 2 and 3 of Genesis he uses the phrase "the LORD God" (YAHWEH ELOHIM) twenty times. In the middle of all this at the beginning of Chapter 3 where we have the dialogue between Satan and the woman we find the term Elohim used by itself. Then, as we proceed into Chapter 4 we find the term YHVH used by itself. From here on through Chapter 9 we have the normal variety of names.

It becomes clear, that this "other author" who used the name YHVH also knew and used the name Elohim. Now examine Chapters 10, 11, 12 and 13 and see what happens to Astruc's theory. Here the term YHVH is used exclusively

twenty times. Are we to conclude that the "Jehovistic" writer had forgotten the other name? Or should we conclude that he had a "literary lapse" and wrote in bad style?

Perhaps we should conclude that there is a third author who didn't know the term Elohim!

One fact simply is not taken into consideration by the critics. YHVH and Elohim are not synonyms! They are two different names for the same Being which have entirely different meanings. It is necessary for a writer to choose one or the other according to the emphasis which he wishes to place on the name.

If you care to make a careful examination of Genesis, you can judge for yourself whether the distribution of the names of God can be taken as evidence of composite authorship. Most of Genesis has no significant variation in the names at all. The exceptions are Chapter 1 which uses Elohim exclusively; Chapters 10-13 which use YAHVEH exclusively; Chapters 33-37 which use Elohim exclusively; and finally the unique section beginning in Genesis 40. In the thirteen chapters ending with Exodus 2, we find what appears to be an exclusively Elohist passage. Every reference to God is a derivation of the word Elohim--every reference except one, that is. In Genesis 49:18 we find YHVH again.

Any attempt to determine authorship by the use of names breaks down at this point. This entire section is

obviously Elohist according to the theory. Yet the writer inserts the name YAHWEH right in the middle of it all.

What have we proved? The distribution of the divine names in Genesis may be interesting and there may even be some significance in the choice of words in the particular passage. But it certainly cannot be regarded as proof of multiple authors!

Colenso's Theory

Some interesting theories have resulted from the critical attempts to back up the idea of Jehovist and Elohist sources. Urquhart describes one of the stronger arguments of Colenso. Colenso says:

The Elohist uses always Padan or Padan-Aram whereas the Jehovist uses Aram-Naharaim This circumstance that such unmistakable differences of expression distinguish, throughout the Book of Genesis, the parts which are due to these separate writers, may almost, with reference to the momentous issues involved, be called providential since it enables us to speak positively on some points which might otherwise have been still subject to doubt. (Colenso, The Pentateuch, pp. 176-177, emphasis mine.)

This is a pretty firm statement and would certainly seem to back up the idea that there is a distinct difference in authorship.

Urquhart points out, however, that the term Aram-Naharaim occurs only once in the whole of Genesis! How can it possibly distinguish authorship "throughout the

Book of Genesis" when it only occurs once? Urquhart asks: "Does it not require a peculiar moral build to make so confident a statement, knowing that there was only this behind it?"

This, however, doesn't tell the whole story yet.

Urquhart continues:

The very first mention of Padan-Aram, the alleged distinctive name of the Elohist, occurs in a Jehovistic section (Gen. 25:20). This was not at first noticed, but, when attention was directed to it, what was proposed? To alter the theory to suit the fact? Little does he know of critical courage and resource who would think so! No; it was proposed to claim that that verse as Elohist for the sole reason that it had Padan-Aram in it! (Urquhart, op. cit., p. 92.)

The reader should look this up in Genesis 25:20 and then notice the divine names immediately following.

This illustrates the ridiculous extremes to which the critics have gone in attempting to explain the inconsistencies in their theories. Verses have been split down the middle, and even individual words assigned to one author or the other.

Check The Source

Even if the bias of the critic doesn't distort what he writes, his laziness or carelessness may. Urquhart cites the example of two commentators on the Psalms (Perowne, The Book of Psalms I. 76: Binnie, The Psalms) who state that in the first 41 Psalms "Jehovah occurs 272 times, and Elohim only 15 times." The reason they make

this mistake is because "both those writers have accepted without examination statements made by Delitzsch" (Urquhart, The New Biblical Guide, I, 85).

It turns out that the word Elohim occurs no fewer than 48 times--three times as often as Delitzsch claimed. Perowne and Binnie simply did not check his figures. You can check them very easily yourself by consulting Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and counting up the words. You, too, will find that Elohim occurs exactly 48 times not counting the other derivatives of the name. If EL and its variations are included, the figure is closer to 65!

The significance of all this does not lie in the numbers themselves but in the fact that scholars often use one another's research without making enquiry into its accuracy. The result has been a great deal of "scholarly" inbreeding which has compounded the errors made!

Computer Criticism

Even without mistakes, literary criticism is still inadequate in determining the authorship of an ancient work.

Recently two theologians programmed a computer to make a purely literary analysis of the Epistles of Paul. The computer was programmed to analyze key words in the author's vocabulary, their frequency of use, and his sentence length. Their conclusion? "Only five out of the

thirteen letters tested were written by Paul."

This conclusion was publicized widely and got a full page spread in a major weekly newspaper. The following week had a follow-up article in which other theologians commented. The story got very full treatment.

