

ORTHODOX APOLOGETIC THEOLOGY



By Ivan M. Andreyev

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“On December 30, 1976, reposed an outstanding churchman and statesman, doctor of psychiatry, pedagogue, lecturer, publicist and author of a series of theological textbooks,” states the introductory line in the *Memoriam* published in *Orthodox Life*, about Professor Ivan M. Andreyevsky. He is mentioned often as one of the shining lights of Orthodox theology. His name is often heard together with Archbishop Averky Taushev, Archbishop Vitaly Maximenko, the philosopher Archimandrite Constantine Zaitsev Professor I.M Kontzevitch, Nicholas Talberg, and the theologian Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky.

“And within me, I fervently said to the Lord, ‘Lord, do not give me anything; take away from me all my earthly prosperity, only do not deprive me of the joy of communion with Thee, or, if it is possible to preserve it forever in one’s life, then give me a heartfelt memory, give me the means of preserving till death the memory of this present blessed moment of awareness of thy Holy Spirit.’”

Cover Art: The icon of the Trinity was painted around 1410 by Andrei Rublev- It depicts the three angels who visited Abraham at the Oak of Mamre - but is often interpreted as an icon of the Trinity. It is sometimes called the icon of the Old Testament Trinity. The image is full of symbolism - designed to take the viewer into the Mystery of the Trinity. Investigate this icon further here:

http://www.wellsprings.org.uk/rublevs_icon/trinity.htm

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1. A short historical review of Apologetic works.

Religious delusions (paganism, pantheism, atheism, etc.) appear in the history of mankind just as early as other delusions (scientific, philosophic, political, etc.). We find refutations of them in profound antiquity. For instance, in the book Wisdom of Solomon, there are elements of cosmological proofs of the existence of God, and a historical refutation of the falsity of idol worship. In general, the Bible concerned itself very little with questions of proof of the existence of God since in biblical times very few doubted the existence of God. Belief in God then was so clear and strong that every doubt in His existence seemed simply lunatic or another form of psychic abnormality and irrationality.

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God (Ps. 13: 1). Ancient Greek philosophy, mainly in the persons of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, contributed much that is valuable for defending the foundations of religious beliefs and for criticizing atheistic and materialistic teachings.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in view of the supernatural signs and miracles performed by Him, had no need to turn to so-called scientific and philosophical proofs to corroborate His teachings. For that time, faith alone was enough. Faith was summarized in a heartfelt reception of that which the extraordinary Teacher spoke about.

What could Christ's answer be to Pilate's question: What is truth? When He Himself — Truth incarnate — (I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life) stood before the questioner?

The Apostles and early Christians preached Christ crucified and resurrected as a veritable fact, and were not in need of any scientific and philosophical structures and dialectical subtleties. And preachers themselves, in the name of Christ, performed miracles through their faith. At first, Christianity was accepted only through faith, and only later did faith itself become an object of reflection.

Appearing in a Judeo-pagan world, Christianity, in defending itself from attack, was forced to disclose the delusions of the pagans and Hebrews. It was necessary to prove to the pagans that the Christian God is the true God; and to the Hebrews that Christ is the Messiah promised by the prophets. In answer to the persecutions of the governing powers, the Christians had to refute defamation and prove that they not only were not injurious to the government, but on the contrary, were very useful, in consequence of the high moral basis of the new teaching. This explains the character of early Christian Apologetics.

The most ancient Christian Apologetic belongs to Quadratus (written to the Roman Emperor Hadrian in 126 A.D.) The historian Eusebius cites a fragment on it in which Quadratus witnesses that some of those resurrected by Christ lived up to his own day.

Since Christianity was being accepted not only by ordinary and unlettered people, but also by people highly educated in philosophy and acquainted with all of the Hellenistic wisdom, the latter most naturally began to defend the new Christian truths in the light of rationalistic, philosophical achievements of honorable, worldly knowledge. In answer to the criticism of Christianity by the pagan savants and philosophers Flavius Arrianus (+ 96 A.D.), Lucian of Samasata (120 - 200 A.D.), Celsus (2nd century), and later the Neoplatonists Porphyrius (233 - 304), Philostratus (+ 217), Hierocles (+ 305) and others, Christianity put forth remarkable apologists from among former pagan philosophers and savants who had accepted Christianity. Among them were such as Apollos (mentioned by Apostle Paul), Justin the Philosopher (100 - 165), his pupil Tatian, Quadratus (mentioned above as the first apologist), Aristides, (the full text of whose apology was found by Randall Harrison in 1889), the philosopher Athenagoras, then Pantaenus (formerly a Stoic philosopher), Clement of Alexandria and others.

In the struggle between the young Christian idea and the age old pagan philosophy, an urgent need became apparent: to show forth Christianity as a coherent system of thought or philosophy with a reasonable argumentation which could be contrasted to and could respond to pagan philosophical systems. In connection with this, a new problem appeared. It was necessary to decide in principle the question of the relationship of intellect to faith and philosophy to Christianity, in order to resolve the perplexing questions which were arising concerning the proper place of science in regard to Christian faith. The appearance of new heresies also suggested the same problem. In view of this, some Fathers and teachers of the Church began to deem it necessary to reveal the dogmas of faith with the help of logical methods and to fashion them into a system, setting up against the false gnosticism of heretical schools the true gnosticism of the Christian Church. These teachers of the Church gave a wide scope to their intellect in investigating and defining the dogmas of faith. Other teachers and church writers, believing the cause of heresy to lie in the heretics' faulty understanding of the role of human intellect and therefore in their improper application of it to Christian dogmas, endeavored to expound Church teaching using only Revelation as a basis.

The main defender of intellect and philosophy was the so-called Alexandrian School. In Alexandria, that center of learning, with its schools and institutes of learning eclipsing famous Athens, the Christian Church for the first time mastered school learning and took advantage of philosophy for the service of faith. Working here were philosophers who had turned to Christianity, among whom was Clement of Alexandria. Clement, in a definitive manner, solved the question of the relationship between Christianity and philosophy, faith and science, in terms of a full recognition of the participation of honorable intellect in matters of faith. According to Clement, there is no knowledge without faith, and no faith without knowledge. He contended for the indispensability of a faith revealed by learning and supplied with possible proofs, and for an internal bond of faith and knowledge.

Knowledge obedient to faith, and faith strengthened by knowledge, both accompanying each other, comprise a beneficial accord between themselves. Knowledge succeeds faith; it does not precede it. Clement of Alexandria, the first to attempt to prove Christian theology through knowledge and philosophy, can be called the ancestor of Apologetics as a science.

The same thoughts about the benefits of science and the participation of intellect in matters of faith were also spread by Origen, a pupil of Clement. The thesis of Origen, *On First Principles*, was the first attempt to create a theological system in which the dogmas of faith are linked, argued, and elucidated by general thought.

A sharp contrast to the Alexandrian school was presented by the North-African school. The most characteristic representation of it was a Carthaginian priest, Tertullian. He sharply denied all that Clement and Origen affirmed. Having accepted Christianity at a mature age, he gave himself to it with the passion of his ardent nature — to fanaticism. Tertullian completely denied the importance of the intellect in uncovering the dogmas of faith. In his opinion, "heresy is the daughter of philosophy." "Believing in Jesus Christ and the Gospel, we have no need to believe in anything else but that." "The lust of curiosity concerning objects of faith must be completely rejected; the passion toward science must be suppressed by a yearning for salvation." "I believe because it is an absurdity."

Neither Origen nor Tertullian were recognized by the Church as Fathers and unimpeachable Orthodox Church teachers. They were even subjected to censure and condemnation. But the influence of some of their works was considerable. The Holy Fathers and teachers of the Church, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and Gregory of Nyssa, were partly educated on Origen. St. Cyprian of Carthage was a pupil of Tertullian.

The influence of the Alexandrian school proved to be considerably stronger. In the 4th century, the Christians of the East had neither a fear of intellect, an apprehension of science, nor an enmity towards pagan philosophers. St. John Chrysostom was a pupil of the pagan scholar Livianus, a teacher of eloquence. St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory the Theologian received their higher education in pagan Athens.

All Greek theology during the brilliant, lively and creative age of the Ecumenical Councils, to a certain extent, shows the mark of classic Greek philosophical methods. This period ends with "The Fountain of Knowledge," St. John of Damascus (7th century).

The extremely brusque, universal dogmatic formula of Tertullian, "Credo quia absurdum" ("I believe because it is an absurdity"), finally was not accepted either in the East or in the West.

The intellect was acknowledged also as having been given to man by God, and for this reason harmony was reached between true scientific-philosophical knowledge and true religious faith, and the motto of Christian Apologetics became the affirmation: "I believe because it is not an absurdity." In the history of Apologetics it is impossible not to note the great importance of St. Dionysius of Alexandria (often called the Great), a prominent philosopher and theologian of the 3rd century. In his work, "Of Nature," is contained a deadly criticism of the teaching of Epicurius about the origin of the earth as the consequence of a collision of atoms. Developing the ideas of Origen against materialistic atheism, St. Dionysius of Alexandria proved with exceeding conviction that the relationship of atoms is possible only on condition that they are subordinated to the universal governing force of Divine Providence.

The great Fathers and teachers of the Church of the epoch of the Ecumenical Councils were not only firm in faith and devoted to the Gospel and of holy life, but were also widely educated in science and possessed a philosophical depth of thought and a dialectical delicacy.

Notwithstanding the greater practical aim of the Latin West, the limitation of its education in comparison to the Hellenized East, and the weakness of its interest in delicate abstractions, the West also did not follow Tertullian, its first teacher and author, but followed the eastern teachers. For a long time, the West learned from the Christian East, as once stern Rome learned from subjugated Greece.

In the epoch of the Ecumenical Councils, great apologetic significance was possessed in the East by many works of St. Athanasius the Great (296 - 373), St. Basil the Great (329 - 379), St. Cyril of Alexandria (+ 444 A.D.), the Blessed Theodoret (+ 457 A.D.), and others. At this time theologians active in the field of Apologetics in the West were St. Vincent of Lerins (+ 450 A.D.), Lactantius (+ 325 A.D.), and especially the Blessed Augustine (354 - 430), that greatest theologian and apologist of the West. In his work *The City of God*, making use of the method of Neo-Platonic philosophy, he demonstrated that the best form of a state is found in the heavenly kingdom of the Christian Church. The Blessed Augustine passionately defended intellect and recommended dialectics for theologians. The creative activity of the Christian East flourished during the era of the Ecumenical Councils.

During the Middle Ages the attention of the historian begins to be attracted by the West. Anselm of Canterbury (1033 - 1109) gave a so-called ontological proof of the existence of God which later was highly regarded by such gifted philosophers as Descartes, Leibnitz and Hegel. Thomas Aquinas (1227 - 1274) composed a complete philosophic-apologetic system which to this day is the basis for the teaching of Apologetics in Catholic schools.

The predominant direction in the Middle Ages was the so-called scholasticism, which turned its attention mainly to dogmatics, and subjected all church dogmas to a trivially fine, dry, rationalistic analysis. Besides Thomas Aquinas, the more noted Scholastics were: Albertus the Great (1193 - 1280),

Alexander de Hales (+ 1245), and John Duns (Duns Scotus) (+ 1308). But side by side with Scholastics, the West also found mysticism, of whom the most vivid representatives were Bernard of Clairvaux (+ 1153) and Bonaventure (+ 1274).

Amid the mass of new ideas and theories in the providence of philosophy and science during the epoch of the so-called Renaissance, the western theologians could not at first come to an appraisal. They laughed at the affirmation by Columbus of the spherical shape of the earth and the existence of the antipodes, and persecuted the gifted Copernicus and Galileo for their discoveries. Some of the western theologians even fought against the observations and results of exact natural investigations. The Eastern (Orthodox) Church, however, was blameless in regard to hostility against the progress of science. As to this, there exists impartial, historical and scientific testimony of representatives of western science themselves. For instance, the famous Draper, in his well-known historic research, "The History of the Struggle Between Religion and Science," (there is a Russian translation entitled, The History of the Relationship Between Catholicism and Science,) says: "The Greek Church was innocent of opposing science. On the contrary, she always treated knowledge favorably. She maintained a respect for truth, no matter where it came from. Noticing contradictions between her own interpretations of the revelations of truth and the discoveries of science, she always expected that satisfactory explanations and reconciliation would follow, and in this she was not mistaken." Concerning this, Professor N. P. Rozhdestvensky, in his Christian Apologetics, notes in complete fairness: "It can be said with extreme probability, that all important collisions of western theology with natural science would not have taken place if the western church had remained in communion with the Orthodox Church and had remained true to the breadth of the latter's view concerning the relationship between faith and science, a view which results from the firm conviction in the immutability of the eternal truth of Christianity."

A new period inflicted a heavy blow to the papacy and the scholasticism of the Middle Ages, as a result of which Catholic scholastic theology fell into decline. But this decline did not mean the fall of theology in general.

The German Reformation stimulated new religious interests and evoked a new theological science, broad and diverse, and receptive to all sorts of new scientific influences and, as a result of this, divided itself into many schools and directions.

The Holy Scripture was again recognized as the main source of religious knowledge and all theology; the Bible, forgotten in the Middle Ages, again acquired respect and interest. But with this the authority of the Church was shaken, and a new Protestant dogma began to be built on the denial of the authority of the Holy Fathers and teachers of the Church, the Ecumenical Councils and general intellectual reason, (which Luther regarded as blind and dull in its nature). In the opinion of Protestants, struggling with Catholic rationalism, an understanding of the Holy Scriptures should be guided not by the intellect, but by a spontaneous feeling. This gave rise to an extreme subjectivism, which soon evoked a fully natural and rightful reaction in defense of intellect. But the principle of freedom of investigation and interpretation of the Bible, not guarded by the guidance and authority of the Ecumenical intellect of the Church, led to the development of a new Protestant rationalism, differing from Catholic rationalism in the arbitrariness of its individual intellect.

Based on this rationalistic ground, an immense Protestant scholasticism soon rose, not submitting to the old type of the Middle Ages in the scrupulousness of its definitions and refinements of analysis. Concerning Apologetics, the Reformation forced the defense of general, more important truths to retreat to a secondary importance before the defense of private religious convictions.

An impulse to the further development of Apologetics was the movement toward so-called deism.

Deism is a religious, philosophical teaching denying Revelation and Divine Providence. The progenitor of deism was the Englishman, Lord Cherberrry, in the 17th century. Deism, in the form of a recognition of God as Creator and a denial of God as Divine Providence, was especially propagated in the 18th century. Belonging to the list of deists were Shaftesbury (1671 - 1713), Tindal (1657 - 1733), Voltaire (1694 - 1778), Rousseau (1712 - 1778). (Kant and Darwin, with certain reservations, can also be rated deists.) Many deists defended some general Christian truths very strongly and intelligently and so provided weapons for the struggle with unbelief. But for authentic Christian Apologetics this was not enough. Arguments began among apologists. Some thought it possible to interpret and base Christianity altogether on reason, for instance. Tindal; others, conversely, insisted it is above reason. From among all these savants and philosophers came quarrelling and often the corruption of Christianity. Distinguishing himself is the remarkable personality of Pascal (1623 - 1662), a highly gifted French mathematician and a deeply religious thinker, the great apologist of the 17th century. (For a good example, see his *Thoughts on Religion*.)

The philosophy of Descartes (the French mathematician and philosopher who died in 1650), which because of his idealistic character accepted the innateness of ideas and a super-sensible world, had a kinship with Christian views and therefore was used by theologians interested in the defense of the Christian faith, especially his new deliberations in connection with ontological proof of the existence of God.

The principal enemy fought by German Apologetics in the 17th and 18th centuries was the pantheism of Spinoza (1631 - 1677). A great deal of merit in the battle with him belongs to the German philosopher, Leibnitz (+ 1716). The philosophy of Leibnitz, in many ways, assisted the work of a scientific defense of Christianity. In contrast to the gloomy pantheism of Spinoza, it presented a bright philosophical view, examining the world as a creation of the Almighty, All-Wise, All-Blessed Creator. Against the mechanical theories of the formation of the world, it presented the harmonious system of theological outlook. Against the hypotheses of accidental world order, it presented the teaching of predetermined harmony. Against the atheistic theories, it presented philosophical proof of the existence of God, especially the cosmological and theological, and also the truth of the immortality of the soul. The philosophy of Leibnitz therefore gave ammunition for the disproof of materialism, skepticism, and, in part, deism. The philosopher himself took care that his basic philosophic views were reconciled with Christian teaching on God's Providence, Revelation, Redemption, the freedom of man's will, and the agreement of faith and intellect.

Near the end of the 18th century, the German philosopher Immanuel Kant gave a critique of all proofs of the existence of God which were then known, and then proposed his own new proof (a special form of ethical proof of the trust of the existence of God). Just as the critique itself, so the new experiment in proving this truth evoked a great rise of interest in Apologetics and contributed to the growth as a particular theological science.

In the first half of the 19th century there was a strong current in both science and philosophy which tried to reconcile knowledge and religion. The authority of the learned Cuvier (1769 - 1832) illuminated in natural science the religious understanding of nature. The idealistic systems of German philosophy gave material for a philosophical foundation for these attempts. But the spirit of liberalism and rationalism, penetrating from philosophy to theology, deeply perverted the very principles of Protestant theological investigations. Having conquered scholasticism, Protestant rationalism armed itself against Church dogma in general and even against the Holy Scripture. Objections were raised against the godliness of the origin of Christianity; the human origin of the Holy Scripture was asserted. The miracles, prophecies and, in general, everything supernatural began to be denied. The Holy

Scripture began to be studied just like any other ancient literature. Philosophy began to subordinate theology to itself. Dogmatics were adapted according to the philosophic principles of Kant (1724 - 1804), Fichte (1762 - 1814), Schelling (1775 - 1854) and Hegel (1770 - 1831). The historic church understanding of dogma, the fruit of ten centuries of Ecumenical intellect and experience of the saints, began to be ignored.

Especially great was the harm brought by the German Protestant negative school of historical criticism, known under the name of the New Tubingen School of Theology, the organizers of which were Strauss (1808 - 1874) and Bauer (1809 - 1882). This school, having gathered from the past century all that was done by negative criticism in denying the authenticity of biblical books and scriptural miracles, etc., added considerably to these negative results. Armed by them, it took the field not only against Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition, but also against the Person of the Godly Founder of Christianity Himself. Books by Strauss (1808 - 1874), Schenkel (1813 - 1885) and others in support of these ideas began to appear, among them *The Life of Jesus* by Renan (1823 - 1892) and *The Substance of Christianity* by Feuerbach (1804 - 1872).

The philosophical system of Hegel had a powerful and long lasting influence on the method of western scientific, theological Apologetics. This is explained by the fact that Hegel, in his system, gave primary importance to the religious-philosophical outlook which concerned itself with the scientific basis for religious truths, and sharply objected to those theories which denied the benefits and even the possibility of the application of a scientific method to theology (Kant, Jacobi (1743 - 1819), Schleiermacher (1768 - 1834)).

For many Protestant theologians, the authority of Hegel became such as was Plato's to neo-Platonism and Aristotle to the scholasticism of the Middle Ages. But the efforts to conciliate Christian theology with the rationalistic system of Hegel brought sorry results: God Himself was transformed into a mere idea, and Christian theism was turned into deism and pantheism.

In the history of Catholic theology such waverings as those seen in Protestant theology have not been recorded. Thomas Aquinas remains till now the greatest authority of Catholic dogmatics and Apologetics.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, the struggle with Kant, Hegel, the materialism of Feuerbach and Karl Marx, the positivism of A. Comte (1798 - 1857) and other philosophic movements, hostile or foreign to Christianity, led to the appearance of many valuable philosophical works, having also a great apologetic meaning.

A profound crisis and, following it, the unique development of physico-mathematical sciences in the 20th century also produced a lot of new apologetic material.

One of the greatest contemporary physicists, mathematicians, astronomers and thinkers, James Jeans (1877 - 1946), drawing upon the colossal amount of material gathered by atomic research in the last half century, arrives at the deduction that the matter now found in the universe, "did not exist endlessly," and closes his deliberation with the statement, "the hand of God evoked it."

The defense of particular truths and the refutation of many particular theories was chiefly the work of Catholic theologians, while the general defense of Christian truths became mainly the work of Protestant theologians.

Orthodox Apologetics, however, has always tried to give an intellectual synthesis of both general and particular apologetic problems, using as a cornerstone the positive method of building the organically whole Christian world-view. The literature of Apologetics is unusually vast, diverse and almost boundless. But, from a strictly Orthodox point of view, a fully complete, whole and deeply absorbing textbook of Apologetics has not yet been prepared.

Among the various works on Apologetics written in the 19th and 20th centuries, worthy of note are: Ulrici (1806 - 1884), *God and Nature*; F. Hettinger (1819 - 1890), *Apology of Christianity*; and J. Ebrard (1818 - 1888), *Apologetics*. All of these works are also translated into Russian.

Of the Orthodox Russian works in Apologetics, noteworthy are the classic work of the Moscow Metropolitan, Macarius (Bulgakov), *An Introduction to Orthodox Theology*, (6th edition, St. Petersburg, 1897); a remarkable two volume textbook for religious academies by Professor N. P. Rozhdestvensky, *Christian Apologetics — A Course of Fundamental Theology* (2nd edition, St. Petersburg, 1893); and an original investigation of dogmatic theology from an apologetic point of view, by the Professor V. Rev. P. Y. Svetlov, *Experiment of Apologetical Exposition of Orthodox Christian Doctrine*, Vol. I and Vol. II (Kiev, 1898). These remarkable works have not lost their meaning even up to the present time.

Also deserving attention are some other Russian textbooks. For instance, Father Augustine 's, *A Manual of Fundamental Theology*; Professor V. Rev. D.A. Tichomirov 's, *A Course in Fundamental Theology*, St. Petersburg, 1887; Professor V. Rev. Kudryavtsev 's *Short Course of Lectures in Orthodox Theology* (2nd edition, Moscow, 1898); Piantnitsky 's *Fundamental Theology*; Eleonsky 's *Brief Report on Fundamental Theology*; Petropavlovsky 's *In Defense of Christian Faith Against Unbelief* and several others.

2. The nature of religion.

The word religion as explained by Lactantius, Blessed Jerome and Blessed Augustine is derived from the word “religare” — to tie, to unite, or as Blessed Augustine emphasizes, possibly from “religere” — to reunite. Lactantius defines the nature of religion as a union of man with God. Blessed Augustine defined it as a reunion of man with God.

There is no doubt that every religion presents in itself a tie, a union or reunion and communion with a higher world or a higher being, with a higher absolute worth, that is, with that which is called God. At the foundation of all religions lies faith. Faith is an intricate, syncretic (that is, syncretic at first) capability of the mind, feeling and will (the triune harmony of all these spiritual powers of man), directed to understanding that which is inaccessible for the mind alone. Where it is enough for the efforts of the mind alone to understand something, there is no need to turn to faith. But in a case where the mind alone is incapable and helpless, faith is essential.

Faith can be just or righteous (faith in the Truth) and it can be mistaken or deluded (faith in a falsehood). Where and in what is the criterion of true faith? This criterion consists of the so-called pragmatic justification or accusation of that which is accepted in faith by life itself. By their fruits ye shall know them (Matt. 7: 20). The intellect can never strictly-logically, strictly-scientifically, mathematically-accurately prove that which was perceived with the aid of faith. Where such proof is possible, faith is unnecessary. It is not necessary to have faith in something which can be known simply. The intellect also can never exactly disprove that which became known by true faith. If such disproof is possible, then faith was a mistake. In short, only that can be believed which can not be disproved, and the possibility of which can be proved.

From this it is plain that the basic truths of religion are inaccessible to the mind alone, and, therefore, perceived through faith, can and must be defended as indisputably possible. Fundamental Theology or Apologetics does engage in proving their problematical authenticity.

Every sensible, normal and critically thinking person, developing spiritually, sooner or later sets before himself a whole line of questions about the nature, meaning and aim of life, personally as well as for all mankind and for the whole universe. What is life? What is the origin of all existing things? Is there a God, Creator of all things, or does the world exist without a Creator? If there is a God, can we have a possible communion with Him? Does there exist another world, besides the visible one? What is matter? What is conscience? What is the spirit? What is “I”? What is death?

Does the soul exist and does it possess immortality? In what does the meaning and aim of the existence of the world and man consist? What will be the end of world history and creation in general? What is good and evil? Can the absolute Truth be known? How must one live, and what must one aspire to?

The answers to these questions comprise the religious foundation of every world-view. In the building of this foundation, all the spiritual forces of man take part: first of all the will (will to Truth), then the senses and the mind.

The most important question which must be answered in building this foundation is: Is there an absolute Truth (that is, God), and can It be comprehended? For if there is no absolute Truth, then life has no meaning and no aim.

The solution of this religious problem can be many-sided:

Skepticism is a doubt of everything; included in this is the doubt of the existence of God. His answer

as to the question of God (the absolute Truth) is such: "I don't know." Criticism (Kant) is a declaration that the absolute Truth (God) is not perceptible. His answer: "I cannot know" shows it is impossible to prove exactly by science. Positivism (Comte) is a declaration that mankind in its growth passes through three stages: theological, when faith predominates, metaphysical, when speculative philosophizing predominates, and positive, when science predominates. The answers of positivism as to the existence of God and the absolute Truth is such: "I don't want to know this." Atheism is the assertion that there is no God. Atheism is itself a belief, since to know that there is no God is impossible. Atheism is faith that there is no God, a faith in an un-God. Pantheism is a belief that God and nature are one and the same thing. This cannot be known, but can be believed and is therefore also a kind of faith. Deism is a belief in God only as the originator and Creator of the world and its laws, but denies God as providentially caring for His creation. Theism is a belief in God not only as the Creator and original cause, but also as the Intellect of the universe: Man can be in communion with God through the Sacraments and prayer. The most complete aspect of theism is represented by Orthodox Christianity. Let us briefly analyze these views.

Skepticism is fruitless. It is appeased in its "I don't know," and does not make a moral or spiritual effort of the will to perceive the absolute Truth (God). Consistent skepticism must question its own personal doubts; that is, it becomes completely impotent in questions of any kind of perception of the world and man.

Criticism in the final analysis is only the recognition of the limitation of scientific knowledge and rational method.