The results of the computer research were considered as conclusive evidence that Paul did not write all the epistles attributed to him.

Later, however, scientists used the same computer to make a computer analysis of contemporary authors-- notably Ian Fleming, creator of James Bond. The computer's conclusions: Ian Fleming didn't write them all!

Of course, he did actually write the books. They have grossed too much money for an unknown author to sit quietly by while another author soaks up the money. But the standards by which the Epistles of Paul were judged, said Ian Fleming didn't write all of his books!

The works of Graham Greene and G.K. Chesterton were also found to have "more than one author." Dr. Robert Churchhouse, who conducted the experiment at the Atlas Computer Laboratory in Chilton, Berkshire, felt this was "highly unlikely." In other words the computer's literary analysis wasn't able to accurately determine authorship.

Many of the greatest writers known to man are quite inconsistent in their style. Sir Walter Scott has been criticized frequently for his unevenness of style.

Let us grant that he could write abominably. But is there any great writer, especially any great novelist, who does not sometimes nod? Dickens has appalling lapses of style; so has Thackeray; so has George Meredith . . . (John Buchan, quoted by O.T. Allis, The Five Books of Moses, p. 70).

Another illustration can be found in the works of Thomas Hardy. Buchan calls the last two paragraphs of The Woodlanders "the most beautiful passage written in our day by any novelist." However, there was such a lapse in style that he is able to quote two-thirds of a sentence and say, "Could anything be better?" Then, after quoting the rest of the sentence he says: "Could anything be worse?" (ibid.) If the critics found this in the Bible, they would assume that a different man wrote the last half of the sentence!

We see then that literary analysis, including Astruc's clue, is unable to determine the authorship of the Pentateuch. We are ready to look at the second foundational "clue."

Clue No. 2

De Wette's Clue (1805). The Laws of Moses are ignored until the time of Josiah; then we begin to hear of the central sanctuary described in Deuteronomy 12. Moreover, the literary style and moral and religious tone of the books are centuries ahead of Moses' day (A. Rendle Short, Modern Discovery and the Bible, p. 167).

Now De Wette wasn't entirely wrong. The Laws of Moses were generally ignored until the time of Josiah. However, it is an axiom of criticism that if a law is

ignored, broken, or generally unknown at any given point in history, it may be concluded that it was introduced at a later date. In other words, the Law of Moses is supposed to have come along after Josiah.

The Sanctuary

We are told that it is in Josiah's time that we begin to hear of the central sanctuary described in Deuteronomy 12. This question of a central sanctuary as opposed to a number of high places where offerings might be offered is a major theme of Biblical Criticism. The reader should examine Deuteronomy 12 for himself. It contains instructions, not merely for offerings and sacrifices, but for the observance of holy days. God specifically instructed them that they were not to observe these holy days anywhere they pleased, but they were to go "unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name there, even unto His habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come" (v. 5).

The place is not specified. It is simply to be a place which God selects. Notice what they were to do when they they came to the place where God had put His name:

And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your free-will offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: And there ye shall eat before the Lord

your God, and ye shall rejoice . . . (vv. 6, 7).

It is assumed by critics that this idea of a central sanctuary was unknown until the time of Josiah, and that therefore Deuteronomy must have originated about that time. They seem to overlook entirely the historical record of First Samuel. A man named Elkanah is described--the father of Samuel. We are told: "And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh." (I Sam. 1:3.)

Notice that he left his own city and went to a sanctuary elsewhere. Reading on in the account, we find that there was a high priest at this central sanctuary, and that it was a place to which people went to pray (I Sam. 1:9, 10). Notice especially verse 21:

And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. (I Samuel 1:21, compare with Deut. 12:6, 7 above.)

To say that we begin to hear of a central sanctuary in the time of Josiah simply overlooks the plain record of all the Biblical history leading up to that time.

Laws Disregarded

The key to this whole argument, however, lies in the idea that laws which were apparently unknown and unpractised were not in existence. This argument fails utterly to take into account the fact that these laws again fell into disuse and became generally unknown after

Josiah's time.

The reader should look into II Kings 22 for himself and judge whether the Law of Moses really was totally new to Josiah and the priests. The book which Hilkiah found in the Temple was no ordinary book of laws. It is described as "the book of the law." The direct articles are present in the Hebrew. The reaction of Josiah when he heard the words of this law made no sense whatsoever if he had had no knowledge of the existence of such a law before this time. Who would be foolish enough to swallow a totally new book concerning which there was no tradition and of which no one had heard and decide that it was a book of great religious authority? Why would Josiah accept it, and how could he possibly impose it upon the people unless there was at least some knowledge of its authority?

It is clear that while the contents of the book came as a great shock to Josiah and the others the existence of the book and its authority did not.

Centuries Ahead

De Wette goes on to point out that, "The literary style and moral and religious tone of the books are centuries ahead of Moses' day." In a previous chapter, we have proved conclusively what De Wette could not have known apart from the Bible--that the evolutionary concept of an "illiterate" Moses is totally wrong.

However, it is true that the moral and religious tone of the books are centuries ahead of Moses' day. In fact, the moral and religious tone of the Law of Moses is centuries ahead of our own day!