Positivism presents in itself a combination of a peculiar skepticism (theological and philosophical) with a naïve belief in science. Cutting itself off from the most important and urgent queries of man's spirit, positivism emasculates itself as a world-view, and changes into a conglomeration of scientific knowledge suitable only for the satisfaction of shallow practical questions of life. Positivism suffers through the absence of a will to the Truth.

Atheism, being a belief in the absence of God and absolute Truth, becomes entangled in a mass of contradictions and is incapable of building not only a complete world-view, but even a more or less satisfactory theory of matter, which it tries to idolize, imputing to it absolute virtues.

Pantheism, identifying God and nature as one, also is enmeshed in insoluble contradictions, since it is unable to explain the origin, aim or meaning of the world and man, nor the expedience of the universe, the origin of evil, or moral law.

Deism, denying the Providence and Revelation of God, cannot give any answers to the most urgent questions of man's spirit.

Only Theism, and, especially in most complete form — the true Christian religion — gives the most orderly, complete, deep, wide, reasoned, proved, convincing, and, at the same time, the most bright, joyous and vital world-view.

At the foundation of the Christian religion lies a thirst for Truth and a will to Truth. There must be absolute Truth, and I want to know it no matter what happens! From this act of will (the will to Truth) is begun the building of a Christian world-view!

After this ethical effort of the will, the honest critical mind of a seeker immediately and categorically declares: But man, being a part of the whole world, not being the Creator, but a creature of this world, and limited by the time of birth and death and the length of his life, is incapable of independently knowing the whole, complete, boundless world, to comprehend the thought, ideas and

aims of its Creator and to understand the reason and aim of the life of the world and of his own life. For an insignificant part cannot perceive the absolute whole!

The absolute Truth is incomprehensible to man ! However, there is just one condition under which the recognition of this Truth is possible ! If there exists an Absolute, All-Perfect, Higher Being (God), Who is the Individual, the Originator of everything, the Creator, the Conceiver of the world, and, if this absolute Being (God), desires to reveal the absolute truth to man, then, and only then, can this Truth become accessible to our consciousness. In other words, the absolute truth is either unknowable (in which case life is meaningless), or can be known only through God 's revelation to people ! The absolute Truth is revealed by God ! But does such revelation of God exist? Yes, it exists, and it is precisely this which comprises the foundation of the Orthodox faith !

Christ spoke of this clearly, plainly and definitely: I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14: 6). That is, I am the Method (Way) of perceiving the Truth; I am Myself the incarnate Truth (everything I say is the Truth, for I reveal to people the will of God, My Father), and I am the Life (without Me there cannot be life). How shall we regard these words of Christ? We can believe them or disbelieve them! Man has a free will and on his free will depends the choice of what to believe ! If we choose to disbelieve, then this means we have chosen "to believe in naught."

It is extremely important to understand, therefore, clearly and definitely, that nothing interferes with the possibility of accepting a faith in God, in Christ, and in God 's revelations !

For one who proceeds with faith in God, there are no contradictions or hindrances in the process of building a complete world-view; quite the contrary, it is precisely here that the only possibility of knowing the absolute Truth, which man so thirsts to know, is revealed !

Only when one's knowledge is merely a superficial knowledge (which, in the words of Bacon, often draws one away from God) does there arise before man 's intellect imaginary contradictions between faith and knowledge, between religion and science. However, with a deeply penetrating knowledge (which, again according to Bacon, draws one near to God), these imaginary contradictions disappear without a trace. This is why Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Descartes, Pascal, Leibnitz, Newton, Pasteur, Roentgen, Lomonosov, Mendeleev, Pavlov, Einstein, Bergson, Planck, Jeans, and other famous world scholars of all times and peoples were deeply religious people !

Ordinary people, not tempted by science and philosophy, but being close to nature and having clean hearts, also believe in God.

Atheists, however, in most cases are half-educated people. Even among scholars there are many such people, perhaps highly qualified in their own narrow field, but incompletely educated and philosophically illiterate. An atheist is always defective — either in intellect, in moral philosophy or in will (wicked will).

3. The causes and consequences of the atheism.

Atheists are people who do not believe in the existence of a Supreme Being, called God. Some do not believe in God because no one ever told them about Him, and they never came across a thought about God themselves. Others do not reject the existence of God in principle, though they live so as if He and His Law are not for them. These can be counted as practicing atheists. Finally, there are people who principally reject the existence of God, and who wish to justify their disbelief by scientific or philosophical arguments. These can be called convinced atheists. Theoretical, principal atheism often turns into active theomachism, implanted by violence, as it occurs in communist countries.

Theoretical atheism is in its essence an anti-religion, because it is also based on belief. As religions are formed on faith in the existence of God, so atheism builds on the belief that He does not exist. Indeed, if God is a spirit, then how can material devices “prove” that He does not exist? This is comparable to rejecting the existence of the Earth’s magnetic field on the basis of barometric readings. Atheism replaces belief in God with a belief in self-sufficiency of matter and laws of nature.

As a mass phenomenon, atheism has come into existence over the last two hundred years. It is the result of separation of humans from direct contact with nature, which occurred when significant amounts of population started to move from countryside to towns. Psychology believes that humans have an inherent desire to comprehend the cause and purpose of existence. Contemplating the fundamental questions of existence, man comes to faith in the Maker of the Universe. Nature helps man on his way to the Deity, for at his every step nature’s beauty, splendor, harmony and purposefulness speak of God, His omnipotence and goodness. In the past people used to be closer to nature, and an atheist was a rare bird. It is common knowledge that since pre-historic times the idea of a supreme being has been widely spread among people at all stages of development. “Look at the face of the earth,” wrote Plutarch (1st century AD), — and you will see townships without fortification, sciences or hierarchy, you will see people without permanent dwelling, not knowing money, having no idea of the fine arts, but you will not find any one human community without a belief in a Divinity.” This testimony is still in force when applied to people who live close to nature, though their concepts of God may be imperfect and childishly naive.

On the other hand, the life of modern townspeople flows in daily fuss, traffic noise, a jungle of concrete, smoke and crime. It gives no noble, lofty feelings; quite on the contrary, it mutilates and spoils any spiritual properties. It is therefore not surprising that atheism, and a variety of psychiatric deviations, propagate predominantly among megalopolis inhabitants.

Religion-less and anti-religious teaching systems in a few modern educational institutions also facilitate the spread of atheism. The Biblical narrative about the origins of the world and man is often criticized in textbooks and classrooms. Instead of adding data to expand on the Bible’s information, scientific discoveries are set in opposition to the inspired truths, in order to forge a conflict between faith and knowledge. Sometimes, teachers or professors ridicule the principles of faith and moral in the open. Not many youths have enough independence of thought to see that their educators’ anti-religion assaults are not based on objective scientific data, but on private opinions of people reluctant to religion. These students’ parents need a lot of knowledge and skill to save their belief in God.

Sin casts gloom over intelligence and dulls conscience, and unruly living tends to loosen faith in God. It happens that youths, brought up in religious families and ardently believing during childhood, give up to temptation of sinful pleasures and get stuck in the spider web of fleshly passions. After several years of sinful life, they retain very little of their former innocence, modesty and goodness. They become impudent, evil and shameless. Religious doubts arise alongside vice, and can lead to

faithlessness, unless youths recollect themselves and turn to God in repentance.

One consequence of atheism is despair. It is not usually recognized by non-believers, but it takes roots in his subconscious and begins to determine his style of life. Once there is no God, there is no afterlife, no reward for labors and good works. That is why an atheist, while still alive, has to hastily use all life's available pleasures. Once there is no God, moral law is relative and man defines the difference between good and evil. Of course, laws of state, shame, fear or merely practical concerns may to an extent restrain the desire to grasp the pleasures and delights of life by any means, but they would not change an essentially atheistic mindset. Beasts and insects can be cruel to their prey. But there is no creature more dangerous and brutal than a man without supreme moral guidance. A man like that can cause harm not for benefit, but for some perverse pleasure. He takes revenge on others because of his own bad luck. But he is unfortunate because he has no future. This explains why the most senseless and brutal crimes are committed in countries governed by atheism.

How can man come to faith in God, or strengthen belief in His existence? Philosophy and apologetics have the so-called "arguments for the existence of God." They say that admission of the existence of God logically comes out of observation of the order of nature, spiritual qualities of humans and historical facts. Retelling these arguments here would take too much space. We only wish to say that no external proof of the existence of God can substitute for man's convincing inner spiritual experience. God is a Spiritual Being and may not be studied by any regular scientific methods, but the human soul, created in His image and after His likeness, can be in touch with Him. When a man makes an effort and throws off the darkness of vanity, in which his life is depleted, and takes his heart to follow the Divine light that surrounds, then he can see and hear God. This intimate sense of Divinity cannot be proven or explained to others because it is in the realm of inward experience. Whoever does not have such experience will not realize what you are speaking about.

This personal experience of fellowship with Divine Grace becomes to man the most convincing proof of the existence of God. It obliges him to change his moral life and to learn to sacrifice himself for the sake of obedience to the Supreme Will. Many people are afraid to bother their consciences, and are not willing to give up their sinful lifestyle, and therefore make no attempt to improve themselves and have fellowship with the light of the Divinity. But those who are in fellowship with this light find in it a source of spiritual power, peacefulness and heavenly joy.

4. Religion and Morality.

For a deeper understanding of the essence of religion, an explanation should be given of its relationship to other facets of the spiritual life of man. Most important is an explanation of the relationship of religion to morality, to science and to the arts.

The first and main relationship between religion and morality is the relationship of their inalienable reciprocal action. Religion and morality are tightly bound together. Religion is not possible without morality, and morality is not possible without religion. Faith without deeds is dead. With such a faith only demons believe (believe and tremble). True faith, however (alive, not dead), cannot be without good deeds. As a naturally fragrant flower cannot but be sweet-smelling, so true faith cannot but be testified to by good morality. In its turn morality, too, without a religious foundation and religious light, cannot exist and must certainly wither, like a plant deprived of a root, moisture and sun. Religion without morality is similar to a sterile fig tree; whereas morality without religion is similar to a fig tree which has been cut down. However, the close and unbreakable reciprocal tie between religion and morality does not at all make them identical. In order for this to be understood, it is necessary that along with their relationship, we show their difference. Even many prominent philosophers did not understand this difference.

For instance, Kant asserted: "Religion in itself or objectively differs in nothing from morality, in that the general objectives of one and the other consist of ethical obligations; the difference between religion and morality is only formal " (The Dispute of the Faculties, 1798). This formal difference, according to Kant, consists in the fact that religion rouses us to regard our ethical obligations not just as the demands of ethical duty, but as godly commandments.

The view that the heart of a religion is in teaching on morality and that all the rest is only its "form " was asserted long ago. Such in essence is the teaching of Buddha and of Confucius. In ancient Greek philosophy, the Stoics regarded morality higher than religion. Leo Tolstoy also identified religion with morality.

The difference between a religious feeling and a moral feeling may be understood if we focus on the differing psychology of these experiences and on the difference in their objectives. An ethical feeling is characterized by a movement toward the ethically good, that is, "right " or "appropriate " conduct; a religious feeling, however, tends towards the infinite, that which is perfect in all respects toward the Absolute. The aim of the former is the satisfaction of the demands of moral duty and a longing for ethical perfection; the aim of the latter is unity with God.

Christianity asserts categorically that without the help of God it is impossible to do anything, even to live: Without Me you can do nothing (John 15: 5). Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up (Matt. 15: 13). I am the way, the truth and the life (John 14: 6).

Therefore, between religion and morality there exists the same relationship as that which exists between life and activity. No activity is possible without life. Religion gives life. And only on condition of this life is moral activity possible. Only through God can there be life. Without God life becomes death. The ideal of Christian morality is religious: Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5: 48).

5. Religion and Science.

True religion and true science, recognizing the limits of the sphere of their competence, can never have contradictions between them. If such contradiction occurs, it means that either religion or science betrayed its principles and became pseudo-religion or pseudo-science.

Faith and knowledge in their very essence are inseparable. It is impossible to surmise that a believing person did not think about the object of his faith and did not know what he believed in; it is impossible that a philosopher or a scholar, while investigating, did not believe, at least, in his intellect. Knowledge is as necessary and lawful for religion as faith is for science. Faith can be indispensable where knowledge is inadequate and helpless. Anything learned through faith should not enter into contradiction without knowledge. True, a contradiction is often imagined. Christian Apologetics, therefore, does engage in resolving these imaginary contradictions between religion and science. The more deeply and thoroughly man studies the sciences and knows the limits of their competence, the more philosophical and theological culture man possesses. Likewise, the more deeply his religious faith is developed, the fewer the imaginary contradictions between faith and knowledge and between religion and science. Of course, faith plays a decidedly greater role in religion than in science. But this is explained primarily by the different objectives of religion and science, each demanding different methods of study. The objective of science is exceptionally elementary in comparison to the objective of religion. Knowledge of the chemical composition of a rock, and knowledge of the meaning and aim of the life of the world and of man, have a different meaning for us.

Religion answers the highest and most intricate inquiries of man's spirit, which science is absolutely helpless in answering. The more highly developed religion is, the more it nurtures a love for knowledge; not, of course, vain knowledge, but true knowledge, which is called spiritual wisdom. The ancient Fathers and teachers of the Church attached great value even to pagan philosophy. In the words of Clement of Alexandria: "Ancient philosophy was the world of godly foresight [in the history of the preparation of the ancient world for Christianity]. It was a necessity for the Greeks as a guide to truth ... a child-guide of the Hellenes to Christ, reflecting in itself the truth even if obscurely and not completely, but in part."

St. Basil the Great, who was a scholar, philosopher and a theologian, said: "In philosophical teaching there was a shadow of revealed truths, a pre-portrayal of Truth shown in the Holy Scripture, a reflection of the light of Christ's truth, similar to the reflection of the sun in water." Of the relationship between faith and knowledge, St. Basil the Great also asserted: "In science faith precedes knowledge." This is profoundly true, since everything most fundamental and initial in scientific knowledge is impossible to prove and is accepted as a basic principle by an act of faith.

St. Gregory the Theologian wrote: "I think that everyone having intelligence will recognize external learning as good, even though many Christians, because of poor understanding, abhor it as an evil art causing a remoteness to God."

If the great Fathers of the Church regarded honest scientific and philosophic knowledge with such deep respect, then, in their turn, the greatest scientific scholars regarded religious faith with deep esteem and reverence. True knowledge is incompatible with pride. Humility is an indispensable condition in the possibility of perceiving Truth. Only a humble scholar, like a humble religious thinker, always remembering the words of the Saviour Without Me you can do nothing (John 15: 5), and I am the way and the truth and the life (John 14: 6), is capable of going in the correct way (method) toward perceiving Truth. For God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble (James 4: 6).

It is of great significance that on the church of the Moscow University shone the words: "The Light of

Christ enlightens all.”

The miracles.

Religion acknowledges miracles. But some scientists reject the possibility of miracles, regarding them as contradictory to the laws of nature. Often such scholars assert that miracles appear to be either fiction, fraud or a phenomenon which science cannot at present explain, but will certainly be explained scientifically later on. What is unintelligible today might be intelligible and explainable tomorrow.

Science, setting for itself the problem of an exact, objective proof of phenomena investigated experimentally, is fully correct in approaching miraculous phenomena in an attempt to scientific enlightenment. It is without doubt true that often so-called miraculous phenomena prove to be not at all miraculous. A fiction or deceit in such cases is lawfully revealed through a scientific method of verification. It is also undoubtedly true that many phenomena, not understood at the present time, may be scientifically explained at some future time. But the problem of a miracle is not fully explained by this.

It is necessary, therefore, first of all, to define what in religion is called a miracle. A miracle is a phenomenon which is unexplainable not only at the present time but, in general, can never be fully explained merely from a scientific point of view. The philosophical exploration of a miracle, therefore, arrives at the question: Is a miracle possible? In other words, is such a phenomenon possible which cannot be explained from the point of view of science?

Very often atheistically and materialistically inclined scholars say that every phenomenon of nature and every event occurring in the world can be explained by the laws of nature alone, without the help of God or of miracles. This is not correct. At least two cases are not explainable by the laws of nature alone: 1) the very existence of the world or nature and 2) the laws of nature themselves. Therefore, the existence of the world and its laws are miracles.

Who created the world and the laws of nature? There are not and there cannot be any logical obstacles for the belief that the cause of the world and its law is God.

The English philosopher Berkeley (1685 - 1753), gave this reasoning concerning the above. The laws of nature, he said, are those means through which God governs the world, and the actions of these laws of nature are actions of God Himself. As a result, where God finds it necessary according to His intentions or plans, He can change these constant methods of His activity in the world so that a phenomenon will occur which is not explainable by the laws of nature alone; that is, an actual miracle will occur. Almighty God can, whenever He chooses, even change “the order of nature.”

Very often we may happen to hear it said that a miracle contradicts the laws of nature, but the word “contradicts ” is out of place here. We will try to analyze this question carefully.

Let us suppose that on earth everything exists except man and his consciousness. In such a world can a steam engine appear? Of course, it is impossible ! But why? All the component parts of the steam engine exist in the world (steel, copper, iron, wood, water, etc.). Is it possible that by accidental motion of the particles of which a steam engine is composed, over a long period of time (millions of years), that a steam engine could fabricate itself just by chance? No, this is impossible. Actually, for a steam engine to appear, the intelligence of the man who designed and made it is a necessity. Without the aid of consciousness, the steam engine is a miracle, even though all its components exist in nature.

As it is, this miracle (the appearance of an engine) does not contradict the laws of nature. All the laws

of nature remain inviolate. But they — the laws of inert unconscious nature — are overcome by a new factor, consciousness. In order to explain the miracle of mechanics, a recognition of a “higher factor,” consciousness, is necessary.

Now we turn to consciousness itself. Can consciousness be explained by inert unconscious laws of nature? If these laws could not create a steam engine, they would have even less of a chance to create something incomparably more complicated — consciousness. (Such nonsense is assumed only by materialists who regard consciousness as a product of evolving matter.) Even consciousness cannot explain itself. Consciousness can create a steam engine, but it cannot create itself. It follows, then, that consciousness is also a miracle. To explain this miracle it is necessary to accept an even more complicated, higher and more complete principle, which causes such phenomena as consciousness. This higher cause of consciousness (a higher Intellect) is God, faith in Whom is not impeded by anything found in science or philosophy.

If man’s consciousness, intervening with inert and unconscious nature and overcoming it, can make such things (miracles) as steam engines, then the higher divine Intellect, having created man’s consciousness and inert nature, directly intervening in inert nature and overcoming it (by powers unknown to us of His creative, divine Intellect), can create phenomena even more greatly complicated, for instance, to transform water into wine or to resurrect the dead. In these phenomena the laws of nature are not violated; a miracle does not contradict the laws of nature, but overcomes them by means of higher forces unknown to us.

When scholars came to Newton and expressed perplexity in regard to his belief in the future resurrection of bodies, he answered in the following manner: Taking a pile of copper and steel filings and mixing them together, he offered to separate the steel from the copper. Then he took a large magnet and with its help he quickly separated the steel filings from the copper. The Lord God evidently has forces which are more complicated and unknown to us (special magnets), with the help of which He can perform a resurrection of the bodies of all the dead at the future fearful Judgment. Nothing interfered with Newton’s belief in this.

6. Religion and art.

The relationship of religion and art is neither one of contradiction nor one of sameness. Between them exists a kinship and a singular reciprocal support. Both religion and art exalt us and awaken in us aspirations to an ideal world. But, if aesthetic feelings aspire chiefly to an artistic representation of the ideal world, religious feeling thirsts for a living communion with God — the foundation of all perfection. Contemplation of an artistic composition or of the beauties of nature under the influence of an aesthetic feeling creates in the soul only a vague, unaccountable impulse to the higher world. However, the contemplation of the same phenomena under a religious feeling opens up the possibility for the soul to have active communion with the Living God, through prayer and the Sacraments. These intentional substitutions of an aesthetic feeling for a religious one is a proud and harmful perversion, which in asceticism is the temptation to sin called “delight.”

Common to religion and art is the striving to express ideas not in an abstract form (as in philosophy and science), but in vivid, concrete forms. In religion, as in art, a pure idea is clothed in an appropriately pure and beautiful shroud or image through which all the spiritual / bodily feelings of a man are made to participate in the spiritual contemplation of the idea.

Dogmatic truths and ethical conceptions are clothed by the Church not only in highly artistic word images and the beautiful dress of sacred music, but are also symbolized in the splendor of its liturgical services and rituals. Not one of the ancient religions was a stranger to symbolism. The most perfect religion, Christianity, is therefore an exceptional treasure-house of symbolic images, which, embedded in the muteness of silence (expressing “the mysteries of the future age”), makes the invisible visible.

The philosophy of history teaches us that religion was the original cradle of art. The opinion that religion and art are hostile to each other in principle is a mistaken one. This hostility begins only when the substance of religion is perverted (for example, in Manichaeism, which considers matter an evil substance), or when the form of art is not suitable to the religious idea. The hostile attitude towards all aspects and forms of art inhibited their adaptation to the service of the church and in time led to iconoclasm.

The Christian Church does not deny art. Christianity is the religion of the Incarnate God, Christ, in whom was manifest “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2: 9). Sanctifying the body and condemning only sinfulness in the flesh, Christianity sanctified also the various forms of art for use in Christian church services, condemning only the sinful use of art. The sin of art, therefore, begins where art forgets its divine origin and turns to serve evil.

7. The origin of religion.

Having examined the relationship of religion to morality, philosophy, science and art, we see that religion represents something much more universal than all the above mentioned manifestations of man's spirit, not only separately, but also in combination, since religion embraces them in complete unity. Without religion, all the yearning of man's soul would not have solid support and would place man's spirit into hopeless contradictions.

A yearning for Truth, without faith that there is an absolute Truth (a perception of which is possible through communion of man's mind with the divine Intellect), would be transformed into "a wild goose chase," a fruitless chase after the unattainable, or would end with an even more fruitless and cynical skepticism. Poetry and other forms of art, with their impulses toward the ideal, would be transformed into a fruitless play of fantasies if religion did not convince people that a higher, ideal world actually exists.

Morality without religion would not contribute any consolation to the life of people, since, in a living communion with God, man receives higher, blissful means for moral growth and genuine ethical satisfaction.

This makes it clear that religion not only cannot be replaced by philosophy, science, art or morality alone, but, on the contrary, without religion, all these inclinations would be deprived of all foundation. This basis is the aspiration to a living communion with God (the essence of religion). But where do we get this aspiration? This question brings us to the problem of the origin of religion.

The question of the origin of religion can be the object of historical, psychological or logical analysis. Historical analysis brings us, on the one hand, to the so-called historical proof of the truth of the existence of God by means of indicating the universality of religion, and, on the other hand, to the study of the rise of various forms of religious cults and well-known historical religions. Psychological analysis leads investigators to vague contradictory hypotheses, a survey of which is not at all obligatory for Apologetics.

A logical analysis, however, leads us to a clear assurance that the question of the origin of religion has no practical meaning, for, in an appraisal of religion, it is of no importance whatsoever in what manner religion occurred. It is completely unimportant whether it was because of fear, or foolishness, or amusement, or mischief, or gain, or any other motive that religious considerations arose; the only matter of importance is whether the ideas under consideration are correct or incorrect.

The truth of an assertion does not depend on its origin. Just because an insane or criminal person said that $2 \times 2 = 4$, $2 \times 2 = 4$ does not cease to be the truth. Likewise, the truth or falsity of the statement "God exists," depends not one bit on the fact that it might be made from fear or from the hope of material gain. In other words, the question of how religion originated has no relation whatsoever to the question of whether one or another religious conviction is true or false.

As to the matter of faith in the Divine Revelation (for example, of the Christian religion), you can contrast against it only the belief that there is no revelation. Logic itself presents no obstacles to having faith in God and His Revelation. As was shown above, that is exactly why the majority of the world's greatest philosophers, scholars, poets and other highly gifted people do believe in God and the Revelation.* Faith is not contradicted by the scientific data of psychology, anthropology, comparative philosophy, or any of the other sciences, since scientific conclusions have only a hypothetical character.

Nothing interferes with a Christian's belief that the origin of religion is explained, on the one hand, by an innate impulse of man's soul to strive to its highest image, God, and, on the other hand, by the

influence of God Himself acting upon the soul of man.

*For example: Tabrum: The Religious Beliefs of Contemporary Scholars.

8. The existence of God.

The highest rank among fundamental religious truths belongs to the truth of the existence of God. Objections against the necessity and usefulness of rationalistic proofs for the benefit of religious truths fall into three categories: In the first place, these proofs are regarded as impossible. Secondly, even if possible, they are unnecessary and superfluous. Thirdly, they are not so much useful as they are harmful.

8.1. Objections.

The opinion that theoretical and strictly scientific proofs of the existence of God and of other fundamental religious truths were impossible was expressed for the first time with complete critical argumentation by the German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, in his work, Critique of Pure Reason. However, the followers of positivism were especially energetic in emphasizing the indemonstrability of religious truth. At times in this denial of the possibility of the proof of the existence of God, there has appeared either an incorrect understanding about God or an incorrect understanding about the proof itself.

For example, according to Kant's definition, God is the personified mental ideal of all the possible perfections. In other words, Kant has no conception of the living personality of God, but only has a notion of "a godly idea." Such a subjective and abstract idea of God does make impossible the proof of God's objectively perceptible existence. But this impossibility immediately fades as soon as we replace the conception of an abstract "idea of God" with a concrete conception of God as an active, perceptible Being.

Into the basis of the denial of the possibility of proof of the existence of God there is sometimes mixed an incomplete understanding of the substance of the proof itself. For instance, some investigators have defined proof as a conclusion from the higher to the lower; and, as there is nothing higher than God, the proof of the existence of God is therefore impossible. But that is an incorrect definition of the proof. The proof of the existence of God is necessary not for God Himself, but only for us who are by nature lower than God, and hence struggle to have faith in God's existence. The meaning of proofs of the existence of God are sometimes denied validity on the grounds that they do not have the character of mathematical precision. But mathematically exact proofs are very few. In place of them, in philosophy, in science, and in practical life, other forms of proofs are often used. Even in mathematics there exist so-called postulates, that is, self-evident truths, which are impossible to prove exactly, mathematically, and, as a result, they can be doubted. For instance, the uncertainty inherent in the fifth postulate of Euclid (that is, that through one point you can draw only one straight line parallel to the given straight line) led the highly gifted Russian mathematician Lobachevsky to the discovery of a new non-Euclidean geometry.

So we see that even the most exact and conclusive science, mathematics, is based on axioms and postulates, which, just like all so-called self-evident truths, cannot be proved and which are accepted on faith. St. Basil the Great is profoundly correct when he states that in science "faith precedes knowledge." Everything that is most basic and elementary in scientific knowledge is unprovable and is accepted on an act of faith. The sciences usually pride themselves on their exactness and conclusiveness. But it should not be forgotten that, in the first place, science is composed not only of facts and "empirical data" (which do not yet give us scientific knowledge), but also of speculative structures of the mind. These speculative structures can be argued about, because it is impossible to

construct them without elements of philosophical theory. Secondly, besides exactness of knowledge, one must discern also its value and meaning. The knowledge of the chemical composition of stone and the significance of the life of the world and man, as we have already noted above, have for me a different value than they do for one who does not believe in God. If exact sciences cannot exactly mathematically prove basic religious truths, and, in general, cannot answer the most urgent questions of man's spirit (for example, the aim and meaning of life), then this shows only the limits of the scientific method of knowledge, and, therefore, the boundaries of the meaning of empirical science for man.

Where knowledge is helpless, faith is lawful. Faith in something which cannot be proved, but at the same time cannot be disproved by means of scientific knowledge, is perfectly lawful.

The absence of the possibility of exact mathematical proof of religious truths, which reveals the lawful possibility of faith, makes religious truths (and, first of all, the most important of them — the truth of the existence of God) a subject of the free will of man. God could prove His existence by a direct appearance in His power and glory, but He does not desire to force the free will of man and awaits a free desire, a free faith in Him and toward Him. Again we must conclude that nothing hinders man's coming to God by an act of faith, if man desires to come to Him.

From the Christian point of view, the impossibility of a scientific, mathematically exact proof of the existence of God and other religious truths is part of the nature of things and was originated by God Himself. In science and philosophy there are different methods of proofs or, rather, persuasive considerations, perhaps not so persuasive in a mathematical sense, but nonetheless speaking strongly in favor of one or another theory or hypothesis. The same is true with religion.

The opinion is often expressed that, after Kant's critique of the methods of proving the truth of God's existence, this impossible task should not be approached anymore. This may be answered as follows. In the first place, Kant himself, after a critique of the existing proofs, tried to found a new form of so-called ethical proof. The history of philosophy contains other significant instances where a highly gifted philosopher began to defend anew ideas already examined and abandoned earlier. For instance, the ontological proof of the existence of God, first expressed by Anselm of Canterbury, has at times stimulated a renewed interest toward it and new argumentation in its defense. Such attempts were made by Descartes and Leibnitz before Kant, and by Hegel after Kant.

Kant's critique itself involved not so much a loss of interest, as, instead, a heightening of interest in proofs of God's existence. Famous and weighty is the criticism of Kant and the refutation of his ideas in works such as those by Ulrich, *God and Nature and God and Man*, and in the course by Professor N. P. Rozhdestvensky, *Christian Apologetics*, and others.

Speaking practically, Kant's critique does not refute the proof of the existence of God, but simply points out that these proofs do not have the mathematically exact character of scientific proofs.

In regard to the conclusiveness of proofs in general, one should remember the remarks of Pascal (*Thoughts on Religion*), that if geometry could provoke man's passions, people would be found who would begin to object against the most evident geometrical statements. Contradictions and objections against the most clear and convincing proofs are very often met in practical life where man's passions are touched upon. In political, religious, philosophical and even in scientific controversy, we often meet with this phenomenon. Very often exceptionally convincing proofs, which do not convince an obstinate opponent, do convince a listening bystander present at the argument who is objectively weighing the arguments of the opponents.

Sometimes you can hear objections against proofs of the existence of God in this form: Proofs are not necessary for the faithful, and an atheist will not be convinced anyhow. In answer to this it must be

said that if we have before us an atheist whose convictions are founded on an unwillingness to believe in God, then such an atheist cannot be convinced. If, however, we have before us an atheist who, through a misunderstanding due to insufficient education, regards his atheism as scientifically proved, then such a one can be convinced.

Also, not every believing person is disinterested in the rationalistic proofs of the religious truths in which he believes. A striking example is the prayer with which the profoundly believing scholar and philosopher, the Bishop Anselm of Canterbury, preceded his so-called ontological proof of the truth of the existence of God: "Lord ! You grant wisdom to faith; give me also the wisdom to perceive that You exist, as I believe, and that You are the same being as my faith describes You to me." Love not only contemplates but also wants to know its object. The lover of God lawfully wants to perceive him with all the powers of his spirit — the powers given us by God Himself. Numbered among these powers, granted to us by God, is also the honest intellect.

Some investigators regard the absence of one fundamental and convincing proof of the existence of God and the replacing of that one by several proofs as proving the weakness of the latter. This is profoundly incorrect ! As the steeple of a building is not founded on the foundation alone, but on the many parts of the building simultaneously, so also the proof of the truth of God 's existence is founded on the combination of several separate and particular proofs.

The Holy Scripture rarely mentions the so-called proof of God 's existence, regarding this basic religious truth to be so evident that one who denies it is qualified as senseless. The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God (Psalm 13: 1). It is regrettable that the authority of the Holy Scripture has its full meaning for the faithful, but for skeptics it has no meaning whatsoever.

After these preliminary remarks, we will now proceed to an examination of the specific so-called proofs of the existence of God.

8.2. Proofs of the existence of God.

8.2.1. Cosmological Proof.

1. Cosmological proof of the existence of God is one of the most ancient. Holy Scripture often points to a creature as a manifest testimony of the existence of the Creator of the world: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaimeth the work of His hands (Psalm 18). For 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 (Romans 1: 20).

Among the Holy Fathers of the Church, cosmological proof of God 's existence is presented by St. Athanasius the Great in the form of a conclusion from the fact of the existence of creation to the fact of the existence of the Creator; by St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory the Theologian, by means of refuting the opinion of the accidental origin and preservation of world laws; by St. John of Damascus, in the form of a conclusion from the changeable to the unchangeable. In the history of philosophy, the oldest assertions in the defense of cosmological proof are met in Aristotle (as a conclusion from motion noticed in the world to the existence of a Prime-mover). Leibnitz forms this proof by a conclusion, not from motion to a Prime-mover, but from the conditional to the absolute. The philosopher, Wolf, makes it a conclusion from the accidental to the indispensable.

Cosmological proof usually rests on two laws of logic: the law of causality and the law of sufficient

reason. The first demands the recognition of the original cause of the world, and the second affirms that nothing but the highest universal Cause can be recognized on a sufficient basis as the true original cause of the world.

Everything in the world has its cause. Every cause in its turn is the consequence of another cause. This means that everything in the world has the cause of its existence outside of itself; nothing is original (self-existing). Therefore, the world, too, in totality, is not self-existing and must have a cause for its existence, and this cause must be outside of this world. Such a cause can be only a universally all-highest Being: God.

This was the object of the criticism of Kant and many other philosophers. The main objection to this proof was that we do not have enough reason to search for the origin of world phenomena in another, super-sensual world since it is possible that the law of causality is valid only as to this world's phenomena. Also, in Kant's opinion, there is not a sufficient basis to deny the possibility of self-existing world phenomena.

Contemporary physics, in the persons of the scholars Planck and Jeans, categorically denies the possibility of self-existing world phenomena, and, by doing so, again vindicates cosmological proof to a sufficient degree. As to the question of causality, if there is no absolute necessity to recognize its action in a super-sensual world, then there is also no absolute necessity to deny it there.

2. The Beginning.

If we do exist, there are only two possible explanations as to how our existence came to be. Either we had a beginning or we did not have a beginning. The Bible says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1: 1). The atheist has always maintained that there was no beginning. The idea is that matter has always existed in the form of either matter or energy; and all that has happened is that matter has been changed from form to form, but it has always been. The Humanist Manifesto says, "Matter is self-existing and not created," and that is a concise statement of the atheist's belief.

The way we decide whether the atheist is correct or not is to see what science has discovered about this question. The picture below on the left represents our part of the cosmos. Each of the disk shaped objects is a galaxy like our Milky Way. All of these galaxies are moving relative to each other. Their movement has a very distinct pattern which causes the distance between the galaxies to increase with every passing day. If we had three galaxies located at positions A, B, and C in the second diagram below, and if they are located as shown, tomorrow they will be further apart. The triangle they form will be bigger. The day after tomorrow the triangle will be bigger yet. We live in an expanding universe that gets bigger and bigger and bigger with every passing day.

Now let us suppose that we made time run backwards! If we are located at a certain distance today, then yesterday we were closer together. The day before that, we were still closer. Ultimately, where must all the galaxies have been? At a point! At the beginning! At what scientists call a singularity! A second proof is seen in the energy sources that fuel the cosmos. The picture to the right is a picture of the sun. Like all stars, the sun generates its energy by a nuclear process known as thermonuclear fusion. Every second that passes, the sun compresses 564 million tons of hydrogen into 560 million tons of helium with 4 million tons of matter released as energy. In spite of that tremendous consumption of fuel, the sun has only used up 2% of the hydrogen it had the day it came into existence. The process fueling this incredible furnace is not used by our sun alone. Every star in the sky generates its energy in the same way. Throughout the cosmos there are 25 quintillion stars, each converting hydrogen into helium, thereby reducing the total amount of hydrogen in the cosmos. Just

think about it! If everywhere in the cosmos hydrogen is being consumed and if the process has been going on forever, how much hydrogen should be left?

Suppose one attempts to drive an automobile without putting any more gas (fuel) into it. As he drives and drives, what is eventually going to happen? He is am going to run out of gas. If the cosmos has been here forever, we would have run out of hydrogen long ago ! The fact is, however, that the sun still has 98 % of its original hydrogen. The fact is that hydrogen is the most abundant material in the universe ! Everywhere we look in space we can see the hydrogen 21 cm line in the spectrum — a piece of light only given off by hydrogen. This could not be unless we had a beginning!

A third scientific proof that the atheist is wrong is seen in the second law of thermodynamics. In any closed system, things tend to become disordered. If an automobile is driven for years and years without repair, for example, it will become so disordered that it would not run any more. Getting old is simple conformity to the second law of thermodynamics. In space, things also get old. Astronomers refer to the aging process as heat death. If the cosmos is “everything that ever was or is or ever will be,” as Dr. Carl Sagan is so fond of saying, nothing could be added to it to improve its order or repair it. Even a universe that expands and collapses and expands again forever would die because it would lose light and heat each time it expanded and rebounded.

The atheist 's assertion that matter / energy is eternal is scientifically wrong. The biblical assertion that there was a beginning is scientifically correct.

3. The Cause.

If we know the creation has a beginning, we are faced with another logical question: was the creation caused or was it not caused? The Bible states, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Not only does the Bible maintain that there was a cause — a creation — but it also tells us what the cause was. It was God. The atheist tells us that “matter is self-existing and not created.” If matter had a beginning and yet was uncaused, one must logically maintain that something would have had to come into existence out of nothing. From empty space with no force, no matter, no energy, and no intelligence, matter would have to become existent. Even if this could happen by some strange new process unknown to science today, there is a logical problem.

In order for matter to come out of nothing, all of our scientific laws dealing with the conservation of matter / energy would have to be wrong, invalidating all of chemistry. All of our laws of conservation of angular momentum would have to be wrong, invalidating all of physics. All of our laws of conservation of electric charge would have to be wrong, invalidating all electronics and demanding that your TV set not work ! Your television set may not work, but that is not the reason ! In order to believe matter is uncaused, one has to discard known laws and principles of science. No reasonable person is going to do this simply to maintain a personal atheistic position.

The atheist 's assertion that matter is eternal is wrong. The atheist 's assertion that the universe is uncaused and self existing is also incorrect The Bible 's assertion that there was a beginning which was caused is supported strongly by the available scientific evidence.

4. The Design.

If we know that the creation had a beginning and we know that the beginning was caused, there is one last question for us to answer — what was the cause? The Bible tells us that God was the cause. We are further told that the God who did the causing did so with planning and reason and logic. Romans 1: 20 tells us that we can know God exists “through the things he has made.” The atheist, on the other hand, will try to convince us that we are the product of chance. Julian Huxley once said: We

are as much a product of blind forces as is the falling of a stone to earth or the ebb and flow of the tides. We have just happened, and man was made flesh by a long series of singularly beneficial accidents.

The subject of design has been one that has been explored in many different ways. For most of us, simply looking at our newborn child is enough to rule out chance. Modern-day scientists like Paul Davies and Frederick Hoyle and others are raising elaborate objections to the use of chance in explaining natural phenomena. A principle of modern science has emerged in the 1980s called "the anthropic principle." The basic thrust of the anthropic principle is that chance is simply not a valid mechanism to explain the atom or life. If chance is not valid, we are constrained to reject Huxley's claim and to realize that we are the product of an intelligent God.

Some investigators point out that cosmological proof does not demonstrate a personal God. This is correct. Cosmological proof makes no pretence to this. It affirms only that there is a sufficient basis for the recognition of a super-universal, higher creative force, on which the origin of the universe depends, and that this force has a real existence.

8.2.2. Teleological Proof.

The teleological proof of the existence of God, based on the expedient arrangement of the world, results necessarily in affirming the existence of an Intellectual Being, the cause of this expedience. If cosmological proof concentrates on the investigation of the original cause of the universe, then the teleological proof interests itself chiefly in the final purpose. It examines the world not only as something existing and needing an explanation of its emergence, but as something whole, harmonious, artistic, proportionate, expedient; pointing to the wisdom of the Author of this expedience.

Cosmological proof demands recognition of God as a very wise, mighty, creative force, capable of creating the world; the teleological proof demands the recognition of God as an Intellectual Personality, capable of high purpose and good order in the created world. Both proofs complement each other. Teleological proof is not greater than the cosmological and has need for it. For, as Kant so justly pointed out, the teleological proof does not prove the Creator of the world, but the Creator of a well-ordered expedience in the world which could have existed along with God eternally in the form of inert, formless matter.

A world-view is possible in which God and matter co-exist eternally, and in which God transformed this co-eternal matter into an expedient world. God is understood, in this case, as the Demiurge, that is, the expert arranger of the world, and not the Creator of the world from nothing. But Christianity categorically asserts that God created the world from nothing. The existence of matter co-eternal with God is impossible, since, in such a case, God would not be the Absolute. It is of note that contemporary physical science (Plank, Jeans, and others) also affirms that matter cannot be eternal. Cosmological and teleological proofs are closely related. Only in their synthesis can be inferred the proof of God as an Absolute Personality. In ancient philosophy, many philosophers (for example, Socrates, Plato, and, before them, also, Anaxagoras) recognized the teleological proof as one of the strongest and most conclusive arguments in defense of the existence of a Higher intellect. In general, however, the teleological proof is regarded as chiefly biblical, as the Holy Scripture often refers to the expedient ordainment of the world as graphic proof of the wisdom of the Creator. For instance, in the Psalms of David we find much contemplation of the beauties of the world, with inference from this of

godly wisdom.

Teleological proof can be divided into two main aspects: 1) the so-called physico-teleological, inferring from the expedience and planned system of the external world to a wise Author of it, and 2) historico-teleological, inferring from the intellectual course of the historical life of man to a wise Ruler of the fates of man. The Orthodox Church sometimes calls God “Master of Life.”

Objections against teleological proof usually take one of three main directions: 1) the denial of the expedient ordering of nature; 2) the explanation of expedience as accidental; 3) the denial of the consciousness and personality of the cause of the expedience of the world.

As to the first point, the criticism comes to pointing out several popular phenomena of the world which do not appear to have expedience. The answer to this is that we sometimes do not know, do not understand, and do not see the purpose and sense of some particular phenomena, but this does not mean that, in general, these phenomena have no purpose and sense. With this, the general experience of nature can by no means be denied. Exceptions are extraordinarily insignificant and can be simply unexplained expediences from the point of view of a higher plan unapproachable to us and with purposes incomprehensible to us.

The explanation of expediency as ordinary chance does not withstand strict criticism. If the expedience of a machine (for example, a steam machine) cannot be explained as accidental and demands the recognition of the presence of consciousness which crafted this expedient machine, then it is that much more difficult to explain the expediency of consciousness itself, and, finally, the expediency of the entire universe, as accidental.

If we conjecture that this question is unsolvable by exact knowledge and is subject only to faith, then faith in a causative expediency certainly has many more sufficient reasons than a naïve and contradictory faith in causeless expedience. In short, plan, aim and sense (which can be disclosed by analyzing expedient phenomena of the world) should be regarded by normal consciousness as primary, preliminary phenomena and not as secondary or subsequent.

The last objection, denying the reasonableness and personality of God and explaining the cause of expediency as blind unconscious will, also cannot stand serious criticism. Some critics point to animal instinct as an example of expedient action. They say, “The instinctive activity of animals is originated without reason.” This is not correct. An animal acts without being conscious of the aim of its action, but not without aim. An animal acts in conformity with an aim unrecognizable to itself.

From this, it follows that the causes of the expedient actions of animals and nature, in general, are not animals and nature themselves; but it does not follow that there is no Creator consciously assigning the aims, which are unconsciously accomplished in an unconscious nature. Observing the expedient arrangement of the world, we affirm a conscious Author of the world — i.e. one with an intellect, to whom came the idea of an expedient arrangement of the world, and also one with power, which accomplished this idea in a substantial existence of the world. Only to a reasonable, conscious, personal Being can an expedient creation be obliged for its origin.

Historico-teleological proof of the existence of an Intellect-God is more debatable. This proof, leading to an understanding of the profound significance of man’s history, is accessible to few people (the philosophical theory of reality). For those to whom it is accessible, this proof is exceptionally convincing.

8.2.3. Ontological Proof.

Ontological and ethical proofs of God’s existence are called inner proofs in that they are taken from

our inner experience, as distinguished from external cosmological and teleological proofs which are taken from external experience.

The meaning of inner proofs is very important, for without them, external proofs would not have force. If we had not the former, there would not be so much strength expended on the latter. If in our consciousness there were not an idea of God and an inner conviction of His reality, together with the immense practical importance of the ethical meaning of this conviction, we would not have the impetus to search for careful proofs of the existence of God in external experience.

Ontological proof of the existence of God was formulated first in the 11th century by the western theological scholar Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury. The author of this proof regards it not as a fruit of his own mind, but as received with the help of a higher inspiration.

The basic thought of this proof is that in the inherent idea of a higher, all-perfect and endless Being, there is of necessity also included the idea of the reality of this Being, because the All-Perfect cannot be unreal!

Critics, especially Kant, consider it incompetent to conclude that God exists based on human thoughts of Him. To make such a conclusion is impossible, says Kant, because we can have (and do have) dreamy ideas which do not conform to the existence of actual objects.

Long before Kant, this objection was foreseen by the learned French philosopher and mathematician Descartes. Analyzing chimerical, conditionally and unconditionally necessary ideas, Descartes came to the conclusion that unconditional necessity truly belongs to the idea of an all-perfect Being.

Ontological proof was also defended by Leibniz and Hegel. The latter, taking exception to Kant, cited the following considerations. Ontological proof does not at all assert that all ideas must necessarily assume the existence of the thing corresponding to the idea. It does not conclude the existence of the All-Perfect from understanding it, but insists that in understanding the All-Perfect, there is already contained an understanding of its existence. We can no more think of an all-perfect Being as not existing, than we can think of a triangle as not being a triangle.

Therefore, the ontological proof can be finally formulated thus: because in the soul of man there exists an idea of a Being, which with a fullness of perfections is united also to a real existence, it necessarily follows that this being must exist, not only in mind, but in actual fact.

8.2.4. Ethical Proof.

Ethical proof of God's existence can be of a practical or theoretical character. Practical, ethical proof results in pointing to the fact that faith in God assists improvement of morality, while faith in atheism usually leads to a fall in morality.

Attempts to prove that atheism, on the contrary, assists in bettering morals are absurd and are not corroborated by actual experience. Many defenders of atheism, recognizing the beneficence of religion for morality, expressed the thought that this does not at all prove the truth of religion. However, it is very strange that in such a case a paradoxical situation exists — a false conviction (faith in God) leads to a betterment of morality, while a true conviction (faith in atheism) assists in corrupting morals. Instead of quibbling, ought not the truth of religion and the falsity of atheism be accepted, since the former assists the betterment of morality and the latter, on the contrary, ruins it? The indication that atheists exist who do live morally does not refute the general conclusion about the ethical benefits of religion. The truth is that many people do not follow their theoretical convictions in practical life. This contradiction between theory and practice leads to the result that some who theoretically espouse atheism in their practical life follow the laws of Christian morals. But wherever a

complete accord exists between theory and practical action, where there is no dissension and contradiction between theory and practice, based on this theory, there cannot even be talk of the ethical good conduct of an atheist.

At times, atheists indicate that believers live in perpetual fear before the Almighty Sovereign God for their misdemeanors, while the atheist, free of religious convictions, does not experience this fear. This can be answered in the following manner.

The fear of moral responsibility before God is an exceptionally beneficent fear. This fear appears in a man not when he lives a moral life, but only when he performs unethical actions, transgressing moral law, given to us from God, according to the conviction of believers. On the other hand, does not the atheist also have fear? If life has no meaning and aim, and every occurrence depends on a simple accident of an indifferent, cruel nature, does not a man acquire fear before these inexorably cruel happenings upon which all life wholly depends? And, conversely, does not the conviction of a religious man assist in reassuring him that Almighty God Himself, Who is understood as love and higher justice, guards a man and leads him to eternal blessings?

Theoretical and so-called scientifically philosophic methods of ethical proof of God's existence come in two main forms. Before Kant, in both theology and philosophy, ethical proof of God's existence was deduced from the ethical law contained in conscience, to the existence of God as the Creator and Legislator of this law. Kant gave to the ethical proof a different basis. For harmony between virtue and blessedness, which is demanded by our ethical conscience, it is necessary to recognize God, because this harmony can be accomplished and fully realized only by God Himself. In both its forms (pre-Kant and Kant), ethical proof has its force. These forms not only do not exclude, but, on the contrary, complement each other.

Careful analysis of the ethical conscience of man shows us that having freedom of action, man, after performing immoral actions, experiences pangs of conscience, and, on the other hand, after fulfillment of the demands of ethical law, he experiences a spiritual satisfaction in being aware of a fulfilled debt. In other words, the freedom of man's will is guarded from arbitrariness by the presence of a higher ethical law which approves or censures its actions. Man, having free will, nonetheless feels this law above himself as an unconditional, commanding force. Consequently, it could not have been man himself who created this law and placed it above himself.

Ethical law also cannot be deduced from any other side of man's nature. However, if ethical law is not created by man and cannot be deduced from anything conditional and accidental but is deposited in man's spirit as an unconditional higher requirement, then its origin can be explained only by its being deposited by a higher, unconditional Being, God, and presents in itself nothing other than the voice of God in man's soul and the inner revelation of the holy and unconditional will of God in man's spirit.

Concerning Kant's basis for ethical law, it is formulated by the author himself in such a way: "We are aware of the ethical law within ourselves demanding our fulfillment of a debt without any search for gain, benefit or pleasure; besides, we are conscious within ourselves of a need to attain the higher welfare. Even though in our ethical deeds we should not be governed by self-interested ideas of rewards, we have in our spirit a permanent demand that virtue should have a worthy reward and vice a worthy punishment. This is the law of truth. The requirement that virtue would be rewarded by a corresponding measure of fortune is so deeply placed in our spirit that we can in no way erase it within ourselves. The union of the purest morals with perfect fortune or blessedness, therefore, constitutes the highest blessing to which the spirit of man aspires by virtue of its own ethical nature. But the union of fortune and virtue in a completely equal measure does not depend on us ourselves.

The organization of our morality depends on our freedom, but fortune does not depend on our authority. And experience shows that virtue in the present life more often is not rewarded by deserved fortune. Meanwhile, our ethical conscience urgently demands that virtue should be inseparable from fortune, and from this alliance of virtue and fortune, supreme welfare would result. If it is not in man's power to establish an alliance between virtue and fortune, then there must be another ethically good Being who wants to and can effect this; that is, to reward virtue with fortune worthy of it. Such a Being, therefore, is the one God."

Kant also expressed his proof in this fashion: "Nature cannot establish compliance between virtue and fortune. This impels us to recognize the existence of a cause differing from nature and not depending on it. This cause must possess not only force and might, but also intellect; it must be such a force which, in might and will and mind, is higher than nature. And such a Being is God only. He wants to and can also sanction an alliance between ethics and virtue."

From his proofs, Kant deduces God's perfections. "As one who desires the highest good, God Himself must be the highest Good, filled with holiness. As one capable of combining virtue and fortune, He must be All-Mighty, All-Knowing, All-Wise, etc., and, in every case, a particular Being."

The deficiency in Kant's argumentation is found in that he separates the understanding of virtue from the understanding of fortune (or blessedness), and, therefore, he understands a compensating reward as something eternal, when, according to Christian morals, true virtue finds its reward in itself and does not require any external repayment. Even in pre-Christian philosophy we find such an understanding of good. "Virtue is fortune," says Socrates. Hegel, in his criticism of Kant's ethical proof, with complete justice, notes that "virtue in consequence of its expedient activity directly brings with it self-enjoyment and self-satisfaction."

The Savior Himself said in regard to virtue, which cannot be put into life without moral effort and grace sent from above (and consequently, being a sort of yoke limiting man's freedom) the following clear and simple words of Truth: Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light (Matt. 11: 29 - 30). The yoke of Christ is goodness; that is, Christian value is already in itself a blessing.

Combining all aspects and formulations of ethical proof of God's existence, we can arrive at the following generalized conclusion. The existence of moral law concluding in a demand for moral good, which already in itself comprises the greatest spiritual good, and which is impossible to explain or to accomplish without help from above, is the theoretical proof of the existence of God, receiving its fullest justification during its practical verification by ethical life according to the teachings of Christ.

Conclusion.

The truth of God's existence, finally accepted with the assistance of faith, has exceptionally convincing and highly rational principles, permitting us to maintain the irrefutable, local possibility of this truth. The impossibility of refuting this truth by any local considerations and the impossibility of proving it exactly and mathematically, methodologically justifies the application to it of faith as an act of the free will of man.