Once again we see the adamant unwillingness of critics to admit any divine origin of the Bible. Since Moses couldn't have written the Law of Moses, they assume, then it must have been some other man at a later time. However, the obstacles to believing in a human origin for the Law of Moses are just as great at any stage in Israel's history as they are in the days of Moses.

Health Laws

The Laws of Moses are centuries ahead of their time in every way--scientifically as well as morally. Where healing and health are concerned, for example, the Laws of Moses stand like an island of common sense in a great sea of paganism, mysticism and magic.

Two ancient documents dealing with medical treatment in Egypt have come down to us. The one deals with injuries and seems to be fairly sensible. However, when it comes to dealing with disease we find a different picture:

The Ebers Papyrus deals with medical diseases, and here we are in a different world altogether. A supernatural force is regarded as causing most of the ailments, and the remedies are a curious mixture of

medicines, charms, incantations and charlatanism
(A. Rendle Short, Modern Discovery and the Bible,
p. 119).

Egypt, of course, was one of the more "advanced" nations of that time. What would we expect, then, from a small band of Hebrew nomads coming out of the desert and invading Palestine? Humanly, we couldn't expect much and this is the reason why many critics feel the Laws of Moses were written much later. The Law of Moses is much too rational.

The especial value of the Hebrew contribution to the development of scientific medicine was the complete repudiation of the dominance which magic was thought to exercise in the whole realm of pathology, and the substitution of a rational prophylactic approach.
(R.H. Harrison, Healing Herbs of the Bible, p. 14.)

Now the evolutionary approach would have us to believe that the Hebrews grew out of paganism into this new phase--that it represents the natural progress of the human spirit. But what did the human mind do with these laws?

It is therefore unfortunate that the Jews of the apocryphal period abandoned their inheritance and began to adopt the ancient Babylonian practice of using spells, amulets and charms in the prevention and treatment of disease In later Judaism the physician became increasingly involved in magic and superstition. (ibid., pp. 14, 15.)

The Law of Moses--given by God--lifted the Hebrews out of the paganism and filth of Egyptian medicine, but the human spirit couldn't hold on to it. They reverted to their own superstition over and over again. It was only

occasionally, as in the case of Josiah, that revivals of faith in God and obedience to His Law took place.

The evolutionary concept simply won't fit the facts.

Now what is left of De Wette's clue? We find that the evidence for the beginning of these laws in the time of Josiah is based on the confusion of Israel's religious degeneration with an evolutionary concept of the development of religion. We find that the central sanctuary was in use from the time of the Judges. When we come to the point regarding the literary style or the moral and religious tone of the books, we simply come back again to the question, "Are these laws of human or divine origin?"

It is true that no man living in Moses' time could have originated these laws. The critical argument is that they were written later. Yet, in fact, these laws would not have originated from the mind of any man at any time in the history of Israel. The history of Israel proves conclusively beyond any shadow of a doubt that both Judah and Israel were consistently hostile to this law--before and after the time of Josiah! They were hostile to the law because it was the Law of God, and no one--I repeat no one--could have palmed off a spurious Law of Moses on these hard-headed, stubborn, rebellious people and made them believe it was divine! Either there was some divine

authority in this book or it could never have been accepted!

Clue No. 3

Graf's Clue (1866). There are three stages in the development of Israelitish religion. JE [The two "documents" containing YAHWEH and Elohim] corresponds to a stage, running up to the time of Josiah, when God might be worshipped anywhere at any shrine; any layman could offer his sacrifice, and images of Jehovah were tolerated. D corresponds to a stage when worship was centralized at Jerusalem, and priests and Levites only might minister at the altar. After the exile, a full and complicated ritual was laid down by P, and only priests could minister. (A. Rendle Short, Modern Discovery and the Bible, p. 168.)

All this, of course, is purely hypothetical. A key is found in the remark that "images of Jehovah were tolerated." Tolerated by whom? Certainly not by God!

The "Graf Clue" is based on his own mistaken interpretation of the history of Israel. It is based squarely on the evolutionary concept which has since been discarded.

It is quite true that there were numerous altars in Israel which are spoken of in Judges, Samuel and Kings and that there were images held by some people--including Michal, David's wife. All this proves nothing except the fact that the people were disobeying the law. It doesn't prove that the law was not in existence. Furthermore, it does not really represent a stage in Israel's religious development, but a stage in their religious degeneration.

Notice also that Graf held that God could be worshipped anywhere at any shrine in the earliest stage. Yet we have already seen in I Samuel 1 that Elkanah had to leave his city and go to the central sanctuary.

Graf-Wellhausen Theory

Actually, this "clue" is not a clue at all but is pure theory. It was taken in hand by a literary critic named Wellhausen and developed into what is now known as the Graf-Wellhausen Theory. Strangely, this theory was not based upon literary analysis or archaeological discovery. It was founded entirely in a Hegelian evolutionary philosophy.

There is no proof of these three stages of Israel's religious "development" at all. The Bible doesn't back it up in any way; nor does archaeology. However, at the turn of the century the Graf-Wellhausen Theory was held in highest esteem. Dr. C.F. Burney wrote of this theory:

This latter hypothesis [i.e., the Graf-Wellhausen Theory] with the reconstruction which it involves of our view of the development of Israel's religion after B.C. 750, may now be regarded as proved up to the hilt for any thinking and unprejudiced man who is capable of estimating the character and value of the evidence. (H.M. Wiener, Essays in Pentateuchal Criticism, p. 176).

Here again we encounter intellectual blackmail. If you don't agree that this hypothesis is "proved up to the hilt" then you are either unthinking, prejudiced, or incapable of estimating the value of evidence. Many a

scholar has been intimidated by this approach, and the Graf-Wellhausen Theory was almost universally accepted among higher critics of the day.

But has the theory stood the test of time and evidence? No, it hasn't.

The Theory Falls

Since 1908 a tremendous amount of new material has become available which has forced a complete reappraisal of the situation. One of the top contemporary biblical scholars, writing in 1960, tells us that:

The generally accepted account of Israel's history and religion produced by Wellhausen and popularized in the late 19th and early 20th centuries survives, to be sure, today. It is especially among non-specialists that it is accepted as indubitably valid, and particularly among those who would claim the label "Liberal," religious as well as secular. (G.E. Mendenhall, "Biblical History and Transition," The Bible and The Ancient Near East, p. 36, emphasis mine.)

The specialists in the field have had to realize that Wellhausen's theory was really not based upon evidence as much as on philosophy. They realize that the evidence has not borne out the theory and have acted accordingly-- they have scrapped the theory.

However, there are always those who don't get the word. Mendenhall goes on to point out:

Yet, Wellhausen's theory of the history of Israelite religion was very largely based on a Hegelian [evolutionary] philosophy of history, not upon his literary analysis. It was an a priori evolutionary scheme which guided him in the utilization of his

sources. Such evolutionary schemes have been rejected nearly everywhere else Hypotheses are basic to research, to be sure, but they should arise on the basis of some sort of evidence, not simply be transferred from a philosophic system.

Now this was not published by some obscure religious quack, but in a collection of articles by the most noted Biblical scholars and archaeologists in the world. It reflects the scholarship and research of recent years. Yet many theologians are still blissfully unaware of it!

While many people go their merry way assuming that critics have successfully repudiated the Bible, the facts are stacking higher and higher all the time repudiating the critics. Wellhausen, as others have done, started with an assumption which prejudiced the rest of his work and guaranteed a false conclusion.

The Three "Clues"

Now, what is left of the three foundational "clues" upon which the critical theory was built? Astruc's clue was found to be inconclusive. De Wette's "clue" was spawned in ignorance of essential evidence. And Graf's "clue" was not a clue at all but an expression of an evolutionary theory of religion which has since been rejected by scholars.

There is, therefore, no foundation for the critical theories which deny the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

But there is a very good foundation to support the truth that Moses was the human author of the first five books of the Bible.

Israel Came Out of Egypt

By the time any schoolboy finishes his education in English Literature he has become aware of the fact that there are numerous foreign words present in our language. In some cases the origin of the words--French, German, Latin, etc.--is obvious. In many other cases, however, the words have been so smoothly assimilated that the origin isn't apparent at all. However, really old English bears a much more marked relationship with German, and it is not too difficult to date Old English by the presence of foreign words.

A similar situation has existed down through the centuries with the Jewish people.

The Hebrew language, even at times when only in literary and scholarly use, did not cease to live but was continually enriched by the adoption of new elements through close contact with other peoples, and varied cultural surroundings. In the development of the Hebrew language, one can follow the route of Israel's wanderings during the last twenty-five centuries. In its expansion and enrichment, we can see reflected the fresh cultural values acquired in all the borrowed or imitated expressions, phrases and modes of speech, as well as the adopted foreign words, are to be found embodied in the language, and worked into its texture. Thus there are Aramaic, Assyro-Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Latin and Arabic elements, finally elements from modern languages in their most recent developments. (A.S. Yahuda, The Accuracy of the Bible, p. xxviii.)

Having seen this phenomenon demonstrated in comparatively recent generations, we should be able to apply this test to the Pentateuch to see it in its relation to the known languages of the time. If the Pentateuch was written long after the time of Moses and only was finally finished after the Babylonian captivity as the critics would have us to believe, there should be certain clearly defined linguistic evidence available. Late Babylonian and Persian influence should be present, and there should be no special Egyptian influence. Furthermore, the history and archaeology should be "full of mistakes and anachronisms." (A. Rendle Short, Modern Discovery and the Bible, p. 161.)

These tests certainly apply to other books of the Bible.

Such books of the Bible as Ezekiel, Daniel, and partly also Ezra and Nehemiah, which were admittedly composed during and immediately after the exile, reveal in language and style such an unmistakable Babylonian influence that these newly entered foreign elements leap to the eye (A.S. Yahuda, The Language of the Pentateuch in Its Relation to Egyptian, p. xxix).

The Pentateuch, however, presents a totally different picture. The influence of the Babylonian language in the Pentateuch is so minute as to be negligible, and what there is is not late Babylonian but is extremely archaic dating even back to the time of Abraham. This, of course, is exactly what we would expect.