9. The Immortality of the Soul.

Belief in the soul's immortality among all peoples is usually closely connected with religion and comprises an essential part of almost all religions known in history. This points to the fact that the idea of the soul's immortality goes into the consciousness of man with its roots. In the opinion of many profound thinkers of ancient days as well as of recent (Socrates, Plato, Descartes, Pascal), the idea must be recognized as native to man's spirit. The religious conviction that the alliance uniting God with man cannot be destroyed after the death of man, but is an eternal union, belongs to the most firm convictions of religion, without which it would not have a vital force. Faith in immortality is as ancient as man himself and his religion.

In defense of this belief there are also intellectual considerations, which are called proofs. Proofs of the immortality of the soul are divided into teleological, philosophical, ethical, and historical (from the universality of belief in immortality held by all peoples).

The teleological proof is drawn from the attributes of God, mainly the attributes of His personality, goodness, justice, and omnipotence.

- The philosophical proof is inferred from the properties or nature of the soul itself.
- The ethical proof is based on the demands of our ethical conscience.
- The historical is drawn from the history of mankind.

For people who believe in God, the most convincing proofs of the immortality of the soul are the teleological proofs. If God is a living Personality, possessing attributes of All-Mightiness, All-Goodness, and unconditional justice, then, in creating people, He could not have created them deprived of immortality. Therefore, the conscience of a believer has an immovable conviction in the truth of the soul's immortality. If there is a God, there is also immortality of the soul.

The philosophical proof of immortality complements the teleological and comes to the aid of the believer when he meets with objections from theories denying a personal God (i.e. materialism, atheism, pantheism).

Spiritual and physical phenomena present in themselves something substantially heterogeneous (or different in nature), not comparable one to another. Just as you cannot infer physical attributes from spiritual attributes, so also you cannot infer spiritual attributes from physical. What kind of chemical, physical, or, in general, material attributes can be found in such psychological phenomena as faith, hope, justice, love, kindness, etc.? It is impossible, from a materialistic point of view, to explain psychological phenomena. The consciousness of a man represents in itself a complete oneness, while the brain, to which materialists want to attribute a consciousness, represents a multitude of material particles. The brain is only an instrument of which the soul makes use, but it is not the soul itself. And when the brain and man's body, in general, is destroyed, there is no logical basis on which to affirm that the soul must also be destroyed. It does not have to be manifested in a dead body or in a destroyed brain, but can exist also separately from the body and from the brain.

The body cannot live separately from the soul, but from this it cannot be deduced that the soul cannot live separately from the body in a different world which is unknown to us, but whose existence we have no basis for denying. We can believe in the existence of a different life, another spiritual world, or we can disbelieve in it, that is, we can believe there is not a spiritual world. Nothing can interfere with our belief. We have many more reasons for making the assertion that the psychological differs from the physical. Likewise in stating that the soul can live without the body, we

again have more reasons than in conjecturing the destruction of the soul at the time of the destruction of the body.

From the materialistic point of view, which denies the existence of the soul as a separate element, that is, a separate substance, it is impossible to explain the fact of the constant identity of our self-consciousness. If our spiritual phenomena represent in themselves only the union of material particles, then how can the continuity of our consciousness throughout our whole life be explained with the change of material particles which undoubtedly takes place in our bodily organism?

Therefore, it is highly improbable that the basis of our personality would be composed of constantly changing matter.

The ethical proof of the soul's immortality is summarized in pointing out that man, representing in himself an intellectual, ethical personality, cannot have only a temporary meaning during his life on the earth. The aim and ethical designation of man as a personal being consists of his attaining the fullness of his personal spiritual perfection and taking his place in the proper relationship to the eternal personal God. It follows that his purpose cannot be terminated by time. The denial of God and the immortality of the soul transforms man into a highly qualified form of cattle. Faith, however, in God and the immortality of the soul, in the way of which nothing can stand, places before man the possibility of endless perfection until union with God is reached.

By ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect — that is the ideal furnished to man by God Himself.

9.1. Renewed interest in this subject.

The immortality of the soul, the existence of the spiritual world and life beyond the grave, these are religious themes. Christianity has always known and taught that man is more than a simple combination of chemical elements, that besides the body humankind has a soul which at the moment of death does not die, but continues to live and develop in a new surrounding.

In its two thousand years of existence, Christianity has amassed a wealth of literature on the world beyond the grave. In some instances, the Lord allows the souls of the departed to appear to friends or relatives to forewarn them of what awaits in the world to come and thus to encourage them to live righteously. Owing to this, religious writings have a significant number of accounts of what the souls of the departed saw in the other world, of angels, of the devil's snares, of the joys of the righteous in heaven, and of the torments of sinners in hell.

In the last quarter-century, many accounts of people's experiences during clinical death have been documented. A significant percentage of these accounts contain a description of what the person saw near the place of their death. In most cases these souls did not have time to visit either heaven or hell, although at times they observed those conditions.

Both ancient religious stories as well as doctors' contemporary research reiterate the Holy Scripture's teachings that after the death of the body some part of the person (call it what you will: the personality, consciousness, me, or soul) continues to exist, albeit in completely new surroundings. This existence is not passive in nature, because the personality continues to think, feel, want, etc., much as it did during its earthly life. An understanding of this essential truth is absolutely necessary to

correctly build one's life.

Nevertheless, far from all of the doctors ' conclusions should be taken at face value. Sometimes they put forth opinions based on incomplete and sometimes inaccurate data. A Christian must check everything that concerns the spiritual world against the teaching of the Holy Scripture to avoid entanglement in the webs of philosophic machination or the personal opinions of authors who write about these themes.

The main value in the contemporary exploration of the life after death question is that it confirms in an unbiased and scientific way the truth of the soul 's existence in the world beyond. In addition, they can help a believer to better understand and prepare for that which he will encounter immediately after his death.

10. Natural religions.

In a general survey of pagan natural religions, we come to the conclusion that all these religions represent in themselves the history of the natural development of religious consciousness of ancient man. Each individual religion fixed on some one aspect of this development which was the nearest to the spirit of its people. A full expression of the true substance of religion, however, is represented neither by any one of them nor by all of them taken together. Every different religion had its sources, its golden age, and its decline. The sources of all religions bear witness to the fact that the Ancestral Religion contained the ideal of monotheism. The golden age of a religion was often preceded by the personality of a reformer (for example, Confucius, Lao-tse, Buddha, Zoroaster). The decline of a religion, however, for the most part, was related to later times, as each individual religious system of ancient times outlived its contents. The dying out of a religion — if not of the whole cult and its rites, then of its very spirit or essence — most vividly bears witness to the absence within it of authentic revelation.

If, in the Chinese religion, God is almost in no way different from the world, in the Hindu religion, He is represented as somewhat different from the world even though He is still impersonal and not fully separated. In the Persian religion, there are already tendencies toward the idea of a personal God. And, finally, in the religion of the Greeks and Romans, personality becomes a necessary condition of divinity. Already among the Greeks and Romans there is not the overwhelming force subjugating man to external nature characteristic of the ancient East. Absent, for the most part, too, are the bloody cults of ancient oriental paganism.

In view of this, the ancient pagan religions portray more than just a series of continuous fallacies. The Holy Fathers reckoned that the pagan world was not excluded by the design of God from the circle of divine care. Although not having supernatural Revelation, the pagan world was not deprived of natural revelation. With the correct use of the natural abilities of his spirit, man can have definite knowledge of God, of the world, and of himself. In addition, having an innate idea of God in his mind and an inborn knowledge of the Divine Will in his conscience, man was capable of realizing the limits of his knowledge and, by a spiritual renunciation, was capable of looking for aid from above. However, paganism did not utilize all the possibilities of natural religious development. Pagan religion could have been considerably higher and purer than it was in fact.

Therefore, the Apostle Paul regards as answerable before the countenance of divine truth not only the Hebrews, who had the law given through supernatural revelation, but also the pagans, who, while not having the same revelation, were not left without natural means of knowing God. For that reason, from a strictly religious point of view, pagan religions will forever remain monuments, witnessing not only the weakness of man's mind and the poverty of his spiritual feeling, but also the presence of a fateful corruption of man's will. All systems of ancient religions are guilty of distorting both the theoretical and the practical principles of true religion and ethics, of mixing a portion of truth with a mass of fallacies. Therefore, we do not find one among them in which we would be given a correct understanding of God, the world, and the spiritual nature of man.

The religions of paganism did not elevate their followers to an intellectual worship of God. Among the most prominent and learned ancient thinkers, we do not see any who would have taught the people religious truth. The thinkers that were most prominent in mental and moral qualities openly acknowledged their complete helplessness in solving such a problem. The highest attainment of ancient man is acknowledged in the teaching of Socrates and Plato that there is not anything more important than the true perception of God, which perception can only be given by God Himself. In the

language of contemporary thought, this implied a theoretical recognition of the inadequacies and limitations of natural, human means for perceiving the truth of God, and a recognition of divine Revelation as the only adequate method of perceiving this truth.

10.1. Different belief systems.

The natural cause belief. Buddhism 's belief in reincarnation but not in God. In this philosophy eternal peace is achieved through discipline and enlightenment. Hinduism 's belief in many gods, reincarnation, and an afterlife attained once one becomes worthy through good works, knowledge, or devotion. The Muslim belief that there is one true God, and in judgment followed by paradise or hell depending on one's good works. Judaism 's belief in one true G-d, in blessing or punishment based on obedience, in charity and repentance, and in a coming resurrection at which time the Messiah will come, reestablishing the throne of David and bringing peace to the earth. Christianity 's belief in one true God, and in a coming judgment followed by heaven or hell depending on one's relationship with the son of God.

In addition, there are any number of folk and cult religions. Most of them attempt to merge beliefs from the various world religions. This results in a kind of pick and choose designer religion, custom tailored to fit our life style. The more destructive cults prey on the castaways, the refuse of society, offering them acceptance in exchange for their allegiance to the group and its leader no matter how weird or bizarre they might get.

Since all of these belief systems conflict with one another they cannot all be right. But one must also recognize they all do contain some, maybe even a lot of, truth. Since we build our belief system on a lifetime of experience and learning, it is very difficult to accept that our beliefs might be wrong. We are comfortable in our beliefs, and we find assurance in the truth they contain. The problem is that we often carry a lot of untrue baggage with us that we accept without really questioning why.

10.2. The Natural Cause Belief.

Natural cause is the belief that all things can be explained without invoking a god. Those who accept natural cause as their base point of reality claim to have little use for religion. They believe we have only the present. Like a flower we are here only a little while and then we are gone. One thing we can all agree on is that in the end all our studying and hard work are meaningless, a chasing after the wind. Another thing we can all agree on is that physical death is waiting for all of us. Science may prolong life, but it cannot stop death from coming.

Natural cause is usually associated with the beliefs of scientists. In all fairness, the scientists seldom consider science their religion and many do recognize that eternity is calling. This is good since complete truth is not found in the pages of any science book. There are holes in the explanations of creation and life given by science that I believe can only be understood as the working of God in the universe. Education and science cannot save your eternal soul.

This of course assumes that you have an eternal soul in need of saving. The eternal soul, or more properly the spirit, cannot be seen or measured. Thus, it cannot be detected by direct observation, even with the best scientific equipment. So couldn't the spirit be just an idea in our head? Couldn't the spirit be just wishful thinking? We cannot see or measure love directly, but we all agree it is real, and not wishful thinking. There is a mystery to the way we react when we hold a newborn baby, even when it is not our own, just as there is a mystery we feel when confronted with a beautiful sunrise.

10.3. Buddhism.

Buddhism stresses the need for enlightenment as ignorance is blamed for mankind's plight. Certainly, we can agree, ignorance has caused an awful lot of the heartache and pain we see in the world. Buddhism also stresses peaceful coexistence with all men and with nature. There is a respect for life that is truly amazing, to the extent that it is considered wrong by many to kill even an insect. A great emphasis is also placed on discipline in the denying of self. It sounds good, but there is a problem. Some sects of Buddhism have deified Buddha, but he never made such a claim about himself. As we have seen in this series of articles, the universe itself declares God's glory and existence. Buddhism misses this obvious truth just as naturalism does, in believing there is no Creator God. The universe is seen as operating by the laws of cause and effect. A man's current suffering is believed to be the result of misdeeds in a former life. Unless he can obtain perfection of thought and deed it is believed he is destined to the further suffering of being reborn. The only way to break free of a cycle of death / rebirth, according to Buddhism, is to end the desires of the flesh, which are caused by ignorance, and which result in more suffering. This is attempted through discipline and teachings on enlightenment. The belief of Buddhism is that you can achieve eternal peace on your own through discipline. This is unrealistic according to Biblical teaching, since none can achieve this level of perfection, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. The followers of this philosophy generally agree that only Buddhist priests have achieved anywhere near the level of enlightenment needed to break the cycle. So for the average Buddhist, the belief they will attain priestly status in the next life is their only hope for eternal peace. Christians receive priestly status in this life.

What the Buddhist people think they need is someone to teach them the right thought. But no matter how many lives you might live, it will never be enough to enter perfect peace through your own efforts. What the Buddhist really needs is someone who is truly enlightened to exchange places with them in this life, a High Priest who will carry the weight of their suffering, one who has the right thoughts and right deeds that can take the place of their own impure thoughts and deeds. What the people need is someone who has the authority to break the chains of the natural laws, thus allowing the people to escape suffering the penalty of the natural laws. The only one who can control the natural laws is the one who created them in the first place. That one is Jesus.

Yes, life is often hard, and sometimes there is a lot of pain, but I find there is far more joy in living than misery. The good far outweighs the bad.

10.4. *Hinduism.*

Buddha was originally named Siddhartha Gautama. He was raised in the Hindu culture. His father was a king. He was raised in great luxury, sheltered from the outside world. But he found his life of luxury meaningless and abandoned it along with its comforts to seek enlightenment. Except, he didn't abandon all of his former life. The reincarnation beliefs of Buddhism were directly borrowed from Siddhartha Gautama's childhood religion of Hinduism.

Hindu worshipers believe in many gods. Followers pick the gods they will worship. Many choose the gods they have created with their own hands. The history of the Hindu religion is chaotic but appears to indicate that they once believed in the one true God, and their many statues were but representations of His attributes. Over time, the statues came to represent little gods under the one God, until finally the statues were believed to be inhabited by a god or actually became a god.

In this belief system it is thought that everything in the universe is God. Hindus reject the Christian concept that God exists outside and independent of the universe. But the universe had a beginning. Science clearly confirms this point. At the moment of the big bang, time and space also began. The cause, the Creator — God — must exist outside of the universe. This is a basic doctrine of Judeo-Christian belief and the evidence supports it. The universe is clearly not God.

Hindu culture is also heavily based on the caste system. This is highly contrary to western thought. In the caste system, the social position that you are born into determines what your life will be like. You cannot climb above the class that you are born into, because your birth position was determined by your past life. So if you are poor, you deserved it. If you are the son of a rich ruler, you earned it by your past deeds. The only hope for the masses in the Hindu culture is to acquire a better rebirth by good works, devotion to a god made with their own hands, or through knowledge in a manner similar to Buddhism's enlightenment.

Viewed from a Biblical perspective, Hindu believers worship the creation (originally seen as attributes of God) and not the Creator. By creating their own gods in the form of wooden and stone statues, Hinduism violates the first and second of the ten commandments: Thou shalt have none other gods before me and Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. Hindu beliefs are not proven wrong just because they are in direct opposition to Muslim, Jewish, and Christian teaching. However, it has been shown that the universe is not God. It is also just as obvious, to all but the Hindu believer, that wooden and stone god statues cannot help anyone attain Nirvana. The Hindus, under their system, must try to work their way to eternal bliss on their own. Since no one can be perfect enough to earn eternal peace, the Hindus have developed a system that offers them multiple lives to reach this goal, a noble but meaningless effort.

What the Hindu people think they need is to be reborn into a higher class so they can be served, giving them more time to work on their need for perfection. But isn't it the rich, the powerful, and the religious leaders who have held them in bondage to the caste system? What the people actually need is to be born again as a servant. There is no more noble a class in life than that of one who gives

his life to serve another. Even more, the people need a perfect servant who will allow his works, devotion, and knowledge to be counted in place of their own imperfect deeds and actions, one who even while they still reject him, will give his very life to gain their eternal life. What the people need is Jesus Christ.

10.5. *New Age.*

A modern offshoot of Hinduism is the New Age movement. There is a scene in the movie "Out on a Limb" where Shirley MacLaine stands on the beach before the ocean and declares, "I am God!" That is the very essence of the New Age religion. Picture it in your mind. One can almost hear the ocean in defiance pounding the shoreline insisting that the waves, and not this little person, are God.

Meanwhile, the sun beats down on the waves causing the water to evaporate, so the sun might claim it is God. Still, the air holds the water, collecting it into huge clouds, and then blows the clouds about with its mighty winds. So the air might be God, except that the earth's gravity eventually overcomes the air and pulls the waters back down in a mighty storm. The earth then could be God, for out of it life springs forth in abundance, including the flowers, the birds, and Shirley. The earth, however, would remain lifeless if not for the air, the waves, and the sun.

Any of these things might be claimed as God, but they are not. All of them together might be thought of as composing the whole of God, but they do not. It should easily be seen that all these things have limits, even when combined. God is not limited. Beyond the limits of space and time the eternal one looks at the creation of His hands and quietly declares through it, "I am that I am."

Many people in the world fall into the error of New Age thought by worshipping things that are not God. The earth is not God; it is His creation. Crystals are lovely but they cannot hear your prayers. The stars are glowing nuclear furnaces. They are not gods who guide our lives. Mediums cannot get in touch with the dead. The telephone psychics so popular today cannot tell the future. At best they have vivid imaginations, or are con artists. At worst satanic angels are guiding them. Either way, all these things are tools of death, because they cannot save your soul. Material possessions, money, power and authority are other gods that are common to man. These things are of no value when faced with death.

10.6. *The Muslim Religion.*

The Muslims know there is a God, and only one God. He is not made of wood or stone by man's hand. He is eternal, the Creator of the universe, and the giver of life. The Muslims also rightly reject multiple lives as a way of gaining eternal life.

The Muslims share some common heritage with Jews and Christians, although they believe Jews and Christians have perverted the Scriptures. The common link is that Muslims claim Abraham as their ancestral father. The Muslims are believed to be descended from Ishmael, the son of Hagar. Hagar was the servant girl of Sarah, Abraham's wife. The Muslims accept Moses as a prophet, but reject the Bible's claim that God's blessing is through Isaac. The Muslims accept Jesus as a prophet, but deny He is the promised Messiah.

The Muslims also reject the Christian concept of the Trinity, one God in three persons. The Muslims believe Christians worship three Gods instead of the one true God. The question one must ask is, can the Muslim religion be reasoned true or false? First, we must examine the practices of Muslims. Every Muslim has 5 duties:

to make the profession of faith “There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet ” (Allah is Arabic for God — there is no god but God) to pray 5 times a day to give a regular portion of his goods to charity to fast during the day in the month of Ramadan to make at least one pilgrimage in their life to Mecca, if possible

Notice there is not a lot in these practices that most of us would find objectionable at first glance. We prefer to view Muslims as radical fanatics who do not value life as westerners do. This allows us to make them different from us, and thereby acceptable as objects of hate for our prejudice. This is not how God views them. God loves them the same as he does you, and everybody else on this planet, including Hindus, Buddhists, and atheists.

Muslims would have others believe that Islam is a religion of peace, but this is problematic both in view of its past history and its current policies and practices. Under the Ottoman Turks, scores of Orthodox Christians accepted martyrdom rather than convert to Islam. In 1821, at the outbreak of the Greek War for Independence, the Ecumenical Patriarch, Gregory V, was hung from the gates of the patriarchate. The fierce and even brutal persecution of Christians in Islamic countries today is well documented — if shamefully ignored (see Paul Marshall 's *Their Blood Cries Out*). Muslims cannot deny the fact that there are extremists in their midst, and these often have the voice in the Muslim community. This admission comes from the Islamic Supreme Council, a Muslim education group that is criticizing Islamic leaders here in the US for too often “equivocating between implicit support for extremists and general condemnation of terrorism.” It says that Islamic extremist organizations often operate in the US under “assumed identities as non-profit organizations or corporate businesses, hiding their origins and affiliations ” (Religion Watch). The KLA 's ties with Muslim terrorist Usama bin Laden and the support it receives from the militantly Islamic state of Iran were widely reported. As a religion Islam is deficient in many ways. It does not admit the concept of grace and makes no provision for redemption of sins. Heavily based upon rituals, it is legalistic, and pervaded by a sense of fatalism (kismet). Muhammad himself inspires little confidence in his claim to be a divinely chosen prophet. When he was still young, he was subject to fits, leading his foster mother to suspect that he was possessed by demons. His later visions were accompanied by similar manifestations, terrifying Muhammad himself. Although some of his followers persist in believing Muhammad to have been sinless, his behavior in Medina was in many ways disgraceful — he plundered caravans and persecuted Jews. When Kadijah died, he took several wives, sanctioning polygamy (he himself exceeded the “proper ” limit of four wives). His sexual indulgences translated into his conception of heaven as a place of sensual gratification.

10.7. *Judaism.*

To understand Judaism today, one must clearly distinguish between the God-inspired faith of the Old Testament and today's Judaism which is called rabbinic or Talmudic Judaism — rabbinic because its source is the teachings of the rabbis, or Talmudic because its source is the Talmud. The Talmud is an 18 - volume set of rabbinic writings, written from about A.D. 200 to 600, which is considered the authoritative commentary on the Old Testament Scriptures.

It is proper to call God's people in the Old Testament "Israelites," while reserving "Jews" for the period after the Old Testament, to indicate that Judaism, the faith of the Jews, differs significantly from the faith of the Old Testament.

At the time of Jesus' ministry on earth, the majority of the Jews were scattered throughout the Mediterranean world and the Middle East, with concentrations in Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy. The interest of the Jews, however, was still on the temple and the sacrifices at Jerusalem. For them, that was the center of the universe, and every Jew tried to make as many pilgrimages there as possible. When the Romans destroyed the temple in A.D. 70, the primary focus of worship turned to the synagogue.

The Jewish people who are affiliated with a synagogue today (about half of them in the United States) belong to one of the three major branches of Judaism: Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform. These divisions are not rigid. Much of the teaching still depends on the local rabbi, and what is actually believed by the people varies by individual. Jewish people even feel free to identify with more than one of these branches or denominations.

None of the three branches of Judaism has a fixed set of doctrines or creeds beyond the Shema. At the same time, all Judaism is monotheistic. Also, it is oriented mostly to life in this world, with little attention given to life hereafter.

Orthodox Judaism

The Orthodox Jews refer to themselves as "Torah-true." They are devoted to strict observance of all of the 613 commandments they count in the Torah. The Sabbath must be strictly observed from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday. They cannot ride in cars on the Sabbath and can only walk short distances. The Sabbath is observed by complete abstention from work and business. The Orthodox keep "kosher," which means that they can eat no pork or blood, and milk cannot be consumed at the same meal as beef. In Orthodox synagogues Hebrew is used, women are separated from the men, and the head is always covered.

Reform Judaism

While the Orthodox accept the Tanach (the Hebrew Bible, which Christians call the Old Testament, except that the order of the books is different) as the inspired, unerring revelation of God, the Reform (not Reformed) Jew believes in progressive revelation, which takes into account changes brought about by history. Worship is in a "temple" rather than a synagogue, sexes can mix, mostly English is used, and musical instruments are permitted. The dietary laws are not observed strictly. Hope for a personal Messiah is replaced with the hope for a messianic time of peace for humanity. The Reform movement began in Germany as an attempt to modernize the burdensome traditions of Orthodox Judaism. The center of Reform Judaism today is in the United States.

Conservative Judaism

Between the strict Orthodox and the liberal Reform is Conservative Judaism, which attempts to

compromise between the two, keeping some of the traditions but still trying to be enlightened about modern civilization. It keeps some of the dietary laws (with modifications) and uses both Hebrew and English in worship. The Conservative Jew sees Jewish culture as the unifying bond for Jews. The largest number of affiliated Jews belongs to this group.

Limburg, in *Judaism: An Introduction for Christians*, writes that 53 percent of American Jews have no formal membership in a synagogue or temple, but many of them express their relationship to the Jewish people through participation in Jewish organizations. He lists these percentages of those 47 percent who are affiliated: Orthodox, 20 %; Reform, 30 %; and Conservative, 50 %

Other Movements within Judaism

Other smaller movements and sects within the scope of Judaism include Hasidic Judaism, a pietistic movement somewhat akin to the pietistic movement within Lutheranism in the 18th century, or perhaps more like the development of the Amish people. It was a reaction against the unemotional Judaism of Eastern Europe.

Reconstructionism, a radical movement within Judaism, seeks to reconstruct all aspects of Jewish society. Its founder, Mordecai Kaplan (*Judaism as Civilization*, 1934), was excommunicated by the Union of Orthodox Rabbis. This movement, while emphasizing the need for a Jewish community, views that community as a “civilization ” rather than a religious community, although the community does have religion as its core.

Among the Jewish people of our day, many espouse no formal religion but deal with the ethical questions of life with a moralistic approach. They still consider themselves Jewish but see their Jewishness not so much as a religion but as a culture, a community of people with a long and rich heritage. These Jews are sometimes called “cultural Jews,” “secular Jews,” and some might even be considered agnostics or atheists.

Messianic Jews

Another group within the realm of Judaism consists of those who identify themselves as Messianic Jews. These Jews believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah. Culturally and ethnically they are Jews, but they believe in Christ as do Christians. Some prefer the terms “Hebrew Christians,” “Jewish Christians,” or simply “believers.” Most Jews who do not believe in Jesus claim the term is deceptive since it does not identify a Messianic Jew as a believer in Jesus Christ.

The traditional Jewish community today maintains vehemently that when a Jew by birth accepts Jesus as Messiah (that is, when one becomes a Christian), he or she is no longer a Jew. One cannot be a Christian and a Jew at the same time, they say; these are mutually exclusive categories. In December, 1989, the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that Jews who believe that Jesus is the Messiah cannot be considered Jews under Israel ’s Law of Return (which guarantees citizenship to every Jew who desires it). The reason, given by Justice Menachem Elon, is that Messianic Jews “do not belong to the Jewish nation; those who believe in Jesus are in fact Christian.” Rabbi A. James Rudin of the American Jewish Committee stated that he hoped this ruling would end the “deceiving charade ” of Jews who claim to be Jews but are Christians (St. Louis Post Dispatch, January 6, 1989).

Of course, those Jews who have become Christians strongly object and insist that they are still Jewish even though they believe in Jesus. To emphasize this fact, some use the terms “Messianic Synagogue ” (calling their spiritual leader “rabbi ”), “Completed Jew,” and “Fulfilled Jew.”

It seems today (although there are no hard statistics to demonstrate it) that more and more Jews who become Christians want to continue to be identified with their Jewish heritage. To varying degrees, they continue to practice some of their Jewish customs and traditions — like the Seder meal of the Passover, the use of Hebrew in some worship and prayers, and some styles of worship learned in the synagogue. Some Jewish believers may keep kosher and wear yarmulkes and prayer shawls. Whatever view we hold in this area, as long as individual practices (and not doctrine) remain a matter of Christian freedom, we do well to respect the culture and heritage of the Jewish people and to allow Jewish believers in Christ to express their faith in their own way.

Messianic Judaism has grown in recent years. There are Messianic congregations in all major cities of the country which have large Jewish populations. There are several national and world organizations which bring them together in an “association” style.

The Messiah.

The Old Testament faith was strongly messianic. The prophets promised a “greater prophet” than Moses, a king who would restore the throne of David, a suffering servant who would redeem his people. Every Jewish mother at the time of Jesus hoped that her son would be the Messiah. The reason that many Jews in Jesus’ day did not welcome him as the Messiah is because they had a different concept of what the Messiah would be like and what he would do: they expected a political king who would free them from Gentile rule and establish the glory of their own kingdom. They generally ignored prophecies (such as Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22) that the Messiah would suffer and die for the sins of the people.

But Jesus came, and the Jews had to deal with him. After Pentecost, as the church grew and the apostles preached that the crucified and risen Jesus was truly the Messiah who fulfilled all of the prophecies, the officials had to take a stand. There were strong differences of opinion. The Sanhedrin issued the order “not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus” (Acts 4: 18). The conflict which then unfolded between the church and the synagogue helped to shape the development of Judaism. One thing remained a strong element in Judaism: it was anti-Jesus. Judaism clearly taught that Jesus of Nazareth was not the Messiah.

Judaism, however, did remain messianic in the sense that most Jewish people continue to look forward to the coming of the Messiah and/or a messianic age of peace and good will. As one Jewish lawyer expressed at a Messianic Forum luncheon in St. Louis, “When I see the lamb and the lion lie down together, as Isaiah promised, I will believe the Messiah has come.”

11.Revelation.

By the capitalized word, Revelation, we mean the supernatural disclosure by God to people of otherwise unknowable truths. Man is a part of the world. The world was created without man's participation. Man is limited by the time of his birth and death, the extent of his stay within the world. As a part cannot know the whole, so man cannot perceive all. He can, by the strength of his own mind, comprehend neither the original cause of everything in existence, nor the meaning of his own life and that of the world, nor the goal of the universe. These questions which arise and demand a solution in the consciousness of every man are unsolvable by the mind of man. The only possible method of solving these and many other most urgent spiritual inquiries is Revelation. If God should want to disclose to the people these otherwise unknowable truths, then, and only then, will man become able to perceive them.

God desired this and opened the Truth to people. He sent to the earth his Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who brought people the Truth, the way of understanding it (the method or way of perceiving the Truth) and the authentic life, for without the aid of God there cannot be eternal life. I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14: 6), said Christ.

In another passage He said, Without Me ye can do nothing (John 15: 5). Nobody had previously spoken as having power to reveal Truth Itself. Christ is the fullness of God-revealed Truth. Speaking with His lips was God Himself. His every word was the absolute pure Truth. For He Himself, the Savior of the world, was the Son of God; He was the true God.

Revelation was accomplished gradually. The Lord did not reveal Himself and His will at once. In the beginning, through miraculous and wonderful phenomena of nature and its laws, He gave the so-called natural revelation. Then He gave the supernatural revelation by means of spiritual prophets and through miraculous events in man's history, and, finally, He gave the full Revelation of good tidings in the Son, the God-Man, Christ.

In the composition of every supernatural revelation there is sure to be contained the foretelling of the future, the disclosure of God's mysteries and the explanation of religious-ethical truths which rise above all possibilities and capabilities of man's knowledge.

The revelation of nature as well as the voice of our conscience says that above us there should a cause, a power and wisdom of a creative principle witnessing the presence of a personal Higher Being, that is, that there exists a God ! All so-called proofs of the existence of God are the result of this supernatural revelation.

An honest and normal person's mind, through examination of the nature of the world and the nature of his own conscience, reaches the conviction of the existence of God, and only an evil or abnormal mind can deny Him. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God (Psalm 13: 1).

But besides a conviction of the existence of God, man also desires personal communion with Him. Religion begins not with the acceptance of God's existence (this, properly speaking, is a problem of philosophy) but through communion with Him. This communion of man with God is impossible without the aid of God. It is exactly this aid which is given by supernatural Revelation.

Besides the subdivision of Revelation into natural and supernatural, there are distinguished yet other aspects of Revelation: direct and intermediary, external and internal.

Direct Revelation is the communication with God Himself of one or another religious truth to a selected person (for example, the prophet and God-seer Moses). Intermediary Revelation occurs when it is communicated to people through divinely inspired persons (for example, the prophets) or higher intellectual beings — angels (for example, the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary). External

Revelation is the act of communication of the Truth, and Internal Revelation is the act of understanding what was communicated.

For the latter, supernatural inspiration, usually described as “divine inspiration,” is a necessity. This signifies the effect of the Spirit of God upon the prophets and Apostles: under God’s inspiration they correctly explained the Revelations communicated to them and faithfully set them down in the holy books. Such holy books received the name “divinely inspired.”

Regarding the nature of Revelation, false views were often expressed and are still being expressed. It is necessary to expose them.

The famous Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria, and several ancient Christian sectarians (for example, the so-called Montanists), expressed the view that for the perception of Revelation a special state of unconscious ecstasy is a necessary condition. At a later time, a similar opinion was expressed in various Protestant circles of the 17th and 18th centuries. According to this teaching, people esteemed worthy of being heralds of divine Revelations were themselves not conscious of these Revelations, but received them passively and were only the technical transmitters of God’s word. This teaching is profoundly false. The very meaning of “Revelation” presupposes the intelligence of the receiver. There is no reason to take away the light of intelligence from a person at the moment of Revelation, for the intellect itself is given to man by God precisely for the perception of Truth.

At the other extreme, we find that overly rationalistic opinions of the nature of Revelation eventually lead to a denial of the possibility of supernatural Revelation and to various attempts to bring the supernatural down to the level of natural revelation. All of these attempts prove fruitless, since they also lead to insoluble contradictions. The analysis of the perception of absolute Truth brings us to this dilemma: either such Truth is incomprehensible, or it can only be divinely revealed and, therefore, is supernatural.

Pantheistic understanding of Revelation virtually amounts to a denial of it. If nature is God, then there is no need for One to reveal Himself to anybody or anything. In philosophical pantheistic systems, Revelation is understood as the self-revelation of God in man’s spirit. For instance, according to the teaching of Hegel, the absolute spirit is eternally and variously revealed in diverse forms — in nature, in man’s spirit, in the history of man. He is revealed not to man but in man, coming to self-consciousness in him. In such a teaching, man’s knowledge of God is, in essence, a knowledge of God about Himself.

In the most recent history of philosophy there have been attempts at building whole complicated theories about Revelation. One of these theories, which has received considerable circulation, is the theory of the German philosopher Schleiermacher, who lived in the first half of the 19th century. Schleiermacher regarded as miraculous every vital phenomenon, because no phenomenon of life can be completely understood. By expanding in such a way an understanding of miracles, he denied miraculous phenomena as they are understood in Christianity. Schleiermacher acknowledged as revelation every new prominent phenomenon of man’s spirit, natural to genius. In such a way, the supernatural, in his opinion, is the same as the natural, but of exceptionally rare and wonderful meaning in man’s life. This mixture of deism and pantheism is full of contradictions. Arbitrarily and excessively expanding the understanding of miracles, revelation and inspiration, Schleiermacher dilutes meaning and explains nothing.

Other recent philosophers have raised doubts regarding the possibility of supernatural Revelation. By nature, the problem of supernatural Revelation rests upon the problem of miracles in general. If a miracle is possible (see the chapter on the problem of miracles above), then supernatural Revelation is possible. Faith in it depends on the good or evil will of man. The verity of Revelation, besides the

rationalistic basis, is finally proved pragmatically, by the experience of Christian life. The question of the criteria of true Revelation is a serious question of Christian Apologetics and, therefore, is subject to more minute examination.

The criterion of true revelation.

If a teaching which claims to be Revelation contains obvious internal contradictions or contradictions to elementary ethical demands, then there can be no doubt that this teaching is not true Revelation. However, if in a teaching we find an elevated religious-ethical instruction, producing an exceptionally salutary influence on the spiritual life of man, then this serves as a serious argument in favor of its being true Revelation. For instance, Tertullian, in his "Apologetics," pointed to the unusually ethical-salutary action of Christian teaching as a proof of its divine origin. St. Clement of Alexandria pointed to the true enlightenment spread throughout the whole world through Christianity as an indication of its divine issue. The revelation of new truths, serving as a stimulus for the religious-ethical development of mankind, also certainly bears witness to the truth of Revelation.

The holy Apostle Paul points to the regeneration into a new life as an indication of true Revelation, saying: Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (II Cor. 5: 17). But newness alone is not enough for it to be accepted as an indication of supernatural Revelation. The truth of Revelation can never become obsolete, as man's new teachings do. Being an inexhaustible source for the spiritual renewal of man, it abides eternally unchangeable in its principle, while at the same time it does not lose its profoundly vital meaning in spite of the most diverse changes in the historical life of man. Revealed Truths are always eternal Truths.

The discovery of mysteries inaccessible to the natural capabilities of man's research is the most apparent indication of true Revelation. When God Himself reveals about Himself — about His unsearchable plans concerning the fates of the world and man — then, before man's intellect there is necessarily disclosed a whole series of truths which exceed every intellect of man.

According to the teaching of the Holy Fathers, the Truth of God's Revelation is verifiable, chiefly, by its announcement to us of "the mysterious, intimate, great wisdom of God," which, in the words of the Apostle Paul, which reveals God's unfathomable depth, into which nobody can penetrate or know, except the Spirit of God. The Church Fathers point with especial insistence to the great mysteries of the Christian faith — to the Mystery of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, the future Resurrection of the Dead — as unquestionable proofs of the divinity of Christian teaching.

St. Athanasius of Alexandria, in his *On the Incarnation*, proved the truth and godliness of Christianity from an analysis of the Mystery of the Incarnation. Origen, the Blessed Augustine and St. Gregory of Nyssa arrived at the same conclusion, analyzing the Mystery of the Holy Trinity.

Many ancient Christian apologists pointed to the Christian teaching about the Resurrection as a proof of the divine greatness of Christianity, especially Athenagoras' *About the Resurrection of the Dead*, and Tertullian's *About the Resurrection of the Body*.

The supernatural character of Revelation cannot be proved in the absence of supernatural signs, that is, miracles. Therefore, the most important proof of the divine truth of Revelation should be acknowledged in those phenomena and miracles, which the Savior not only produced, but to which He Himself referred: Though ye believe not Me, believe the works (John 10: 38).

12. Miracles and Prophecies.

The miracles which accompany Revelation are proof of Divine Almightyness, and, because of that, witness to the truth of Revelation. Prophecies, being proof of Divine Omniscience, also witness to the truth of Revelation.

A genuine miracle can be examined from the ontological, psychological and teleological points of view. As an ontological phenomenon, a miracle is a phenomenon of the supernatural power of Divine Omnipotence in the facts of usual life. Psychologically, a miracle produces a soul-stunning sensation. As a teleological phenomenon, a miracle always has a definite aim, sense, and a deep moral meaning: revealing to people the nature of divine love and truth. Therefore, a genuine miracle is always the best and most graphic proof of the divinity of Revelation.

The Savior taught as one who had the authority to reveal the Truth to people. In order to prove His divine might and goodness, and also the might of those who had faith in God and love toward people, He occasionally performed miracles and demonstrated other spiritual phenomena. Sometimes these miracles carried an undoubted and exceptionally supernatural character such as the resurrection of the dead, healing at a distance by word alone, and subduing the storm also by word; sometimes they were combined with causes, such as the healing of a man born blind with the help of a mixture from spittle; and at other times, for their accomplishment, the personal effort of the man was necessary — mainly, in the manifestation of the power of faith, such as the walking upon the water of the Apostle Peter.

Of a singular aspect are miracles which represent in themselves fully natural phenomena, but which are performed in a strictly definite moment, as a result of which the wonder proves to be in the extraordinary coincidence of two phenomena, such as the Hebrews' crossing of the Red Sea and the failure of Pharaoh's army to do so, or the earthquake and the obscuration of the sun at the death of the Savior.

Not less of a notable proof of the truth of divine Revelation is prophecy. The prophet Isaiah attaches a decisive meaning to prophecies in the work of disclosing the truth of divine Revelation. Present your case, says he to the idolaters, let your gods approach and tell us what is to happen; let them tell us something before it happens, and we will consider it with our minds, and will find its result, or let them tell us the things that are coming hereafter. Tell us, what will happen in the future, and we will know that you are gods (Isaiah 41: 21 - 23). In the New Testament, the Savior Himself pointed to His prophecies of the future as a sign of His divine dignity: Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he (John 13: 19).

The exceptional and enormous meaning that was attached to the Old Testament prophecies by the Savior is seen from the message of the Apostle and Evangelist Luke: And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself (Luke 24: 27). The power of proof of Revelation by prophecies was compared by the Savior to the resurrection of the dead: If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead (Luke 16: 31).

13. Old Testament religion.

Of all the religions in the world, only the Christian religion possesses all the inner and external indications of divinely revealed dignity and possesses true prophecies and miracles. Christianity is the sole, true, divinely revealed religion. This religion is subdivided into the Old Testament and the New Testament, composing, however, one organic whole, and represents the development of one Divine Plan for the salvation of mankind. The difference between the Old and New Testaments lies not in its nature, but in the degree of its fullness and perfection.

The Old Testament Revelation pertains to the New Testament as a preparation does to a performance; as a promise does to a fulfillment; and as a symbol does to an image. The aim of Old Testament Revelation was the preparation of mankind in its historic life for the acceptance of a higher Christian Revelation. This was spoken of by the Old Testament prophets themselves, for it was they who expressed the thought that the Messiah will come and will Himself announce to the people the New Covenant (see the prophecy of Jeremiah 31: 31 - 35).

Christianity possesses such a volume of proofs of its truth and of its divine Revelation so numerous and diverse that it can satisfy the inquiries and demands of the most varied moods and the most diverse habits of mind and character, if only these sincerely search for the Truth.

The Hebrew people were the elect of God. To this people the Lord gave His original Revelation. To be selected by God means much is given, but much is also asked for in return. A great deal was given to the Hebrew people, and a great deal was to be answered for by them. However, the Old Testament Revelation was not complete, but only preparatory in the history of the divine structure. It gradually fulfilled its purpose. Revealed truths were opened little by little in preparation for approaching the aim of its purpose: to prepare all mankind to receive the higher and more perfect Christian Revelation. The Old Testament revelations were in such a period of the history of man when neither the Hebrew people nor other peoples of the world were prepared for the reception of the higher truths of Christian Revelation. Therefore, these truths were revealed gradually in a limited measure.

The nature of the religion of the Old Testament.

First of all, Old Testament religion represents in itself pure monotheism. This circumstance sharply distinguishes the unquestionably divinely revealed Old Testament religion from all other natural religions which also contained, to a greater or lesser degree, elements of polytheism, pantheism and even atheism.

In the Holy Scripture of the Old Testament, God is represented as a single (Deuteronomy 4: 39, 32: 39), original, and personal Being (Exodus 3: 14 - 15). Among all the religious and philosophical definitions of the Divinity, it is impossible to find in content one more complete and profound, and, in form, a more concise, compact and clear formula than the divine self-determination given to Moses in the Revelation: I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you (Exodus 3: 14).

From this it is clear that God is eternal and ever-existing, and, at the same time, is a vital Personality, an Intellect, sending His elect to work in service to Truth and good for the welfare of the race of man. Biblical monotheism differs sharply from abstract monotheism in which the Divinity is separated by an impossible abyss from the world and man and is placed in a purely outward mechanical relation to them (for example: Islamic monotheism). Being a pure theism (i.e. understanding God not only as the Creator of the universe but also as the Intellect), biblical monotheism sharply differs from all deistic

presentations of God — where God is understood as the Creator of the world and its laws, but does not interfere any further in the life of beings created by Him.

Biblical monotheism bears a deeply vital and highly ethical character. The sole, vital, personal God, endlessly towering above the whole world, Almighty, the all-knowing Creator of the whole universe, according to the biblical teaching, is also the all-good Intellect, the just Judge, and justly rewarding. To Him are attributed not only abstract metaphysical properties, such as eternal existence, almightiness, omniscience, endless wisdom, omnipresence, etc., but also all the highest perfections which the Old Testament unites in one understanding of holiness. Through this understanding, a conception of God as the cause of evil was eliminated because ethical imperfection was impossible in Him.

Not one of the ancient pagan religions ever rose to a true understanding of the holiness of God; on the contrary, an understanding of holiness was always absent from the enumerated and described properties of divinity ! Even in the Persian religion, the most ethical of all, Ormuzd, is bound by an evil origin, did not represent a being possessing a completeness of moral force. There was a complete absence of an understanding of holiness also in the irreligious moral system of Buddhism !

Only in the Old Testament religion was there made apparent an understanding of the holiness of God in all its purity. From whence, therefore, came this purity, depth and lofty teaching of the Old Testament religion about God? All the religious and philosophical representations of God by other peoples were not in a position to break away from the foundation of naturalism or pantheism.

Standing among other religions like a lonely mountain in the midst of a valley is the Old Testament religion, with its lofty monotheism speaking of a holy, personal, vital, all-perfect, all-good God — the Creator and the Intellect of the world. Free of mythological fantasies and imbued with vital life, the Old Testament teaching represents an undeniable miracle appearing at the dawn of history, and by this, already witnessing its Divine origin.

It is especially remarkable, however, that the bearer of this unquestionably divinely revealed religion was a small, insignificant tribe; inconspicuous amid other great and civilized peoples of the ancient world. This tribe, surrounded on all sides by paganism, and itself having an inclination to the latter, as all of its history shows, nevertheless advanced to an incomparable position in the profundity, clarity, purity and perfection of its religion. Nothing other than supernatural divine Revelation can explain this historic riddle before which all attempts of rationalistic interpretation have proved powerless. Biblical teaching about creation finds itself closely dependent on the lofty biblical teaching about the Creator of the world and also represents remarkable features of superiority over all teachings of other ancient religions concerning the origin of the world. The question of creation did not receive a satisfactory solution in any of the known ancient religions. Nature was accepted as either eternally existing, when man was reckoned as only a “flower of nature ” (in the religion of China); or it was transformed into a token, when all matter was regarded as evil (in the religion of India); or else, in the outlook on creation, anthropomorphism predominated, ascribing creation and world rule to gods, differing from man only in the degree of perfection (the religion of the classical ancient Mediterranean world).

The biblical solution to the question of creation sharply differs from all these extremes. The world, in the Old Testament religion, is considered as a creation of the one, personal, all-mighty, all-wise, all-good, and holy Creator. Man is defined as an intellectually free creation, created in the image and likeness of God, capable of the development of moral likeness to God and designated immortal in his potential.

The teaching about creation in the Old Testament is developed more fully than the teaching about God. The Holy Scripture of the Old Testament begins with a description, not of the Being of God, but

with the affairs of His creation and His intellectual activity. A full Revelation concerning the Being of God does not enter into the problem of Old Testament Revelation since mankind was not then prepared for it. In the fullness of time, it was communicated in the Revelation of the New Testament. In the Old Testament, according to the Holy Fathers, the teaching about the Holy Trinity was veiled so as not to give the Hebrew people a cause to think that there were many gods. The main task of the Old Testament Revelation consisted of presenting a firm teaching that God is One. And in the Revelation of the New Testament, the very essence of the one, personal God was represented by the Holy Trinity ! The veiled teaching about the Holy Trinity can be seen in the mention of the Spirit of God; The Spirit of God went about above the water; and about the Word of the Lord; and by the Word of the Lord the heavens were confirmed.

The teaching of the creation revealed in the Old Testament was accepted also in the New Testament, since it comprised within itself eternal and permanent truths of divine Revelation. The question of the origin of the world is a question exceeding the natural perceptive capabilities of man, and for that reason has not been resolved in any philosophical or scientific teaching. Man lives amid nature and its laws. He can study nature and discover, but not create, the already existing laws of nature. But how nature and its laws were created, man with his perceptive abilities cannot know. This question is either altogether insoluble, or it can be solved solely through Revelation. And such a Revelation about the creation was given in the Old Testament.

14. The harmony of the two revelations.

The Lord reveals Himself to people in two ways: through immediate spiritual enlightenment of the human soul, and through nature, whose entire order witnesses the wisdom, goodness and omnipotence of the Creator. Both the interior and exterior revelations have one Source, and their contents must complement one another and cannot be contradictory under any circumstances. It should be therefore accepted that genuine science, based on factual studies of nature, and the Holy Scriptures, a written witness to spiritual enlightenment, must be in full concord regarding each and every issue related to knowing God and His acts. Throughout history, sharp conflicts have occurred between people of science and people of religion (mostly Roman Catholic); however, a thorough investigation into the causes of controversies would explain that they arose out of pure misunderstanding. Religion and science have their own goals and methods, and, while their elements may correlate in certain principal areas, they cannot tally up in full.

Conflicts of science and religion occur when, for example, scientists express voluntary and unreasonable opinions about God, the Original Cause of the world and life and the utter aim of human existence. These opinions of scientists have no scientific facts supporting them; they are constructed from superficial and hasty generalizations which have nothing to do with science. In a like manner, conflicts between science and religion occur when clerics wish to derive laws of nature from their own understanding of religious principles. For example, the Roman Inquisition tried Galileo for teaching that the Earth revolves around the Sun. The Inquisition opined that, as God created everything for the sake of man, then the Earth must be in the center of the Universe and everything else rotates around it. This was an absolutely voluntary conclusion, not based on the Bible, because being in the focus of God's care has nothing to do with the geometrical center of the physical world (which is possibly nonexistent). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, atheists were ironical, above all, about the Biblical narration on the creation of light. They ridiculed believers, saying, "Where could light come from if the source of light, the Sun, had not existed!" But today's science has advanced far from this childish, naive notion of light. Now physics knows that light and matter are two different states of energy, able to exist and translate into each other, irrespective of stellar luminaries. Fortunately, such conflicts of science and religion disappear when deeper study of the issue supersedes the zeal of disputation.

Far from all people are able to achieve a stable balance of faith and reason. Some blindly believe in human intellect, and are ready to agree with any theory, even the most newly-invented and unproven, e.g. the theory about the origins of the universe and life on the Earth irrespective of what is said in the Holy Scripture. Others suspect scientists of crookedness and mischief, and are reluctant to learn about positive scientific discoveries in the fields of paleontology, biology and anthropology, because they are afraid to weaken their faith in the truth of the Holy Scripture.

However, there will never be any serious conflict between our faith and reason if we adhere to the following: Both the Holy Scripture and nature are true witnesses of God and His acts, and they confirm each other.

Man is a limited creature, unable to comprehend fully the mysteries of nature and the depths of the truth in the Holy Scripture. What seems to be controversial now may receive explanation when man becomes able to understand better what nature and the Word of God communicate to him.

One also needs to be able to distinguish precise scientific facts from suggestions and opinions of learned people. Facts will remain facts, but scientific theories built upon them often change radically after new data become known. In a similar manner, one must be able to tell the difference between a

direct witness of the Holy Scriptures from its interpretations. People comprehend the Holy Scripture by the measure of their spiritual and intellectual development and by the baggage of their knowledge. That is why we cannot demand from interpreters of the Holy Scripture perfect infallibility in the areas related to religion and science at the same time.

In the Holy Scripture, only the two first chapters of the Book of Genesis were dedicated to the creation of the world and humans on earth. It is noteworthy that no other writing in the world's literature was read with greater interest than this God-inspired book. On the other hand, no other book has met with such brutal and undeserved criticism as the book of Genesis.

Therefore, in the next several chapters we wish to speak in defense of this holy book, and particularly of its first chapters. These will cover God's inspiration of the Holy Scripture, the author and circumstances of writing of the Book of Genesis, the days of Creation, and man as a representative of two worlds.

15. The biblical teaching on creation.

The biblical teaching about creation comprised the cornerstone of the whole Old Testament outlook on the Divinity and the world created by It. Within the foundation of this teaching lay the idea of a pure creation from nothingness, the idea of the world's temporality, and the idea of the creation of man in his primitive perfection directly by the power of God's almightiness.

The idea of the creation of the world from nothingness by the creative and good power of divine almightiness is remarkable, because in it, for the first time, is given in pure form the true understanding of creation, without any admixture of pantheism, dualism, naturalism, and materialism ! This idea at its very root excludes a representation of the world emanating out of a divine substance, as well as of some kind of Builder who needed pre-existing matter for the creation of the world. This idea excludes the assumption of an extraneous force which God required for the accomplishment of His creative plan. In other words, this idea rejects every misunderstanding of the formation of the world, while clearly and definitely asserting the understanding of a pure creation. Only on the condition of the creation of the world from nothingness is the understanding made clear of the true nature of God as a Being, positive and without end. Only in creation from nothingness is the distinguishing virtue of divine nature expressed. The act of creation from nothingness is characteristic solely of God alone as an absolute being. Only an absolute and infinite cause can evoke existence out of non-existence ! All teaching rejecting the idea of creation from nothingness lacks true understanding of the certainty and infinitude of the divine absolute Being ! The act of the creation of the world by God is incommensurate with acts characteristic of limited beings. The possibility of creation from nothingness proceeds from the omnipotence of God for whom nothing is impossible !

The idea of the temporality of the world also has an enormous meaning. This idea does not deny that the ideal image of the world was inherent in the divine intellect from eternity, but only denies that the tangible world exists eternally — in exactly the same way as the teaching about the creation from nothingness does not deny that God created the world with the help of His almighty power, but denies only that the world was created by God from some kind of substance separate from Him.