It is when we look for the Egyptian influence,

however, that we begin to get the picture. Yahuda finds even the early chapters of Genesis "full of Egyptian influence." For example, the word tebah is used for Noah's ark, and is an Egyptian word. It occurs twenty-six times in Genesis, twice in Exodus (dealing with the little ark that the baby Moses was hidden in) and nowhere else in the Old Testament.

Pilter lists some of the more notable Egyptian words found in the Pentateuch. As it would not be particularly helpful to list all these words, simply read his conclusion:

These words alone (there appear to be others in the Pentateuch) show, firstly, a strong Egyptian influence upon the writer, which is adequately and best explained by his having been, although a Hebrew, instructed in Egyptian schools; in other words, they point to Moses; and secondly as they are words of everyday life--including a liquid and a dry measure, and linen and woollen textiles--indicate strong and persistent Egyptian influence upon the common life of the Hebrews which admits of no explanation so satisfactory as that of the sojourning of the Israelites in Egypt for a considerable period (W.T. Pilter, The Pentateuch A Historical Record, pp. 506, 507).

This powerful Egyptian influence in the Pentateuch which shows itself most distinctly in the Exodus is unmistakable evidence of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Kyle says of these Egyptian words:

These words are of such unusual meaning and of such temporary use in Egypt, belong so peculiarly to the place and the times and are used with such absolute accuracy throughout the Pentateuch, that it is incredible that scribes of a late period in Israel's history could have attained to such a linguistic nicety. The passages in which these words occur must

have come from the Mosaic age, the only age when some of them were employed in Egypt. (M.G. Kyle, The Deciding Voice of the Monuments in Biblical Criticism, pp. 249, 250.)

Everything in the Pentateuch is as it should be for Moses to be the author.

Does The History Fit?

If, as the critical theory would have us to believe, the Pentateuch was of late origin and based on early myths and legends, we would expect the history and archaeology to be full of mistakes and anachronisms. This however, is not the case.

Then when the archaeological data of the Mosaic age are laid all along the course of the Pentateuchal narrative, it is found to be so uniformly harmonious with that narrative, with the customs, the institutions, the topography, the itineraries, and the history, as far as these are known, all the way from the shadows of Hebrew slavery in Egypt to the fifth year of Maraneptha and the turning back from Kadesh-Barnea, as to make one marvel that different authors in different centuries should have been so uniformly successful in the representation of historical fiction. (M.G. Kyle, The Deciding Voice of the Monuments in Biblical Criticism, p. 251.)

But let's return to the original question. What difference does it make whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch or not? Why have the critics devoted so much time to trying to prove that the Pentateuch was composed of documents written from about 750 B.C. onwards?

The answer is simple. Once we admit the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, it becomes impossible to deny

the divine origin of the Law. The evolutionary concept of the development of Israel's religion requires a passage of time in which a law could evolve. The Law, they reason, had to be the result of trial and error--of a form of "natural selection."

No single living man in any given age of history could possibly have written such a Law. In this the critics are correct. God, not Moses, is the Author of the Law!

CHAPTER VIII

THE BIBLE JUDGES THE CRITICS

By this time, one thing has become abundantly clear--the critics have not taken an unbiased approach to the Bible. Why haven't they? What is it about the Bible that has drawn such absolutely unparalleled opposition from so many men? Why have they tried to discredit the Bible?

For over three hundred years, various critics have been sitting in judgment of the Bible, and it's about time we saw the Bible's judgment of them.

Surely it would be remarkable proof of the Bible if it could judge these men from a distance of over two thousand five hundred years, describe their actions, define their motives, and predict the results of their criticism accurately. Surely no modern critic would argue that the Old Testament prophets were written in our own generation. So if Jeremiah can describe the critics along with all their arguments, attitudes, conduct and bias, then the critics can no longer judge Jeremiah.

Listen to Jeremiah's cry!

Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the Lord, and because of the words of His Holiness (Jer. 23:9).

Jeremiah had received a prophecy directed at the

clergy of our day. Don't make the mistake of assuming that this prophecy applied only to his own time. In Jeremiah 23:20, we are told: "In the latter days you will understand it clearly" (RSV).

What Jeremiah saw in this prophecy left him stunned and horrified. He saw a land full of adultery, cursing and violence. A land in which "both prophet and priest are profane" (v. 11). As a result of this profanity, God said of the religious leaders:

Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them . . . (v. 12).

Ministers Sick

And something is very wrong with today's religious leaders. A glimpse through the veneer of a segment of today's "Christian" ministry was given in a recent book by Dr. Klaus Thomas, a psychotherapist. The book is entitled, Handbook of Suicide Prevention.

After being in practice for six years, Dr. Thomas had records of some ten thousand people who had come to him desiring advice. The shocking fact is that ministers, ministers' wives, teachers of religion, or theology students composed "the largest single professional group of desperate people which turned to medical care sick of life."

Can you grasp the significance of that? Out of a group of ten thousand people the largest single professional group that contemplated suicide were religious workers.

Why?