The creation of the world as an objective realization in time of the eternal, divine idea, contemplated from eternity, was spoken of by the Holy Fathers of the Church. For example, St. Gregory the Theologian said, "from eternity God's thoughts contemplated the desired serenity of its goodness ... and also examined in His thoughts the image of the world formed by Him. For God, the world was always present." The question of the manner of the accomplishment of the transition of the ideal image of the world, eternally present in the godly Intellect, into a real form of existence is solved, according to the Holy Fathers of the Church, by faith in the omnipotence of God.

The teaching about temporality is opposed by the pantheists and materialists, for it destroys the foundation of all their philosophical structures. However, present-day science arrives at the indubitable conviction that the world is not eternal.

The order of creation, which is recorded in the first chapter of the book of Genesis, represented a complete compliance with authentic conclusions of natural science in the question of the formation of the world. The biblical narration of the creation of the world is very brief; does not, in principle, mention details; and does not intend to be a textbook for the study of astronomy and geology. But the very essentials, in relation to the order of world formation in general, especially, in the order of the creation of our planet, on which the attention of the narrator of the creation is concentrated, are described in the Bible with an accuracy which is irrefutable from the point of view

of honest and serious naturalists.

In the biblical narration, the creation of the organic world on our planet was preceded by the creation and formation of inorganic nature. The organic world, however, developed gradually — the appearance of the animal kingdom was preceded by the vegetable kingdom. The first to appear in the animal kingdom were the lower and more simple organisms (water animals and crawlers), and then the more developed and complicated (birds and four-footed animals). Finally, man is created as the crowning achievement.

The bodily human organism was formed by God from an earlier created element of nature — earthly dust. But the animation of man — the creation of spirituality and intellect — was a specific act of divine creation. The presence of deeply believing people who honor the Bible among learned, world-renowned naturalists, express the conviction that the biblical teaching about creation, which appeared before the birth of science, has passed the test of time.

The academician, Professor R. E. Baer, a Russian scholar, zoologist and anthropologist, well-known to the whole world, says: “Nothing is bequeathed to us from ancient times that is more lofty than the biblical teaching of creation.” An analogous evaluation of this teaching was also given by the famous American naturalist Dawson. The appraisals of Newton, Lomonosov, Pasteur, Roentgen, Mendeleev, Pavlov, Planck, Jeans and the other greatest geniuses of the world are known to all.

As it will be shown below, “days ” of creation should not be understood literally, but as periods, since one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (2 Peter 3: 8).

15.1. *God and Genesis.*

The universe testifies to the existence of its Creator. The Bible in the book of Genesis gives a brief account of God ’s creative work. Unfortunately, some scientists and theologians have not been able to come together on the facts.

One reason — the age of the universe, another — evolution.

In 1650 AD, Archbishop James Usher used the genealogies provided in Genesis to calculate the age of the earth. He arrived at a date of 4004 BC. Usher had little scientific data available to determine whether he was using sound exegesis. It is natural to assume that the Archbishop would not reach the same conclusion if he were to study the evidence available now. However, the young-earth creationists are still perpetuating this view today by insisting that the earth is about 6, 000 year old. The young-earth creationists have made this issue a battleground by coercing well-meaning clergy into believing godless science is purposely attempting to discredit the Bible. But the young-earth arguments are flawed, even though they sound like they are glorifying God.

Naturalistic science, on the other hand, claims that everything developed naturally and that there is nothing for a Creator to do. All things can be explained without invoking a God. The sad thing is that this is not true, but it is feared that admitting otherwise would give credence to the young-earth beliefs.

In their pure form, Christianity and science are interested in the same thing — the truth. Many Christian scientists struggle daily between the facts of the universe and the tradition they are told they must accept because of their faith. Some unbelievers cannot come to the saving faith in Jesus

Christ because they cannot settle the differences between science and religion.

The fossil records indicate that life began as simple bacteria type cells and became more and more complex as creation progressed. This does not mean naturalistic evolution can explain everything. It is a theory. Microevolution does explain much of the variations within a species — different types of finches for instance. Macroevolution 's ability to produce through natural selection or mutations novel organs or a change in body plan is not proven fact. On the contrary, the fossil records show that species generally appear suddenly and remain basically stable throughout their existence. On the other hand, in principle it is very logical to admit that God used the laws of nature, that He designed, to achieve His goal.

Two extreme opinions are fighting with each other on this matter, not realizing that it is actually not difficult to harmonize modern science with the Bible.

15.2. *A Brief History.*

From a Judeo-Christian perspective, man and the earth are pretty special to God. A simplistic interpretation of Genesis assumes that of the six days of creation, God used one day to create the heavens and the earth filled with light, then He spent the next five days making provisions for the survival of His final creation — man. Is it any wonder that for thousands of years man has believed he is the center of the universe? Yet as we shall see, the “days ” of creation are not our 24 - hour days.

The earliest theories on the cosmos placed the earth at the center of the universe. The sun, moon, planets and stars all circled the earth. The Mesopotamians taught this theory, centuries before being taught by Aristotle, and later by Greek astronomer Ptolemy. This was not the only theory taught: even from the beginning there were dissenters, e.g., Greek astronomer Aristarchus in 270 BC taught that the earth circled the sun. But Aristotle carried more clout than Aristarchus, and his opinion was silenced.

In 1530 Copernicus published his theory that the earth revolved around the sun. Copernicus ' work was written in Latin, the language of the church and scholars. The church quietly tolerated this theory until 1633 when a very vocal Galileo confirmed the views of Copernicus in everyday language. Interestingly, the Roman Church had licensed Galileo to publish his work prior to the Inquisition; with time, Galileo 's work changed the way the universe was perceived.

For two hundred years, beginning with the 17th century, science and the Bible coexisted relatively comfortably.

And then — Darwin. The name itself can boil the blood of many an otherwise quiet and peace-loving Christian. In 1827 Charles Darwin entered the University of Cambridge to become a clergyman for the Church of England. Upon graduation Darwin signed on as an unpaid naturalist on the survey ship HMS Beagle for an expedition around the world. During this expedition Darwin saw firsthand things he could not explain by the theories he had learned. Among these were fossils of supposedly extinct creatures that closely resembled living creatures. Also the Galapagos Islands proved puzzling, with each island having different forms of the same species of animals. Darwin 's natural selection theory was published in 1859. It claimed that species slowly change through time as favorable adaptations make the animal better able to survive in its environment. These creatures would then pass favorable

change on to their offspring. This theory was met with much criticism among scientists and religious leaders alike, even though Darwin originally gave God the glory of being responsible for the gradual changes he perceived in the species of animal life on earth.

Scientists began to embrace this “evolution” theory as research continued on the newly discovered fossils of the huge extinct creatures we call dinosaurs. The first dinosaur fossils were discovered in 1820. What fueled the fire of separation between science and the theologians was that paleontologists believed the fossils were very old, far older than the traditional Bible creation dates allowed. Geologists, likewise, began to question the age of the earth; it appeared to them to be not a few thousand years, but billions of years, old. Meanwhile, astronomers, such as Edwin Hubble (the Hubble Space Telescope honors his name), using Galileo's invention the telescope, began to make startling discoveries of their own. Not only was the earth not the center of the solar system, but the solar system was not even at the center of the galaxy. It was way out in the suburbs of an ordinary galaxy that was one of millions of other galaxies. The universe also seemed to be much older than even the earth. Astronomers now believe it to be some 17 billion years old.

These galaxies were found by Edwin Hubble to be moving away from each other at a high speed. This led physicist George Gamow to present the big bang theory for the creation of the universe. In the 1960's astronomers Penzias and Wilson observed a background radiation pattern of incredible uniformity and intensity occurring in every direction of the cosmos. This discovery is important because it precisely coincides with predictions made by the big bang theory.

Later were discovered the cavemen. Scientists believe the fossil records show that Australopithecus, an upright walking ape-man, lived in east Africa and the Middle East some 4 to 5 million years ago. Some 2 million years ago, scientists say Homo erectus, a stone tool-making creature with a large brain and more human-like features, replaced the ape-man. These creatures (Peking Man) are found from Africa to tropical China. Homo Sapiens (not modern man) is believed by scientists to have appeared 200, 000 to 300, 000 years ago. Homo Sapiens was later replaced by Homo Sapiens Neanderthalis, or Neanderthal man, about 100 thousand years ago. The fossil record indicates the Neanderthal lived from ice age Europe to the Middle East. Modern man (Homo Sapiens Sapiens) appears abruptly as Neanderthal becomes extinct, according to some scientists, around 40, 000 years ago.

15.3. Understanding Genesis.

Scientific investigation has repeatedly uncovered evidence of an ancient earth. The young earth creationists claim the evidence is being misrepresented but their view is not supported by mainstream science. Some believers perceive this as a conflict between their faith and science. Many erroneously think there are only two choices: people can hold to the “literal” interpretation of Genesis and a young earth creation date, while rejecting science, or accept the evidence of an ancient earth as proof and reduce Genesis to a collection of myths and legends.

But another very logical option exists. Genesis can be read literally, while the evidence of an ancient earth will actually support this view. Let's read Genesis again more carefully...

Day 1

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 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. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day” (Gen 1: 1 - 5).

Before the big bang nothing of our universe existed — not even time or space. It truly was in the beginning when God caused the universe to explode out of nothing. One of the laws of physics is the law of causality which, paraphrased, says that an effect can not be part of its cause. Translation: nothing cannot produce something, any way you look at it, unless acted on by an outside force — in this case — God. Space, time, matter, and energy spread out like a curtain at God 's command. In the big bang model of creation, it is expected that photons would have been the first recognizable particles of matter to form. A photon is a particle of light. Imagine that! Many billions of years pass with stars forming and collecting into swirling galaxies. In the next verse (1: 2) Genesis tells us that the Spirit of God was hovering over creation, organizing and enlivening everything. The newly forming sun condenses until the nuclear furnace ignites and light fills the solar system. This was + 14 billion to 5 billion years ago.

Day 2

“And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day” (Gen 1: 6 - 8).

God, using the laws of nature that He designed, molded the planets of our solar system out of elements of the cosmos — the leftovers of the gas cloud that formed our sun. This swirling cloud clumped and condensed into the individual planets. Day 2 expresses the work of God in forming and shaping one of these. The core of the gaseous ball that was to become the earth begins to cool until it solidifies. This distinctly separates the “waters ” (gases) of the intergalactic space from the “waters ” (superheated gases) of the young earth, 5 billion to 4 billion years ago.

Day 3

“And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day” (Gen 1: 9 - 13).

The earth continues to cool, steam condenses into a shallow sea over the earth. With time dry ground rises above the oceans, due to plate movement and volcanic activity. A heavy cloud of water vapor and carbon dioxide envelops the earth. Life appears in the fossil records of the very earliest rocks that formed, 4 billion to 1.5 billion years ago.

Day 4

“And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day ” (Gen 1: 14 - 19).

A casual reading of Genesis suggests that the Sun, Moon and stars were made on day four. Taking all of Scripture into account we see that these existed long before. But scripture records creation from the perspective of an earthbound observer. This observer would see the earth was enveloped in a heavy cloud of volcanic gases, steam and carbon dioxide. The light of the sun was visible — but not the sun or the stars — until the cloud enlivening the earth started to clear. As volcanic gases and ash settle, single-celled life forms in the ocean, including blue-green algae, are at work cleansing the atmosphere and enriching it with oxygen, making air-breathing life possible. The sky with the sun and its stars now became visible — 1.5 billion to 700 million years ago, or on the “fourth day ” of Genesis.

Day 5

“And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day ” (Gen 1: 20 - 23).

During “day five ” we see the filling of the seas and the skies with new creatures. About 570 million years ago the single biggest period of creation takes place, which scientists call the “Cambrian explosion.” Creatures with hard-shelled bodies like trilobites and shellfish were created, creatures with skeletons such as fish spread throughout the ocean depths. Soon after, the Earth sees the first creatures appearing on land, apparently brought forth by the sea: amphibians, reptiles, and insects. Another great explosion of life begins 225 million years ago as dinosaurs appear and they dominate for 160 million years.

Note that the KJV translates the Hebrew tanniyn as whale. The translation used in the NIV is creature but it also means a marine or land monster i.e. a sea serpent or dragon. The NASB translates it sea monster as does the RSV and Darby versions. Young ’s Literal translation translates it simply as monster. The KJV uses dragon many times in the Old Testament. The dragons are not dinosaurs, as they were extinct millions of years before man was created. The dragons are probably crocodiles with an occasional hippopotamus, but they are not dinosaurs. The same Hebrew word is translated dragon and whale, but Genesis 1: 21 calls dinosaurs gadowl tanniyn or great monster.

Late in this “day ” birds begin to fill the skies above the heads of the dinosaurs. — 700 million to 65 million years ago.

Day 6

“And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day (Gen 1: 24 - 31)... And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen 2: 7).

“Day six ” begins as the dinosaurs become extinct. 65 million years ago, mammals begin to rule the earth with the appearance of the grazing animals and wild beasts. True Man appears last with the creation of Adam and Eve. — 65 million to about 10, 000 years ago.

What about prehistoric men? They are included with the beasts of the earth — just as monkeys and apes are beasts. No matter how similar to us they were, they did not possess a human soul. The human soul, created in the image of God, is that invisible part of man that is endowed with intelligence, creativity, conscience and the desire to be in communion with its Creator. More on this later.

It is the book of Genesis which reveals to us that God calls the Earth to a synergy, to a creativity that is indicative of the God-given internal creative abilities of the Earth. Different stages in the history of Creation open with God ’s call upon “earth.” The world, being called to growth and development, acts in cooperation with God. This theme of cooperation of God and His creation appears in the Bible long before the creation of man. The fact that the earth in response to the Word is producing life indicates that it is not merely a lifeless substance, out of which an external action is “molding life,” overcoming inert matter. The Bible is unlike the Vedanta, and matter in it is not a synonym of death and non-being.

This is how St. Basil describes this creative response in his Homily V: “See how, at this short word, at this brief command, the cold and sterile earth travailed and hastened to bring forth its fruit, as it casts away its sad and dismal covering to clothe itself in a more brilliant robe, proud of its proper adornment and displaying the infinite variety of plants.”

Day 7

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because on that day he had rested from all his work which God created and made” (Gen 2: 1 - 3).

We are now in “day seven ” — the day of rest. Nothing new has been created since man appeared. During this last “day ” the history of mankind unfolds. This is indeed a very long period — certainly much longer than the 24 - hour period of the young-earth creationists !

15.4. *Scriptural evidence for long “days.”*

In the book of Job we read:

“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted with joy?” (Job 38: 4 - 7).

When studying Scripture one has to consider all related passages. This passage in Job presents a contradiction to the creationists ’ understanding of Genesis 1 regarding the appearance of the stars on day 4. They actually exist before the creation of the earth. One cannot dismiss this passage as just poetry: It is the LORD speaking. Day 4 should be understood as the cleansing of the atmosphere of volcanic ash, steam, and carbon dioxide. We should therefore search Scripture for more information.

“A prayer of Moses the man of God. Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. You turn men back to dust, saying, “Return to dust, O sons of men.” For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night ” (Psa 90: 1 - 4).

Here we are instructed that as God 's ways are not our ways so God 's time is not our time. Our time and space actually began with the big bang. God is not confined to the universe He created, because He is not limited, eternal, omnipresent and omniscient. For Him the past and future are always present, because He lives above the confinements of time.

Another argument made for 24 hour days is that the Hebrew word for day *yowm* means day, and if God had meant long periods of time he would have used another word. However, this is not entirely true. There are many places in the Old Testament where *yowm* means something other than a 24 hour day. For the purpose of this study we will look only at a few examples from Genesis.

These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground ” (Gen 2: 4 - 6).

This is an example where “day” refers to a longer period of time. Whether day means 6 days or 15 billion years makes no difference: it does not mean a 24 - hour period.

“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen 2: 17). Here day seems to indicate when a judgment was made concerning Adam 's future (and ours). But we know that Adam lived a long time after this. Upon banning them from the garden, God clothed Adam and Eve in animal skins to insure their survival. God seems to have wanted them to live and procreate. Most people believe Adam died spiritually that day. Certainly his innocence died. But Adam continued to talk with God after this event and Cain was concerned that he would no longer be in God 's presence after being forced to leave his land because he killed Abel.

“And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD” (Gen 4: 3). This passage translates yowm as the passing of time. This occurs many times in the Old Testament.

“While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Gen 8: 22). The lifetime of the earth is indicated by this use of yowm.

“And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife” (Gen 26: 8). Time does not relate directly to 24 hours but it is yowm that is used here.

“And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward” (Gen 40: 4). Scripture tells us Joseph was in prison a lot longer than a day. Yowm is translated season in this passage.

“I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever” (Gen 43: 9). How long is for ever? Longer than 24 hours; yet “ever” is yowm in Hebrew.

“And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years” (Gen 47: 28). The age of Jacob, or the day of Jacob, was 147 years.

As has been shown, days can and often are understood in Scripture to mean a period of time greater than 24 hours, and numbering the days does not force a fixed time limit upon the passage.

One argument remains to be addressed: “And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day” (Gen 1: 5). Young earth creationists insist that the mention of evening and morning in combination with day forces “day” to be a 24 - hour day. “Benjamin shall ravine as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil” (Gen 49: 27). The Hebrew word for evening is 'ereb, it is translated night in this passage. The Hebrew word for morning is boqer and it means sunrise or the coming of light. In each of the creation days, we see darkness followed by the coming of light. We see God 's hand at work in his creation day as something that did not exist before, therefore in principle was invisible, and then has been brought out into the light to declare His glory. We see what was formless and void receive limits, shape, fulfillment. This does not limit the day in any way to 24 hours. One thing that is certainly inconsistent about the literal reading is that the evening and the morning were not the first day but rather the first night. Of course, understanding that the Hebrew day starts at dusk helps, but then we are still faced with only half a day.

15.5. *Reconciling some Creation / Evolution Questions.*

The Church always thought that the Bible is the inspired and unerring word of God which should be taken literally in most cases. But in dealing with a difficult subject all related Scripture must be considered before deciding on an interpretation of a passage.

The Bible is God 's book of words, while the universe is God 's book of works. Since the Bible and the creation are both from God, neither is more true than the other. They are but different witnesses of the same God, of His power and glory. Theology is man 's attempt to understand the Bible. Science is man 's attempt to understand the universe. Theology and science can both be flawed since they are interpreted by man, whose knowledge is always incomplete.

When the truth will become fully revealed the Bible and the creation record will agree. "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known " (1 Cor 13: 12).

The meaning of some terms.

The following terms are thrown around in nearly every creation / evolution debate. Clear definitions are essential to insure common understanding of a position.

Abiogenesis — The supposed development of living organisms from nonliving matter. Also called autogenesis, spontaneous generation. Spontaneous generation is a deceptive definition, as naturalists generally believe the first life developed over a great period of time by unguided chemical reactions.

Cosmology — The study of the physical universe considered as a totality of phenomena in time and space.

Creationism — The position that the account of the creation of the universe given at the beginning of the Bible is literally true. Usually thought of as a belief in a young-earth creation, but applies equally to an old-earth view.

Evolution — The theory that groups of organisms change with passage of time, mainly as a result of natural selection, so that descendants differ morphologically and physiologically from their ancestors. While this is a literal definition, this term is seldom thought to stop with "change with time." It usually is believed to involve origins from a common ancestor and is often associated with the atheistic view of naturalism. Many Bible-believing Christians, however, see no conflict between a belief in evolution and a belief in the God of the Bible.

Microevolution — Evolution resulting from a succession of relatively small genetic variations that often cause the formation of new subspecies.

Macroevolution — Large-scale evolution occurring over geologic time that results in the formation of new taxonomic groups.

Naturalism — A theory denying that an event or object has a supernatural significance; spec: the doctrine that scientific laws are adequate to account for all phenomena. This is atheism.

Species — A fundamental category of taxonomic classification, ranking below a genus or subgenus and consisting of related organisms capable of interbreeding.

Subspecies — A subdivision of a taxonomic species, usually based on geographic distribution.

Taxonomy — The classification of organisms in an ordered system that indicates natural relationships.

15.6. *What the Bible Says About Evolution.*

Since young-earth creationists comprise such a large segment of the population, it seems proper to begin by restating that it is not against the Bible to admit that the earth is much older than the 6,000 years. The Biblical case for an old earth has been presented in the previous chapter. Here we will examine what Scripture says about evolution.

The Beginning of Plant Life

Most of us were taught as children that when God created the earth he simply spoke the word “tree” and there appeared a fully formed tree, or “grass” and there appeared grass. Nearly half the adults in the United States believe this is true. Is this what Scripture says?

Gen 1: 11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. Gen 1: 12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

If one throws out all the evidence for an old earth, Let the earth bring forth has no real significance when interpreting these verses. 24 hours is close enough to instant that it just doesn't matter. But when one accepts the evidence of cosmology, geology, paleontology and all the other “-ologies” as basically true, this phrase becomes very interesting. God's command let the Earth bring forth plant life suggests a passage of time and indicates the earth is God's chosen instrument through which He will create. The implication is that God's creative act might appear perfectly natural to humans when examining it millions of years later in the fossil record. This interpretation harmonizes Scripture with the fossil record.

Does this mean random evolution from a common ancestor is God's chosen method of creation? Scripture clearly states that it was God who planned, ordered, and formed all of creation, and the phrase after his kind is a pretty direct statement of limits. Note in particular that grass, the herb yielding seed, produces after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind. Scripture does not say “Oak tree you will produce only exact duplicates of yourself until the end of time.” But isn't this the way we tend to think? So there appears to be room for variation of plant life in Scripture by what would appear to be natural selection with limits. Not random chance, but God's hand guided the creation of plant life on Earth.

The question remains to be asked: did all plant life originate from a few plant cells that God developed into individual forms of grass, herb, and tree, or were many types of fully formed plants created initially? We cannot be certain since Scripture is silent on this issue, but the first view seems to be more consistent with the fossil record. Either way this should not be of great concern to us. The fossil record is very clear; plants have changed tremendously through time. No matter what

mechanism has been used by the earth to bring forth plant life, it is God 's command that caused it to happen. “The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD ” (Prov 16: 33 NIV).

The Creation of Dinosaurs and Birds.

If God allowed room for his creation to change in the plant world is it possible He did the same in other areas? Again let's examine the Scriptures.

“And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good ” (Gen 1: 20 - 21).

Here the same pattern emerges as in the earlier passages. This time it is the waters that bring forth but it is God that created the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth. Another pattern is repeated as well — notice God created... that... which the waters brought forth... after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind. Again limits have been set but specific species have not been mentioned, with the exception of great whales.

Dinosaur fossils would not be discovered for 250 years after the translating of the King James Bible. If this is a correct understanding of God 's word then this means that the creatures of the waters developed until one day God made some of them able to live on land. This is a proper understanding of current scientific theory and, if correct, is not a violation of Scripture.

It is interesting to note that the waters are mentioned as bringing forth the fowl that fly above the earth. This is a totally foreign idea to the old understanding of Biblical creation, yet that is what the Scripture says. It is also interesting that science has been unable to decide how to classify birds, how they originated and whether they were originally reptiles. The Bible says they were created after their kind. It is possible that the birds have no predecessor. Archaeopteryx may have been a flying reptile just as bats are flying mammals. This does not mean they are related to birds. Archaeopteryx may also have been legitimately one of the first birds, despite its reptile features. The possibility remains that birds were descendants of reptiles through God 's guiding hand on this “fifth ” creation day. There is no conflict here except in our old views and in our bias.

God is in control. The Biblical account of creation is literal, and science agrees with the Bible — again. Doesn ' t this diminish God 's authority and power? In no way, but it does destroy long held views. The Bible is literally true. It is the creationist 's interpretation that is in error. This interpretation was not built on a denial of the truth but upon the amount of available information. It was a belief based upon what was known.

If rejection of the old views causes you to stumble or weakens your faith, don ' t blame the science. You will never meet anyone who became a Christian because they heard the earth was 6, 000 years old, but you may meet people who have rejected the Bible and Jesus because of the young earth teaching.

The Making of Mammals.

What does Scripture really say about mammals? “And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. Gen 1: 25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good ” (Gen 1: 24).

The words “let the earth bring forth... after his kind,” indicate God 's chosen instrument through which He will create. What is created at this time needs some discussion. Specific species are not mentioned here, only broad categories. The Hebrew word for cattle is behemah and it means a large quadruped. This covers a broad range of mammals, but is best understood as meaning grazing animals. The Hebrew word for creeping things is remes and it means a rapidly moving animal. It can mean reptile, but probably refers to rabbits, squirrels and that type of mammal. Beast of the earth is chay in Hebrew and refers to wild creatures.

Another interesting thing about these verses is that God made these creatures whereas the creatures mentioned previously were created. Why the word change? Is it possible this verse is not as simple as the creationist interpretation has held? The mammals may have been created from the earth directly or they may have been genetic alterations of previously existing land dwelling life forms that had been created during day five. The Hebrew word for created is bara and it means “cut out” or “formed” and is traditionally considered to mean “out of nothing.” Since we are told that the sea brought forth the creations of day five, the idea might better be understood as a lump of clay being used to form a piece of pottery. In this case the pottery is a living creature. Asah, the Hebrew word translated made, means to bring forth. Carrying the pottery analogy further, this might mean using the existing pottery (from day five) and reshaping it into something new (the mammals of day six), understand that the “potter” is still necessary. God is the Creator and force responsible for the genetic alterations. He is in control of everything.

Why should God make mammals in this way? Looking at this question from another angle we could just as easily ask: why do we believe God must have done it in a certain way? We should never be so arrogant as to demand that God follow our idea of what is the proper method to create a universe, or a mammal. We should never be so arrogant as to demand that God follow our limited understanding and interpretation of Scripture.

Did God make all mammals from a few pair of creatures or did He make many different kinds of mammals initially? Again, Scripture is silent — we do not know. One idea may be more palatable to us than the other but it is folly to demand a preferred method is correct. Science is also uncertain on this point. Current theory is that mammals descended from Therapsida, a large order of reptiles (an order contains many species). This would indicate that several cold-blooded reptile creatures developed along parallel lines to become warm-blooded mammals. This seems too unlikely by unguided random natural selection, but with God all things are possible.

Interestingly, the origin of mammals appears to be mentioned already in day 5. Indeed, in Gen 1: 21 we read “And God created... every living creature that moveth.” The Hebrew for “creature” here is different than “creature” mentioned in verse 20. The Hebrew word is nephesh and it is often translated as “soul” — not to be confused with spirit. Spirit refers to the immortal; soul in Scripture refers to life, having limited mind and emotions. Unlike reptiles, mammals are capable of emotional expression.

The fossil record tells us that until 65 million years ago mammals were confined to rodent-sized creatures scurrying about at the dinosaurs’ feet. When the dinosaurs became extinct the mammals quickly came to dominate the earth, exploding in numbers and variety. Isn't this what the Bible tells us that God did on the sixth day?

Science and the Bible are once again in complete agreement.

15.7. *The Creation of Man.*

Young-earth creationists aren't too concerned if a zebra and a horse have a common lineage or if a lion and a tiger share a common ancestor. The real problem comes when we discuss the origins of man. Immediately defenses go up and emotions start to rise. Naturalism insists that man is no more evolved than any other primate. Man is then considered no better than, just different from, any other animal. Creationists hold that man is a special creation, and is above the creatures of the Earth. What does Scripture say on this issue?

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Gen 1: 26 - 27).

“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul ” (Gen 2: 7).

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth !” (Psa 8: 4 - 9).

What wonderful verses ! Interesting, full of challenge and mystery. How shall we begin to understand these passages? One thing that should be immediately clear is God created man. Whenever the Bible makes a statement 3 times, as it does in verse 1: 27, it is to make sure we take special notice. Something very profound is being said and God wants to make sure we don't miss it. Of the other works of God's creation we read “and God said, Let there be or Let the earth or again let the waters...” These are statements of authority. But in man's creation we read And God said, Let us make... This is a statement of affection.

Man was to be a creature different from all that had been hitherto made. Flesh and spirit, heaven and earth, must be put together in him, and he must be allied to both worlds. And therefore God himself not only undertakes to make him, but is pleased so to express himself as if he called a council to consider the making of him. Actually, this was the council of the Holy Trinity, as the Fathers of the Church explain.

Regarding the order of man in creation, man was made last of all the creatures, that it might not be suspected that he had been, in any way, a helper to God in the creation of the world. That question must be forever humbling and mortifying to him.

Man was made the same day that the beasts were, because his body was made of the same earth as theirs; and, while he is in the body, he inhabits the same earth with them.

The relatively new field of genetic research shows that the genetic difference between apes and man is possibly as little as 1 %. If this figure holds up in future research it will certainly make the case for a common ancestor very strong. If this conclusion should prove to be true it is humbling and may bruise our ego, but it should not cause us great concern for long.

Looking closely at Scripture we see the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground. Traditionally this has been taught to mean literal soil, but in light of God 's earlier creative efforts this might not be the case. Genetically there is not much physical difference between apes and man, but the real difference between man and apes is actually infinite because the difference is spiritual in nature. We are told that God created man in his own image so what we must do is determine what this means. If the dust of the ground God used to form man was a primate ancestor that the earth brought forth, so be it. For God 's image is not the body, God is Spirit and as such has no body as we understand that term.

It has been suggested that it is our minds that separate us from the apes. From our minds we gain the ability to think; to reason; to speak; to write; to design; to build, to pray, to believe; to distinguish moral evil from moral good; to create art; to compose music; to write literature and poetry; to ponder truth, beauty, love, humor, and every other intangible thing that is part of the human experience. Compared to animals of a similar size and body mass, we are not strong, we are not fast, and we have no special physical abilities — we can't leap like a panther, climb like an ape, or fly. We would not make it without clothing and shelters constructed to protect us from the elements. And yet, humans have used their intelligence and tools (which they have also designed and constructed) to survive and thrive in every climate on the planet, from the hottest deserts to the highest mountains to the densest jungles, to the frozen Arctic. We have learned to survive in and explore even environments that will not sustain our lives, like the ocean floor and outer space.

Some see human morality as the difference between man and animals. Human morality, the sense of right and wrong, goes far beyond instinct. We have a sense of “the greater good.” It is not enough that our own children are safe and fed, we are moved to feed other hungry children — whether they are in our own city or are suffering from a famine on the other side of the world. A fireman who rushes into a burning building to save an elderly man isn't doing it for the money. He does it because he recognizes the preciousness of life, even if the man he rescues is old and sick. A herd of musk oxen would run away from a predator, leaving the old and sick of the herd behind with no remorse. These things are true and add to our understanding of what it means to be human. But who we are is more than a primate with intellect and a high moral standard. The question remains, what does it mean to be created in God 's image?

The clue to answering this question is found in Gen 2: 7 “and the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” The initial reaction to this verse is that it is saying God made man alive, and this is true, but it has a much deeper meaning than just bodily life. The breath that God gave man was the immortal spirit. Man was created different; he was created to have eternal life with angels in heaven. Man was created to have a personal relationship, even friendship, with the Creator of the universe.

The other creatures of the Earth are purely physical in nature, brought forth by the earth and the waters, but man 's spirit is directly from God. We are by design spiritual beings. We can deny there is a God and reject any form of communion with Him, but the desire for Him remains. To fill this vacuum we create our own gods in the form of idols; we create money, theories, facts and figures, rules and traditions. Still, we remain spiritual beings, unique special creations of a loving God.

The idea that man is considered no better, just different from any other animal is just plain wrong. It robs man of the glory and honour God has crowned him with. It robs God of the praise He is due for the creative work of His hands. God blessed man with a spirit and gave him dominion over the other creatures of the earth. Not so we could be little gods over them but rather to be caretakers of the earth. To this I agree with the psalmist “O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth !”

15.8. *The physical evidence — in agreement with scripture.*

Theology and science do not have to be in opposition. They are not only compatible with one another, but they complement each other. You do not have to sacrifice the truth or integrity of either field of study. You do not need to check your brains at the door to worship God, and your faith does not render invalid all intellectual pursuits. The Bible instructs us to test everything and hold on to the good. This implies spiritual discernment and mental reasoning working together.

For a collection of books written thousands of years ago, the Bible continues to be true and relevant. The Bible's ability to convey truth when compared to the evidence of nature is, well, supernatural. The writers worked under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to express truth in such a marvelous way that it grows with our understanding. A word of caution — our understanding and our old views are not to be worshipped. The Bible is to be read, studied and applied in the life of the believer. The Bible is the Holy Scripture, but the recipient of our worship is God Almighty. Our traditions, interpretations, and theories change with time. God does not.

So, what have we learned thus far? The basic framework of creation presented in the Bible fits very nicely with current scientific understanding of the beginnings. The Bible sets some specific limits, but otherwise appears neutral regarding change of plants and animals over time. It is the limits of the creation / evolution controversy that we will discuss in this section.

But first there is a statement in the theology and science debate that should be addressed.

Science can't say anything about the existence or non-existence of God.

Of course science doesn't say anything about the existence or non-existence of God, because science is man's attempt to explain the working of all that is in the universe by natural means. You can't find evidence of God if you exclude Him from the equation. What is really being said is that naturalism can explain everything, God may exist but He is not necessary. So it would seem the atheist gets to remain secure in his scientific comfort zone with this statement. Gaps, holes, and improbabilities do not mean or even suggest God, because every problem must have a natural solution. Even what we do know, at least in part — the physical laws of the cosmos and of nature — are never seen as having significance beyond themselves.

Honest science readily admits it can never prove anything as absolutely true. Science does not claim to prove; rather it offers a best guess explanation based on the evidence. This method has proven to be very effective. Our knowledge and technology have greatly benefited from science. Because theories are tested against the evidence, science is fluid, changing with new discoveries. Where naturalism adherents misuse science is when they fail to differentiate between what has been tested and found true in all cases and that which is not observed, but is assumed true, because it is the current naturalistic best fit for the evidence.

Evolution defined as “change occurring over time” is observably true — you are not identical to your parents. Thus naturalism can claim that evolution is a fact at this observable level. It becomes theory once you move beyond this point. That man and apes have a common physical ancestor might be

true. It is suggested by the evidence but not observed so; while it may be true, it cannot be considered a fact. That all life on earth is descended from a common ancestor is accepted in most evolution circles but it is theory not fact. The theories by which descent with modification from a common ancestor might have occurred continue to be the subject of heated debates. That the first life on earth originated by natural chemical reactions is still speculative. Abiogenesis is theory, not fact. Once you move beyond direct observation, truth becomes belief. One willfully chooses to interpret the evidence in a certain manner. This is the essence of faith — a belief in what cannot be proved based on what is known to be true. The Bible offers an explanation beyond naturalism for the evidence. We may willfully choose to believe that the Bible reveals the truths that are unavailable from physical evidence.

Now let's begin our look at the physical evidence:

15.9. *Observed speciation.*

Heralded as the deathblow to creationism by evolutionists. Usually claimed as non-existent by creationists or at least as a gross misrepresentation of the facts. Many, and perhaps most, Christians are unaware of observed speciation, and if confronted with the evidence are ill equipped to deal with this knowledge. The reason is twofold. First, many believe that macroevolution is in direct opposition to the Bible. Second, the Scripture says that on the seventh day God ceased from His work and rested. Most of us have been lead to believe there are only two choices, we can believe the Bible or we can believe science. But in truth, there is no reason we must compromise either the Bible or science. Biologists have directly observed and documented various cases where the breeding of a controlled or isolated population has resulted in the inability of the subject to breed with the original population. They have hence observed macroevolution. The traditional creationist explanation has been to claim that this represents a normal expression of the natural variability that was always present in the DNA, so nothing new has been created.

A second defense traditionally used by creationists is too limiting. The evidence is acknowledged, but the resulting species is claimed to be of the same Biblical kind as the original organism: flies remain flies, bacteria remain bacteria, etc. Of course this infuriates the evolutionist who then demands a definition of a "kind." The debate usually deteriorates from there.

The creationist solution here is that the Biblical kind is synonymous with the folk method of classifying a species. Everyone knows a fly when they see one. The fact that it may be one of dozens of species is irrelevant.

Naturalism advocates are generally quick to state that the Bible is not a science book. So why do they expect a scientific explanation for kind? If fact, they often don't. They usually want to derail the creationist argument and replace it with their own view of reality — the scientific natural cause reality.

The Bible is a collection of books focusing on God's dealing with, and love for, mankind. It details God's plan to restore man to His image through the cross. The Bible also mentions some scientific concepts, such as the beginning of time and matter and the existence of extra dimensions. The Bible

should be taken seriously, and yet for many evolutionists it cannot be as long as this stumbling block remains.

The observed speciation conflict is resolved when we realize the problem is in our faulty expectations. As was mentioned before, we expect that God said “tree ” and poof, there was a fully formed mighty oak tree, and we expect that when the Creator rests from His work, He just kicks back on His throne and works no more. We expect this but it is not what God has done. If God has really ceased carrying for the world, everything will end up in chaos. Rather, He continues to work and to provide for us: “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother 's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well” (Psa 139: 13 - 14 NIV).

If He provides for us, how can the Bible say God rested from His work? Blame old misconceptions for this seeming paradox. The problem exists because we have let our fear convince us the Bible says something that it does not. Any new species is still God 's doing, because it is a result of the laws that He created. God is the one that made the process function, as God is the one who instituted and holds all the natural laws together. There are kinds mentioned in Genesis, but the making of kinds is not what God rested from on the seventh day. Scripture does accurately record that God rested from His work of creating, while some new species do exist. Confused? Let's dig deeper.

15.10. Biblical Limitations.

The subject of Biblical kinds has caused much division. This argument is not just between naturalism and creationists, but even sets believer against believer. In the Old Testament kinds are mentioned many times, often when listing the clean and unclean animals. Kind appears to represent roughly what taxonomy would classify as a genus — a grouping of similar species — basically corresponding to the folk kind mentioned earlier. So far so good. The problem is old views maintain that these kinds have been set by God with no drifting over the lines allowed, while science claims that life evolved from single-celled organisms into the variety of life we see today.

Much time and effort have been exerted by theologians and scientists defending their respective positions. The arguments of one side sound convincing until you hear the opposing view, and then that seems correct. So which is right? It seems that we may never know for certain how God created the world around us. There might be some limits to the variation of life on earth which are impossible to exceed without the direct intervention of God. At the same time we cannot close our eyes to the physical evidence.

15.11. The idea of progressive creationism.

We begin by acknowledging God as the Creator, something science by its own limitations can neither

admit nor deny. Progressive creationism fully accepts the physical evidence for an old earth, but parts company with mainstream science when it comes to evolution. The fossil record clearly shows life has changed with time. But stasis, not change, is the observed pattern for creatures once they are introduced into the fossil record. The ability of natural selection to produce novel organs or a change in body plan is only suggested by the fossil record. It has not been proven.

Evolutionists are certain transitional fossils prove evolution. These fossils do exist, but it cannot be proved they are ancestral links between two groups of creatures. They may be. If so, the idea that they represent an intentional genetic bridge used by God to transform one type of creature into another is as valid a theory as evolution. The Scripture states that major leaps in the development of life occurred abruptly and by the direct intervention of God. Natural selection, environmental pressures, and mutations do explain changes on a limited basis — observed speciation — but even this is totally by the will of God.

But what if gradualism could be proven irrefutably? Would this mean Genesis is not the living word of God? Absolutely Not! The trustworthiness of Genesis is not dependent on these theories.

Determining which theory is correct will not greatly enhance our understanding of Genesis, since it is not about species and kinds. So what is Genesis talking about? If there are limitations, where are they? And just what work did God rest from on day 7?

The correct placing of limits is at the level of division listed in the creation days of Genesis chapter one: “this is not at the folk kind.” To see this will require a closer look at Scripture. The following, found in the New Testament, was written by the Apostle Paul. It is part of his teaching on the resurrection of the dead in Christ, but it also sheds some light on the subject at hand:

“When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another” (1 Cor 15: 37 - 39 NIV).

In order to grasp what is being said in Genesis chapter one, we need to understand what Paul means when he says all flesh is not the same. The genetic code of a lion makes it physically different than a tiger and yet we see from observed speciation that it is possible they had a common ancestor. They may not be of the same species, but they are very similar. Notice that in the passage above, the divisions listed are not nearly as limiting as lion kind and tiger kind, or even a broader grouping like the cat kind.

Paul mentions plants (seed), plus four different divisions of flesh; man, animal, bird, and fish. Genesis follows this same pattern with plants on day 3, fish and birds on day 5, then on day 6 animals, followed by man. These are God 's creation limits. There are creatures that don ' t immediately seem to fit into any of these categories, insects for instance. A cricket is not a gill-breathing fish, and it is hard to imagine it is to be grouped with animals such as the tiger. So where do insects fit in? It seems we may have misunderstood what makes one type of flesh different from another and therefore we miss the point Genesis is making.

God is not concerned in Genesis with detailing and limiting the species that He creates and makes. If He were, chapter one would be a lot longer than 31 verses. In fact, only 12 of these verses relate directly to living things, and of these, only 8 are concerned with the actual creating and making of them. This is not very many verses to have caused all this fuss. Most of the chapter is concerned with the creating and ordering of the cosmos and the preparation of the earth to sustain human life.

The one theme consistently presented is that God is the Creator and maker of all that exists in the universe. God is the author of time, space, matter, and life. Rather than limiting the species, Scripture is declaring God 's sovereignty over all things. It is an expression of the ordering of the developing relationship God has planned for His creation, the establishing of the limits creation will have with its surroundings and ultimately with Him. Obviously a sparrow relates to the world in a different manner than does a fern, just as man relates differently to God than does a horse. This is the Biblical difference that separates one type of flesh from another.

One final item. It is not necessary for God to have created all the species of each type of flesh on the day it is mentioned in Genesis. In fact, that is not what He did. Remember — observed speciation. On each of the creation days the important point to grasp is that God has created a new limit. Just as God has ordered the natural laws of the universe, like gravity or the strong nuclear force, to behave in a certain manner, so He has ordered the way life progresses. We cannot change the laws of physics, and no amount of evolution can overcome God 's limits. God rested from His work of creating limits on day 7. He will once again create new limits when this day-age ends.

Summarizing, the creation is subject to the limitations placed on it by God. These limitations have some physical characteristics but actually concern the relationship of the creation to the Creator. Using 1 Cor 15: 37 - 39 as a pattern, the relationships can be broken down into five limitations: plants, fish, birds, animals, and man.

15.12. Limits and the flesh of life.

Here we focus on the relationship of God with His creation, and the creation with God. Using the pattern described in 1 Cor 15: 37 - 39, the relationships can be broken down into five limitations: plants, fish, birds, animals, and man.

Plants.

“And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so” (Gen 1: 11 KJV).

“And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good ” (Gen 1: 12 KJV).

The King James Version lists three types of plants; however, the NIV shortens the list, saying simply, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees.” Vegetation as one type, not three, seems to be sufficient to express the full range of meaning in the words. Grass will sprout from the roots but it also will bear seed, and how do we decide when a plant stops being a bush and should be called a tree? The sub-divisions here are simply for the sake of showing God is responsible for all the different varieties of plant life.

We see in the first 10 verses of Genesis the creation of our universe where nothing existed before. The coming of light. The forming of the earth. The separation of the atmosphere and the sea. The appearance of dry land. Then, in verses 11 and 12, at God 's command, the earth brings forth plant life. This is a very important event in the history of the developing earth. God begins building on His

creation foundation an incredibly solid ecosystem. Early plants produced oxygen, which enriched and changed the atmosphere, building up the protective ozone layer. This allowed the further development of life. Also, plants appear to have taken part in the cleansing of the atmosphere, reducing the cloud cover until the sun became visible on day 4.

Before you get too comfortable here you should know the traditional understanding of Genesis causes another conflict between science and theology. Grass and trees almost certainly did not appear on earth until much later than the great explosion of marine life. It has been suggested that soft parts, such as plants, do not fossilize as easily as bone and hard body parts. It is possible evidence will still be discovered of land plants predating marine life, but for now that seems highly unlikely, especially since many soft bodied fossils predating the Cambrian period have been found. Still, this should not be of great concern to us. Whether you are a believer or an interested skeptic, you are probably wondering how I can make such a statement. If grass and trees didn ' t come before marine life, how can the Bible really be the word of God? This will require a closer look at both sides.

According to the physical evidence, unicellular prokaryote life is found in the oldest known rocks to have formed on earth, 3.5 billion years ago. Bacteria is this type of microorganism. Eukaryote cells appear next 1.5 billion years ago. Eukaryotic cells differ from prokaryote cells in that they have a distinct nucleus surrounded by a membrane; also, their DNA is organized into chromosomes. All multicellular life is made up of eukaryotic cells, the first multicellular fossils being the unidentifiable organisms known today as the Ediacaran fauna, which may date to 700 million years ago. 570 million years ago, the oceans swarm with life during the Cambrian explosion. Land plants occur much more recently.

Tradition has painted a beautiful picture of creation, where God forms the earth complete, with a single word. Then with a word, He covers it with grass, flowers, and lush fully grown shade trees. The next day God begins early by stocking the waters with fish. This is a beautiful account of creation, and it is the simplest reading of the text. However, it is not the way God actually went about His work. So how do we reconcile the evidence with Scripture?

Digging deeper you will notice blue-green algae is among the first life found on the developing earth. Blue-green algae is an oxygen producing photosynthetic bacterium. This seems to be one of the primary sources for the oxygenating of the early atmosphere. A prokaryote organism, blue-green algae is not really algae at all. True algae appears with the development of eukaryote cells. Algae ranges in size from single-celled forms to giant kelp. Bacteria and algae are not considered plants by our modern day classification system. However, the fact remains: photosynthetic life appears 3.5 billion years ago in the fossil record. That's 3 billion long years before the creation of anything remotely resembling a fish.

Note that until recently blue-green algae and algae were classified as part of the plant kingdom by science. Genesis maintains they always have been grouped with plants in God ' s classification system. Science and Genesis only appear to disagree here, because the criteria each use in forming groups is different. Hopefully, you will understand why Genesis considers them plants in a moment.

Only three times in chapter one do we see God ' poof ' anything into existence. The beginning of plant life is not one of those times. Look closely at verses 1: 11 and 1: 12, and notice what it does not say in them. It does not say that God created plants out of nothing. It does not even say that God made them by forming dirt into little leaves. So what does it say? Simply, the earth brought forth plants. When God said "Let the earth bring forth," He actually gave authority to the earth to produce plant-life, obviously from the very resources of the earth itself by the natural laws God had instituted at the big bang.

Take a moment to ponder this. What a mind blower ! Creationists have spent the last 50 years denying this event to protect their view (which does not agree with the Scriptures). Meanwhile, science, with the best equipment available under the best possible conditions has tried to duplicate what the earth did almost 4 billion years ago. Abiogenesis, the study of life 's origins, is still a long way from accomplishing this feat or even understanding it. Someday scientists may synthesize life in the lab, but the earth did it without all the fancy tools at God 's command.

As was mentioned elsewhere, the earth brought forth implies time, lots of time. The earth did not bump up against this limitation until early in day 5, after God had begun creating the swarming creatures.

Day 3 did see the initial fruit of the command — oxygen-producing photosynthetic microscopic life. The early microscopic life had the God-given directed purpose to become the world 's flora. This is not the same as natural selection, since traditional naturalistic evolution has no predetermined direction. The seeming conflict between the Scripture and the origins of plant-life solves itself once one realizes that Scripture is setting limitations, as was discussed in the last section, and is not listing species. Science says life appears in the first sedimentary rocks to form. The Bible says life began as soon as there was liquid water and solid ground.

What about panspermia, the theory that the first life on earth arrived here from space? Since Genesis does not mention the moment God created the spark we call life, it is possible the earth was seeded in this way. The original proponents of panspermia realized the amazing complexity of life, even the simplest bacterial life, and decided there had not been sufficient time on earth for the natural development of life. Cosmic seeding was the logical alternative to avoid the obvious theological implications of life 's sudden appearance. Panspermia buys time for the non-theist but does not explain the beginnings. Still, it does not conflict with Scripture, and it does not eliminate God if it is ever proven correct.

The Flesh of Fish.

“And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good ” (Gen 1: 20 - 21 KJV).

Immediately you should notice that these verses do not specifically mention fish. We use fish as a general term in agreement with tradition and Paul (1 Cor 15: 37 - 39). Tradition holds to this interpretation because of the mistranslated “great whales ” listed here (which aren ' t fish anyway), and of course because what else could the water bring forth? What else indeed! You already know the answer, but there is a twist.

As was just discussed, from the humble single-celled beginnings we have all the plants found on earth today. From these same beginnings the waters brought forth the creatures of day 5. Now, this may appear simply as naturalistic evolution to the unobservant, but a new limit is being established. Nothing existing prior to this time or afterwards could ever cross this boundary given time and chance alone.

Notice something special happens in verse 21 that has not been mentioned since verse 1. God created. Created what? Every moving creature, winged fowl, and yes, the great sea and land monsters. All were created by God but brought forth by the sea. Wait a minute !?! Previously, it was

shown that “created” means out of nothing, so how can the creatures of day 5 be created if the sea brings them forth from the single-celled organisms of day 3? What God did is so incredible that even if you are not so inclined as to give Him credit for it, you must still view it in total amazement.

In the period of about 5 million years, an incredibly short period of geological time, the organisms in the sea change from simple multicellular blobs into over a hundred different phyla of complex life (today, only about 35 phyla exist). These creatures appear complete with limbs, digestive systems, working eyes, and beating hearts. This was not a gradual event by evolutionary standards; it was an explosion with no real advance warning. Further, the creatures introduced remained basically unchanged throughout the duration of their existence on earth. While new creatures continue to appear, the older ones remain true to the form in which they were introduced.

Obviously, naturalism interprets this event differently. They don't see God at work here. They don't see any creation event. And they don't see anything contrary to the theory of evolution about this explosion. In fact, they often don't even see it as an explosion, or perhaps they can't. But the fossil record remains as a witness.

A classic evolution / creation argument revolves around the development of the eye. The Cambrian event renders this argument pointless. The eye makes its first appearance here, suddenly and fully formed. The eye apparently did not evolve slowly. More amazingly, it is found in more than one phylum. Logic dictates that for this to have happened, there would necessarily have been a common ancestor between the phyla. Yet this common ancestor would most certainly have been an eukaryotic cell or at best one of the Ediacaran organisms, which resemble tubes and blobs. This means all the genetic information necessary to produce the eye, the cardiovascular system, jointed limbs, the digestive system, the nervous system, etc. had to be stored away in the earlier organisms, which did not possess any of these physical traits. But why? For what purpose?

Naturalism holds there was no purpose, that development occurred simply as a response to environmental stimuli via natural selection. However, without a survival benefit to the organism, there is no reason for the dormant genetic material to be selected for and thereby retained. It stretches the limits of credulity beyond the breaking point that all these complex life functions should burst suddenly and fully formed into existence from inactive DNA without prior purpose. It also sounds amazingly like the first creationist argument against observed speciation. Hmmm. Design is strongly suggested.

Admittedly, the appearance of design does not mean design has actually occurred. However, if it looks like a watch and it runs like a watch, it's probably a watch. Suppose you wandered into a field and happened upon a free-standing stone arch. Now this could be the result of natural erosion, especially if the entire arch were formed in a single stone ledge. Even if it were made of many small stones it is conceivable that unguided natural events led to this wonder. Now, suppose you wander into this field and discover thousands of stone arches. More amazingly, you notice these arches are all formed in one of a dozen or so distinctly different patterns; some with great big stones, some with little stones, some flat, some round, etc. Now suppose further that the type of stone found in the arches has never occurred naturally anywhere else in that part of the country. You might not be able to prove it, but you would conclude the arches had all been put there intentionally. Now, make this a worldwide event some 570 million years ago and you still don't come close to the magnitude of what transpired during the Cambrian period.

The paradox of warm-blooded life.

On a physical level, blood makes the higher functions of physical life possible. And blood itself is

intricately complex. Microbiologist Michael Behe believes it to be irreducibly complex, meaning the many parts that fit together to form the 'whole' cannot be explained as having originated independently. Either all the necessary parts are there, functioning together, or the unit fails to operate. Behe points out that naturalism uses a tactic, which he labels the 'road kill' approach. Since something did occur it must be able to happen — naturally. When no explanation suits, science assumes that the explanations available overlook something or oversimplify the case, and the theory is restated after the fact. Implausibility is added to implausibility until the impossible becomes the theoretical actual. The Cambrian period seems to render pointless all arguments for or against Behe's conclusion, as blood appears suddenly, without warning in the fossil record.