Dr. Thomas went on to tell of the first two hundred religionists who came to him for help. Five of them were high-ranking ministers of a well-known denomination, one a professor of theology, and another one of the highest church dignitaries. Out of the two hundred, thirty-four suffered from sexual perversions of one sort or another, twenty-one were homosexuals, seven were sadistic perverts, one was an underclothing fetishist, another preferred to wear female dresses, and two were masochists.

No wonder they had contemplated suicide! And no wonder Jeremiah said: "Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein."

Lest you think this is only one man's experience, the German news magazine, Der Spiegel, reported on a meeting of psychotherapists in November, 1962, when the attending doctors discussed their experiences concerning a total of several hundred sexually-perverted persons. They said that: "Nearly 90% of these patients were religious officers, predominantly ministers."

God thunders through Jeremiah:

They commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto Me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah (Jer. 23:14).

Now who is the judge?

Law Cast Aside

But how could this happen? How can men who are the religious leaders--the spiritual guides--become candidates for suicide? Listen to Isaiah give us the answer:

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! . . . Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel (Isa. 5:20-24).

More and more people who are going to their ministers for advice concerning right and wrong are being told that the old moral guidelines (i.e. the Ten Commandments) no longer apply. One minister, for example, was consulted by a married man who was having an adulterous affair. When the minister learned that the man's wife was a bed-ridden invalid with whom sexual relations were impossible he said: "The only function I could serve was to relieve the man's feeling of guilt" (David Boroff, Coronet, August, 1961).

In the same article we are told of a young girl who went to a minister for advice about a boy she had been petting with. She felt guilty about it and asked the minister for help.

Contrary to her expectations, the minister did not rebuke her When she assured him that the relationship was serious--they hoped eventually to marry--the minister indicated that she need not feel such terrible guilt. In fact, he added, a total indifference to sex might suggest a denial of the human instinct, something he considered unwholesome.

Is it any wonder Jeremiah said: "They strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness" (Jer. 23:14)?

Again, who is the judge? What ordinary mortal writing well over 2,000 years ago could have described as God's prophets have described, the religious leaders of our own day? Remember, that Jeremiah directed his prophecies to the latter days--not to his own era.

Free From The Law

We are not yet finished with the Bible's judgment of the critics. What are they trying to accomplish?

No one expresses it any better than the theologian who submitted the Epistles of Paul to examination by computer--Dr. A.Q. Morton. As we have already seen, his conclusions were based on inadequate evidence, and his criteria broke down when applied to contemporary writings. Nevertheless, having concluded that Paul only wrote five

of his Epistles, Dr. Morton reveals what he is driving at:

By far the greatest consequences of the establishment of the authorship of the Pauline Epistles is that it has cut the ground from under any notion of absolute religious authority--whether this is expressed as Church or Bible (The Observer Weekend Review, November 10, 1963, emphasis mine).

And there, in a nutshell, is expressed the goal of most of Biblical Criticism. They want to "cut the ground from under any notion of absolute religious authority."

Once again we hear the cry, "There are no absolutes." Of course, once we get rid of any authority--whether it is Church or Bible--then we are free to do as we please. "Free from the law," is the cry that goes up in many churches and is actually sung in a well-known hymn. The only law that we need concern ourselves with, we are told, is the "law of love." It no longer matters whether we commit adultery, fornication, lie, cheat, and steal, as long as we have "love for our neighbor."

In a prophecy directed at our day, God wrote to our people Israel:

Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; And come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations? (Jer. 7:8-10).

This is precisely what is being done by many religious people today. They come and stand before God, but their minister has liberated them from the law. They

are delivered to do pretty much as they please as long as they do it out of "love to neighbor." Love to God isn't mentioned.

The following article appeared in a British paper recently:

A rector who believes the Ten Commandments are obsolete and negative was congratulated by his congregation after yesterday's services. "We all support his opinion," said the churchwarden of All Saints, Ascot, Berkshire. "It is a sensible modern approach to religion." The minister stated: "I have not referred to the Commandments in my services for years and no one has objected. I know many clergymen who do the same."

But should we expect them to object? Not if we have read Isaiah. Listen to his indictment of the church-attending public of our day:

Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us (Isa. 30:8-11).

Again, we ask, who is the judge? We have seen the critics' judgment of the Bible, and now we have seen the Bible's judgment of the critics. Whose judgment is true?

Now we can understand clearly Christ's judgment:

For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved (John 3:20).

When the Bible so thoroughly condemns everything that a man stands for, it is no wonder we encounter a

thinly disguised, quite irrational rejection of the Bible's authority by that man.

Yet, the Bible is the only authority man can turn to in this time of great religious confusion. Satan knows this, and it is precisely for this reason that his organization has directed a deliberate concerted effort towards destruction of that authority.

Ezekiel describes it:

There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey . . . They have taken the treasure and precious things . . . Her priests have violated My law, and have profaned My holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from My sabbaths, and I am profaned among them (Ezek. 22:25-26).

More and more, in months to come, we are going to see religion stripped of all authority. "Situation Ethics" will be preached with ever-increasing volume. As this conspiracy continues, the result is going to be a plunge in morals that will defy imagination.

Where is it all leading?

CHAPTER IX

THE RESULTS OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM

No one living in this age can be unaware of the fact that we are living in a time of moral crisis. The rising tide of crime, vice, violence, venereal disease, abortion, and drug addiction, has just about reached our necks, and it is no longer possible to pretend that it isn't there!

Even the most dedicated optimist of our age, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, had to admit that the situation was grim when he said that man has almost reached the bottom! Dr. Peale, however, called this an encouraging sign since there was no way left to go but up! Unfortunately, history shows us that the bottom is not always a turning point. It is often a grave.

It isn't necessary to shock the reader with statistics of the millions of dollars lost in shoplifting, embezzlement, theft by employees, and fraudulent bankruptcies. The figures will be out of date by the time you read them anyway.

Nor does one need to enumerate the hundreds of thousands of illegitimate children born every year; the staggering number of illegal abortions that take place; the hundreds of children whose lives are ruined at birth by

venereal disease and drug addiction; or the hundreds of thousands of premature marriages forced by pregnancy.

You already know these things!

But do you know why?

No Supreme Authority

The editors of Look magazine assigned Senior Editor Robert Moskin to talk with a broad selection of leaders who are concerned about where we are going. His most significant observation was that we live in a society without a supreme moral authority. He said: "The moral guidelines have been yanked from our hands."

He asked Dean Samuel Miller of the Harvard Divinity School where we can get moral standards. "Not from the Church," was the answer. Dean Miller said:

The Church has become almost as monastic as the orders in the Middle Ages. There seems to be no connection between what happens in the Church and what happens in society, except that people living in a desperate age use it to tranquillize their disturbing experiences The Church simply does not have a cutting edge. (Look, September 24, 1963, emphasis mine.)

But what real "cutting edge" has the Church ever had? It has thrown away the "twoedged sword" of the Bible (Heb. 4:12).

Where is today's younger generation going to look for moral standards? Are they willing to accept the authority of the clergy as the norm by which they will

regulate their lives? Why should a minister's opinions stand between them and what they want to do? Can tradition provide a standard for today's young people?

There is an authority to which they could turn to provide the "cutting edge" that is needed, but that has been laid aside. The theologians have seen to that.

Sir Robert Anderson, writing about the turn of the century, saw clearly where the criticism of his day was leading. He wrote:

And when these pestilent errors have fully penetrated to the unthinking multitude, they will lead to an agnosticism with no saving element whatever--an agnosticism which will soon develop into practical atheism. In this generation the pseudo-criticism is undermining the faith of the Church; in the next it may affect the fabric of society (Sir Robert Anderson, Pseudo-Criticism, p. 39).

We are that next generation, and the fabric of our society has nearly rotted away.

The Way of Rome

In the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Edward Gibbon tells us that one of the five main reasons for the collapse of that "Great Society" was the decay of religion into mere form, leaving the people without any guide.

Religion is certainly losing its grip on the American way of life. A Gallup poll was taken in 1957 which asked the question: "At present time do you think

religion as a whole is increasing its influence on American life, or losing its influence?"

In 1957 only 14% of the population believed that religion was losing its influence.

In 1967, the question was asked again. This time no less than 57% believed that religion was losing its influence. George Gallup pointed out: "Significantly, younger adults, 21-29, are more inclined to take a pessimistic view than older persons."

We have been called "a society that cannot agree on standards of conduct, language and manners, on what can be seen and heard." A recent news magazine called us "the permissive society." More and more journalists are drawing parallels between our society and that of Rome just before its fall.

Just Another Cycle?

Some, however, like Norman Vincent Peale, believe that history shows a series of cycles of decay and resurgence, of crisis and recovery. They feel that we are simply in another of these cycles of crisis which will be followed by recovery. We are nearing the bottom, and there will be no way to go but up.

This is a remarkably narrow view of history! Look at the world around you. Where are the great civilizations of the past? Have they survived to the present day?

Take the earliest of the great world empires-- Egypt. For centuries Egypt went through cycles of crisis and recovery. No doubt during those years there were many who said: "There will always be an Egypt."

But Egypt fell. To this day it is not merely a second-rate power, but a diseased, poverty-ridden, ignorant people. God prophesied that Egypt would never again rise up as a world power, and it is so! The latest effort by President Nasser has illustrated that with stunning clarity.

For another example, take the Kingdom of Israel under David and Solomon. Again, for centuries we have a historical record of cycles of decay and resurgence. We have the record of false prophets who predicted the kingdom would continue and would not be destroyed by Assyria or Babylon. "There will always be an Israel."

Israel fell!

Is it necessary to continue with the Babylonian Empire, the Persian Empire, Alexander's Empire and the Roman Empire? Where are they today? There have been cycles all right, but each successive cycle reached lower and lower into the depths of human depravity and moral decay. In each case the nation either tore itself apart or was destroyed mercifully by another world power.

The Point of No Return

The lesson of history is clear, and we have seen more and more of the marked parallels between our own present crises and those of the final plunge of the great empires of the past. There comes a time in a nation's history when they are beyond recovery, and it is becoming clear that we are approaching the point of no return. We may have passed it.

Journalists whose life work is keeping a finger on the pulse of our society recognize that we are not merely going through another phase. The Editors of The New York World Telegram and Sun recently were moved to prepare a special series on teenage immorality. Their conclusion:

It is true that in every era since the dawn of man the elders of each community have accused their young of going to hell in a handbasket. But most of these indictments of the past were made on the basis of correlating a few bad cases here and there, and using them to stigmatize the whole. Now, however, the whole picture of juvenile behavior must be viewed from a different angle There was not a single sociologist, psychologist or youth expert whom we interviewed while preparing this series who did not agree that waywardness among today's juveniles has soared to the point of defying all precedent (New York World Telegram & Sun, July 29, 1963, emphasis mine).

Another witness writing in Look magazine of August 27, 1963, said: "Whatever the mechanism, something new and rougher than we have ever known has crept into misbehavior among the young."

Remember that both these articles were written

before the current upsurge in the use of drugs and this frightening increase in the number of "social dropouts" emphasized by the "hippie" movement.

Lawlessness Foretold

It is significant that Christ indicated that iniquity--lawlessness--would abound on the heels of the deception of false ministers (Matt. 24:11-12). Lawlessness is the natural result of the removal of law, and the removal of law is consistently the object of religious deception (see Deut. 13:1-5).

No one seems to realize it, but when the law is laid aside, there are no protective barriers left for our society. If one law can be broken, why not another. Once God's laws are laid aside by the ministry, the stage is set. Civil disobedience is the next step, followed by rioting and looting and eventually a total breakdown of law and order.

The barriers are already down. The floodgates of lawlessness have been opened. How are we ever going to close them again?

It must be frightening to be a political leader these days. No matter what you decide, it seems bound to turn out wrong.

The Death of Protestantism

But there is to be yet another, more surprising, result of Biblical Criticism.

Throughout history, the Roman Catholic Church has been able to flourish even in the face of widespread ignorance of the Bible. For them, the removal of the authority of the Bible presents no problem at all. They have always held tradition to be of at least equal authority with scripture, and where there is conflict, the Bible must be interpreted in the light of tradition.

Not so, the Protestants. From the beginning, their very existence has depended on scripture for its authority. Sola Scriptura--only scripture--was Martin Luther's cry. The original protest against the Roman Catholic Church was on the basis of scripture, and without scripture Protestantism becomes meaningless. On what basis can they protest?

It is ironic that it has been Protestant theologians who have been instrumental in removing the only authority the Protestant Church has ever had.

As the Ecumenical Movement gains momentum, more and more Protestants are beginning to realize that the Bible has been the only real objection they have had to the Catholic Church. More and more Protestant theologians are beginning to look to Rome. As early as 1962, Dr. Ralph

Hyslop, Professor of Ecumenical Studies at Union Theological Seminary said that if the Catholics are right, and if Christ gave to Peter and his successors that kingly authority "which is surely His to give," and if the head of the Church upon earth has the power to maintain the truth in spite of all error, "then it is unwise to resist the loving summons of the Vicar of Christ" (Time, February 2, 1962).

In May of 1967, Episcopal Bishop C. Kilner Myers called on all Christians to recognize the Pope as head of the "Universal Church." He said that the Pope was "the chief pastor of men," and stated: "We need a holy father, we need a father who can speak and witness to the whole human race" (UPI, May 5th, 1967).

As the influence of the Pope becomes greater in the world, and as the influence of the Bible becomes less in Protestantism, what are Protestants to do? Add to the present situation a great religious leader showing "great signs and wonders," and the answer becomes clear (Matt. 24:23-25).

God said concerning our people: "They return, but not to the Most High" (Hos. 7:16). Now we know to whom they will return. They left the mother church at the time of the Protestant Reformation, and they are going to go back again.

What is remarkable is that as the Protestant

Reformation began in Germany, so the seeds of its destruction were sown in Germany. The "great names" of Biblical Criticism fall strongly on our ears: Wellhausen, Graf, Neibuhr, Bonhoeffer, Delitzsch, Baur. They are all German!

And even this was prophesied long ago:

Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city! She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction Her prophets are light and treacherous persons; her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the Law (Zeph. 3:1-4).

The oppressing city here is not Jerusalem--it is Nineveh, the capital of Assyria! (Zeph. 3:1-4). But this prophecy could not have been fulfilled until modern times. Ancient Assyria never had God's Law! When we see that it is in modern Assyria--Germany--that the schools of Biblical Criticism began, it all makes sense. It is they, more than anyone else, who have "done violence to the Law."

As our own theologians have followed their lead our destruction as a nation has been assured.

God's Warning

But God warned us, Through the prophet Hosea, He told us what would happen when we rejected His authority:

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the Law of thy God, I will also forget thy children (Hos. 4:6).

Through the remainder of this prophecy, God warns of a coming national captivity upon our people because they have turned away from the only authority they can trust--His Word.

We can be thankful, however, that the story doesn't end there. Through this time of captivity Israel is going to learn a lot of bitter lessons, and we have the promise that God will bring them back out of it when those lessons are learned. The prophecies tell of the return from captivity, and of the Wonderful World Tomorrow.

To what authority are men going to look in that day?

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3).

May God haste that day.

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