Another life function makes its first appearance in day 5, when God introduces the nervous system to the world, suddenly, fully formed and truly amazing. Life is now aware, able to experience the sensations of hot and cold, pain, hunger, and danger. The newly created brain of this type of flesh functions mainly by instinct, reacting to the environment with a preprogrammed code like the operating system of a computer. In its simplest form, the brain's primary function is to coordinate, making sure needs are being met to keep the creature operating properly. Without the code, breathing, blood circulation, and the desire to reproduce would all have to be learned. That instinct is good is an understatement.

This type of flesh is a very broad grouping of creatures and is not limited to aquatic life. It apparently is not even limited to vertebrate life. The flesh of fish is symbolic, representing cold-blooded life. This relationship applies to fish obviously, but also to amphibians and reptiles. It also appears to include mollusks, crustaceans, insects, and probably many other animal types. Two verses report all the creation activity of day five, but the flesh of fish is only part of this work. They don't even get a full day to themselves. Well over 90% of all animal life on earth are in this group, and yet the Bible lists them all simply as, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life." So they don't even get a full verse to themselves. The diversity of the species and whether they have a common ancestor is not that important an issue, except in our minds. The important point is that life, as defined by blood and the nervous system, is a special creative act of God that time alone cannot fully explain.

The Flesh of Birds.

In Genesis 1: 20 we read that the sea brings forth "fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." And in verse 21 "God created... every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good." The Hebrew word for fowl here is 'owph.' Note that this is an extremely generic word which has caused some confusion.

It is the kanaph 'owph that we are concerned with in the discussion of the flesh of birds. Birds are not unique in their ability to soar above the earth. We have already mentioned winged insects, and there were flying dinosaurs, so it is not flight alone that Scripture is pointing out. The feathers of Birds are unique, but hardly seem worth mentioning. Could there be more we should notice? Possibly, Gen 1: 20 may record the creation of one level of life with verse 1: 21 recording a heightened level of creation on day 5.

In addition to the transitional difference of the word 'owph from one verse to the next there is another change that is lost in the English translation of the verses. In verse 20 it says the waters bring forth "moving creature that hath life" which in Hebrew is sherets sherets chay (active mass of minute living animals). In verse 21 the wording sounds the same in English, "living creature that moveth," but it has a different, deeper meaning. The Hebrew is chay nephesh ramas (living breathing creatures that

crawl). Possibly nephesh is a reference to early mammals. The word nephesh will figure heavily in the discussion on the flesh of animals, but it hints, if only indirectly, at what makes the flesh of birds different.

Also in verse 21 are the gadowl tanniyn (great land and sea monsters) that have no parallel in verse 20. Though they are extinct today, dinosaurs may hold another clue to the puzzle. Recent excavations suggest that some dinosaurs may actually have built nests and brooded over their eggs like chickens. It is also suggested that some may have cared for their young after they hatched. This is hardly reptilian behavior. Reptiles lay their eggs and abandon them. Some fish, such as the male betta, do protect their nests but become uncaring when the young can swim away.

Very interesting, but what does that have to do with the flesh of birds? Birds and mammals are warm-blooded. Paleontologists continue to debate whether dinosaurs were warm or cold blooded. Because they look like big lizards we just assume they were reptiles, but maybe not.

So what makes a dinosaur a dinosaur? It has traditionally been the hip joint that determines this, as far as I can tell. Reptile legs are out to the side of the animal so they carry their bodies low to the ground — think alligator. The legs of the dinosaurs were carried beneath them like mammals — think cow.

Warm-bloodedness may be part of what separates birds from the flesh of “fish.” But there is another point that is of even greater importance. Most birds and mammals care for their young, and apparently some dinosaurs may have as well.

At the upper limit of the previous type of flesh is the instinct-driven reptile brain. The limbic node in man 's brain is akin to the reptile brain. Physical survival skills are controlled by the reptile brain. Cold and indifferent, the reptile brain 's only concern is survival of the individual.

The warm-bloodedness of birds corresponds to another warming — the warming of the “heart.” Birds are capable of emotional expression. Some birds choose a mate for life. As a survival tactic this seems lame. To insure the greatest possibility of passing its genes on to the next generation — survival of the fittest — it would be far more beneficial for the bird to mate with as many different birds as possible. Brooding over a nest of eggs is far less efficient than just laying more eggs as reptiles do. Caring for the young makes even less sense as a survival tactic.

The more complex the brain, the longer the time needed for it to fully develop. The more complex the brain, the longer it takes for the young to become self-sufficient. Warm-blooded young require more care after birth, or hatching in this case, than reptile young. God in His wisdom gave birds a sense that reptiles lack to compensate for the extra time and effort required to raise their young.

To summarize — birds are winged, feathered, warm-blooded egg layers that often care for their young. They have some emotional expressive abilities and some sense of unity that cold-blooded creatures lack.

The Flesh of Animals.

“And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good ” (Gen 1: 24 - 25 KJV).

The flesh of animals is a reference to the mammals. The beginnings of mammals occurred during day 5, so the verses of day 6 refer to the population explosion of mammals occurring after the extinction

of the dinosaurs. The dinosaur extinction was not the only great extinction of life in earth 's history. It was not even the biggest. Long before the dinosaurs roamed the land, over 90 % of all the oceanic life was wiped out in a mass extinction. Also, the Cambrian period, though the most dramatic, was not the only to have an explosion of new species. As the dinosaurs disappeared and mammals began to dominate, the earth saw the greatest explosion of flora in its history.

“The living creatures ” brought forth on this day are chay nephesh in Hebrew, or living breathing animals. The breath of these creatures, the nephesh, is soul. Again, not to be confused with the immortal spirit, the soul is the emotional and reasoning characteristics of warm-blooded life. No offense to snake and lizard fans, but mammals are capable of relating to one another, and to man, in a way that escapes cold-blooded life.

In varying amounts, according to their kind, mammals are capable of expressing joy and sorrow. Even destructive emotions such as hate and jealousy are observed in warm-blooded creatures besides humans. On the positive side, it is a mammal 's capacity to express love, even devotion, that best exemplifies the upper limits of the relationship that is the flesh of animals. The love that a mother bear shows her cubs is obvious. Still, many mammals have learned to respect and live alongside man. The ones we call pets may even show a great attachment to one or more humans. We have all read of accounts where an animal (usually a pet but not always) has rescued a child.

Mammals have some unique physical characteristics, such as nursing their young and fur. Mostly, it is the advanced development of the brain that separates this type of flesh from those previously discussed. There is a sense of curiosity in mammals that they share with birds. But unlike birds there is a greater dependence on learned abilities and less emphasis on instinct. Mammals reason and plan. At the upper limit of this level of flesh today are the apes and monkeys, but this most probably was not always the case. It seems that the hominid species that evolutionists contend are the ancestors of man are more evolved animals. Australopithecus, Homo erectus, Homo habilis, and Neanderthal man should all be placed in this grouping. Science is now pretty certain through DNA testing that man is not a descendant of the Neanderthal.

The Flesh of Man.

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Gen 1: 26 - 27 KJV).

Creationists maintain man is a special creation — formed by the hands of God, and generally made directly from dust. Fundamentalists agree. The Protestant Church in America agrees. The Catholic Church has been misunderstood on this issue as having accepted the evolution of man as factual. Many Christians do accept the evolution of man from a primate ancestor, but insist on the fundamental difference between apes and man.

The Protestant Church does not have a written policy proclaiming a belief in a recent creation of the universe or man. The young earth views are so common that it seems somewhat strange that none of the denominations have declared them publicly. But, there have been no denominational statements written against evolution. With all the fuss made in the U.S. over evolution in the past century, this is amazing ! Apparently, it is not certain what Christians should believe.

On the one hand, man is a special creation, on the other, the dust he was made from may have been a primate ancestor, and there is no real conflict here.

The main reason man 's flesh qualifies as different from other mammals is that man has been sanctified by God — that is, separated and made holy for a sacred purpose. Man 's body is the earthly vessel — jar of clay — used to contain an eternal spirit direct from God. When man sins he defiles what is holy, making it unsuitable as an instrument of worship and service. The connection between God and man is broken by sin. This is what the bloodshed on the cross and the resurrection are about; God washes the vessel clean, restoring a holy function to the redeemed.

That is why God 's way of salvation was planned before the beginning of time. Jesus allowed Himself to be sacrificed, so He could ascend from the grave, thus claiming victory over death and allowing you to finish the course of life in God 's mode ! This is the work of God alone. No creature other than man has been sanctified to receive an eternal spirit. No creature can evolve a spirit. God 's work.

Limitation. The flesh of man is different, even if he has a primate ancestor.

The psalmist declares man was created a little lower than the angels, yet we have been blessed above all creation. Mankind is given a special privilege. In His love God has made it possible for us to become His children. We are told that He could raise up children for Abraham out of the stones. Now, God would have to directly intervene to make that happen, but He could do it. But, notice that in so doing, He would be changing the stones ' relationship from material object to adopted child. So the physical body is not really that important, it is man 's relationship with Him that is of concern to God.

Science tells us the genetic difference between man and ape may be only 1 %. Arguably, there has not been enough time for the DNA to drift that far apart in 5 million years. It is often said by evolutionists that natural selection is not random. Maybe so, but it would need to be directed to effect this amount of change in two creatures living side by side, in the same environment and under the same physical circumstances, especially if they did come from a recent common ancestor.

The fossil record is suggestive, but it is only partial, scattered and not nearly as convincing as one would like it to be. Yet from the naturalist 's perspective it must be true — but directed natural selection is not evolution, it is design ! From the Biblical point of view it may be true. But either way it was God who formed the body of man.

Modern man has been labeled Homo Sapiens Sapiens by science. IF God used a primate ancestor to form the body of man then I propose this label is incorrect. Modern man should be relabeled Homo Sapiens Spiritus. For he is a spirit indwelled being. Man alone ponders where he came from, what is his purpose in being, and where he is going. Man alone seeks to know the Creator.

What if God took a Homo Sapiens Sapiens animal and breathed the breath of life into it? The creature that was already nephesh before God would now become neshamah — spirit indwelled. The animal would become ' adam, the first man. What if God then placed Adam in a special place on the earth? — The garden. Isolated from the Homo Sapiens Sapiens animals, Adam would have been alone. God could have created Eve in the same manner as Adam, but for whatever reason, He chose instead to create from ' adam the ' ishshah, the woman. Is this really that hard to believe? Is it really that degrading? Each of us must decide that for ourselves. Let that decision be an informed one, and not one made out of ignorance.

This interpretation of Genesis seems to fit nicely with current anthropological theories. A dramatic change occurs abruptly in the development of man about 10, 000 BC that has been labeled the Neolithic revolution. Man (as defined by science) for the first time domesticates animals, cultivates plants, makes pottery and cloth, draws pictures, invents musical instruments. Man, however, appears to have been on earth long before this time. Did man suddenly decide he would stop being a hunter-

gatherer and settle down, get a farm and raise some cows? Or is this the indication of a change in relationship? After all, that is what Genesis and the rest of Scripture are about. The loving relationship of the living God for His creation and the opportunity we have to return that love and become the adopted children of the Father of creation.

15.13. *Extinct Humans.*

The human family tree has long been envisioned as a straight line progression from bipedal apes to *Homo habilis*, to *Homo erectus*, to Neanderthals, and to us, *Homo sapiens*. But this model of a single species at a time is suspiciously unlike the pattern of multiple branchings and extinctions known for other groups of organisms, and it fails to confront adequately the variation evident in the hominid fossil record itself. Eschewing preconceived models of evolution, some scientists started to look anew to the morphology of the fossils to see what story they tell. It is a story of great variation, repeated speciation and extinction, played out over the millions of years of hominid history.

One of the most recent books on this subject, *Extinct Humans* by Ian Tattersall and Jeffrey H. Schwartz (Westview Press, New York: 2000), is based on a careful reexamination of virtually every known hominid fossil in collections around the world. The authors offer a radical reinterpretation of human evolution. They demonstrate that there have been multiple coexisting human species throughout hominid history, even as recently as 25,000 years ago.

Related hominid species lived together over time and space, possibly peaceably, but possibly in direct or indirect competition with one another. Since the mid-twentieth century, for example, it has been evident that two species of australopithecines existed at one time in South Africa, one of which, a specialized vegetarian, went extinct without descendants. Early members of our genus, *Homo*, existed side by side with australopithecines, complicating the picture further. The recent redating of Asian *Homo erectus* fossils implies that Java Man might have been a contemporary of European Neanderthals and even of modern humans, casting serious doubt on the longstanding belief that this wide-spread hominid was our direct ancestor. It is increasingly clear as well that the Neanderthals were not directly ancestral to modern humans but were in fact a side branch whose extinction coincided with the arrival of modern humans to Europe 40,000 years ago.

According to the new evidence, over 15 different species of humans have existed over time, with multiple human species coexisting simultaneously up until only 25,000 years ago. How did our fellow humans differ from us? Which were direct ancestors to us and which represent dead branches on our family tree? Perhaps most provocatively, why are we the lone remaining human species?

Certainly up until the origin of our species, this approach shows us that our pattern has essentially been one of business as usual for the natural world: a story of repeated evolutionary experimentation, diversification, and, ultimately, extinction. And it was clearly in the context of such experimentation, rather than out of constant fine-tuning by natural selection over the eons, that our own amazing species appeared on Earth. However, in the end, there was a difference: unlike even our closest relatives, *Homo sapiens* is not simply an extrapolation or improvement of what went before it. The book concludes that our species is an entirely unprecedented entity in the living world. This central fact of human uniqueness is one with which we urgently need to come to terms, because evo

lution has done nothing to prepare the biota that not only surrounds but also supports us to cope with this new element on the landscape.

15.14. *The “Rare Earth.”*

The notion that life existed anywhere in the universe besides Earth was once laughable in the scientific community. Over the past thirty years or so, the laughter has died away. As the vast scale of the universe has become clearer, the notion that life could have arisen only on Earth seems increasingly unlikely. The law of averages alone would suggest that there must be many places in the cosmos that harbor life.

“Not so fast,” say Peter D. Ward and Donald Brownlee. These two professors at the University of Washington argue that the recent trend in scientific thought has gone too far. They suggest that even if the universe is teeming with life, complex organisms are not likely to appear on many — if any — planets besides our own. They make their case in “Rare Earth” (“Rare Earth: Why Complex Life Is Uncommon in the Universe”).

The authors draw on a wide variety of scientific disciplines, from geology to paleontology to astrophysics, as they lay out the evidence that Earth may be a singular habitat for animal life. Indeed, they call this compendium of sciences “astrobiology,” the study of life throughout the universe. They also admit that all of their conjectures about how life might evolve on other planets are based entirely on one example — how life evolved on Earth. But they argue that example is rich enough in detail to provide clues about how the process might work everywhere.

A long list of factors. Ward and Brownlee acknowledge that life arose fairly quickly on Earth, and they allow that simple life forms, of the single-cell variety, might be common on many other planets. But they insist that the evolution that led to everything from butterflies to redwoods to humans is the result of a peculiar, and perhaps unique, sequence of events on Earth.

There is a long list of interrelated factors leading them to this conclusion. They include the presence of the planet Jupiter in an orbit sufficiently far from Earth to deflect much of the cosmic debris floating around the solar system. If Jupiter weren't there, or if it were in a different orbit, a lot of that junk would be crashing into Earth and extinguishing complex plant and animal life. Only Earth, among the inner planets of the Solar System, has plate tectonics, a process that serves as a sort of regulator of our global temperature and provides enough dry land for complex organisms to inhabit.

They also cite the happy accident of Earth's position in the galaxy — not too close to the intense radiation of the central core, not so far away that it is left without the chemical building blocks of life. And there is the position of the galaxy itself — not in a globular cluster, not in a metal-poor quadrant, but in just the right spot to foster the rise of complex life.

'Not the center of the Universe.' “The continued marginalization of Earth and its place in the Universe now should be reassessed,” the authors write. “We are not the center of the Universe, and we never will be. But we are not so ordinary as Western science has made us out to be for two millennia. Our global inferiority complex may be unwarranted.”

To us who believe in God these new findings say that, after all, we are very special to Him.

15.15. *Orthodoxy and Evolution.*

Orthodoxy has neither a textual nor a doctrinal basis to reject evolutionism. Neither does it make sense for Orthodox Christians to indulge the current fashion of irrationality (since any irrationality, in the end, will favor occultism and will work against the Church). Before beginning, it should be said that it is more a novelty than a tradition among the Orthodox to disclaim evolution.

First of all, according to the views of the theologians of the very traditionalist Russian Church Abroad, “the Days of creation should be understood not literally (“For a thousand years in Thine eyes, O Lord, are but as yesterday that is past, and as a watch in the night.”) but as periods !”

Secondly, the idea of evolution, given its separation from its atheist interpretation, is discussed quite positively in works by Orthodox authors. Prof. Ivan M. Andreev, says: “In everything else, Darwinism does not contradict the biblical teaching on the creation of living things because evolution does not address the question of who created the first animals.”

Archbishop Michael (Mudyugin), professor of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, writes: “The process of evolution of the organic world belongs to the category of phenomena in whose description in the Bible and in the pages of any biology textbook it is easy to see an amazing degree of similarity. The biblical terminology itself fits into the same surprising coincidence — it is said: ‘Let the water bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life.’ ‘Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping things, and beast of the earth after his kind.’ Here the verb ‘bring forth’ points to the link between distinct phases in formation of the animal world, moreover, to the connection between nonliving and living matter.”

Professor Alexey I. Osipov, of the Moscow Theological Academy, supposes: “For theology, both the creationist and evolutionary hypotheses are permissible, in principle. That is with the condition that in both cases the Lawgiver and the Creator of the world is God. All existing species He could create either by ‘days,’ at once and in final form, or gradually, in the course of ‘days’ to ‘bring them forth’ from water and earth, from lower forms to the highest by way of laws that He built into nature.”

Professor of St. Vladimir’s Theological Seminary in New York, Fr. Vasili Zenkovsky also emphasized the biblical “creative potential” of the earth: “It is clearly stated in the text of the Bible that the Lord gives an order to the earth to act with its own strength... This inherent creative activity of nature, ‘elan vital’ (in the expression of Bergson) — the aspiration to life, helps to understand an indisputable fact of evolution of life on earth.”

One of the leading authors of the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate in the 1960's and 70's, Archpriest Nicholas Ivanov was in agreement with the idea of evolutionary development: “The act of the creation of the world and its shaping are manifestations of God’s omnipotence, His will; yet, for Nature, the realization of His will is a long and gradual process, an act of maturation that takes place in time. Numerous transient forms can appear during the process of development, sometimes merely serving as steps in emergence of the more advanced forms, that are linked to eternity.”

Professor N. N. Fioletov, who took part in the Local Council of 1917 - 1918, thought that “in itself the idea of evolution appears not to be alien to the Christian conscience, or in contradiction with it.”

In 1917, hieromartyr archpriest Michael Cheltsov, touching on the question of the relationship between Christianity and science, wrote: “Deeper and more thoughtful and spiritual explanation and understanding of many places of the Bible have contributed not a little towards the overcoming of animosity between science and religion. It sufficed to read the biblical account of the creation of the world to realize that the Bible gives no support to understanding of the days of creation as 24 - hour intervals, and the wall between biblical accounts and scientific data on the indefinitely long period of Earth’s existence prior to the appearance of mankind collapsed.”

Before that, it was V. S. Solovyev who showed the way of direct Christian interpretation of the idea of evolution: “If I were facing the task of pointing out parallelisms between modern science and the Mosaic world view, I’d say that his [Moses’] vision of the origins of life is similar to the theory of directed evolution.”

Vladimir Solovyev clearly expressed the philosophical basis of this theory, developed in biology by L. Berg and Teilhard de Chardin: “The fact that the highest forms and types of creation appear or are revealed after the lowest does not mean that they are the product or creation of the simplest forms. The level of being is not the same as the order of appearance. Higher, more positive, and complete images of being metaphysically existed prior to the lower ones, even when they appear or are revealed after these. This does not deny evolution: evolution can not be denied; it is a fact. But to claim that evolution is able to fully create higher forms from lower, and, in the end, from nothing — means putting logical nonsense under the cover of this fact. Evolution of the lower levels of being can not, by itself, produce the higher ones, yet it produces the material conditions or provides the proper environment for the coming or the revelation of the higher type. Thus, each appearance of the higher level of being is, in a way, a new creation: the type of creation, of which the least of all can be called “creation from nothing.” First of all, the old type is forming as the material basis for the new one, and, second, the proper positive content of the new type does not appear fresh from non-being but merely steps into the new sphere of existence, (in due time) into the world of things. Conditions are the result of the evolution of nature, while that which is revealed comes from God.”

Later on, evolutionary theory was not considered “anti-biblical ” or “atheistic ” by the philosopher I. N. Ilyin, (*The Six Days of Creation*, Paris), by the Serb theologians Fr. Stephan Lyashevsky and Prof. Lazar Milin, by the famous Romanian priest and theologian Dumitru Staniloae, and by Bishop Vasily (Rodzianko).

15.16. Body and Spirit.

God creates man’s body from the earth and then into the body He breathes the soul. The Bible does not discuss any span of time between these events. If there was an interval, then there was a creature that had a human body and did not have a human soul.

Saint Gregory of Nyssa speaks about the difference in the genesis of body and the genesis of soul in man: God created internal man and formed the external man. To form means to use already created matter. When making the human body God used some pre-existing material, whereas when creating the internal man, i.e. the human soul, God created it. It was an entirely new act that had never happened before.

What was that material God used to make a human body? What is that earth we are talking about? We will not find the answer in the Bible because in the Bible, the earth is everything coming from the ground. The same can be said about the human body, that it is earth; it came from the ground and will return to the ground. We cannot answer unambiguously what was the level of internal structure of the earth, the matter which was touched by God in order to transform it into the human body. As soon as it is possible to call the human body “earth,” then we can assume the word “earth ” in the biblical story of the creation of man meant a living matter and not some chunk of clay. It was the earth transformed by the God ’s creative act.

God touches previously blessed matter once again and man receives a special blessing. He touches a previously touched matter and we have an anthropomorphous creature. We cannot call that creature a man yet because the human body without a soul is not a man yet, but in a literal sense, an anthropomorphous humanoid creature.

Bishop Theophan the Recluse says: “This body — what was it? Some clay figurine of the grey-hen or a live body? It was a live body, an animal that looked like a man with the animal soul, and then the Lord breathed in it His breath...” First a human-like animal creature was created and afterwards it was endowed with mind. This idea of Bishop Theophan is not accidental; he would return to it again and again in his anthropological constructions, contending that man has in himself all other levels of life. For example he writes: “God ’s creatures are so built that the higher classes contain in them forces of the lower classes and in addition have its own forces attached to its class specifically.” This is a quite normal and widespread dialectic. Bishop Theophan concludes that man has an animal life and animal soul. He refers to the venerable Anthony the Great. “...According to St. Anthony,” writes Bishop Theophan, “our soul is not of the same class as an animal ’s. What we differ in is mind, which I call spirit.”

Starting with Descartes, European thought separates the man and the animal completely. Aristotle, early Church fathers, and even the Bible itself hold that all the God ’s creatures have some relation: the animals have a soul but the soul is without mind. It is possible that this was the type of wordless “clay ” into which God later breathed His spirit.

“And The Lord our God created man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ” (Genesis 2: 7). The meaning of this text is not so obvious as it first seems. If we look closer at the literal meaning we read that God breathes the breath of life not into the face but into the nostrils of man.

According to the Hebraic text of the Scriptures The Lord “breathed into man breaths of lives ” (nishmat hiiim).

Man has several levels of life in him: physical, animal, psychic, God-like, spiritual. Bishop Theophan says that there are five levels, sides or “grades ” of life in man: bodily, emotional-bodily, emotional, spiritual-emotional and spiritual. He explains it as follows: “Five tiers, but the image (persona) is one, and this one face lives one and another and a third life...” A Christian follower, while carrying in himself these five tiers of life, should learn how to be in charge of them and handle them in a harmonious way, so that the lower tiers ' sounds would not overcome those of higher tiers. This is the task of the ascetics: to learn how to collect your soul in such a manner that it would sound as a well-coordinated, unified symphony, whose highest notes are not muted by the lower.

To summarize this section, the biblical teaching about man affirms that man in his spiritual nature profoundly differs from all other earthly creatures, and is incomparably more perfect and perfectable than they, being himself made in the image and likeness of God. Man is also the most perfect creation of God in his bodily nature, the crowning achievement of all earthly creation. In both his bodily and

spiritual / moral nature, man is created in the most perfect aspect, as the purest intellectual / moral personality. According to his designation, man was created to live forever — not because his nature was immortal, but because God gave him access to the Tree of Life.

16. On the unity of mankind.

One of the exceptionally important, basic truths of revealed religion relating to the teaching about man is the truth of the unity of mankind. This truth belongs to the basic truths of the Christian worldview, affirming the dogmas of the Fall of all mankind in Adam and of the Redemption of the whole world through Christ. All mankind, in the light of this truth, represents in itself a family unity, and this family is one complete organism, having one common root in Adam and one crown in his general Redeemer, Christ.

Without this truth, the teaching of the necessity of Redemption for all mankind and the teaching about the general meaning of the redeeming sacrifices of Christ for all mankind could not be understood. This truth also determines the substance of the ethical principle underlying the understanding of the dignity of the personality of every man. Not in one of the natural religions do we find a clear and full expression of this truth, and, because of this, not one of the systems of pagan morality contains a universal latitude and depth of understanding of man's personality, created in the image and likeness of God. Only Christian teaching of morality has widened the ethical horizon of mankind to a fitting scale. Only Christianity can be a truly unyielding foundation for authentic humaneness, in the loftiest and best meaning of the word. From this Christian foundation, humaneness grew through an inclination to missionary activity to enlighten wild peoples (our smaller brothers), through an inclination to liberate enslaved and oppressed peoples and tribes, through an inclination to establish international peace, and other magnanimous social inclinations.

"All for one and one for all are to blame"; this is the social truth of Christianity. The coarsest perversion of Christian social ethics is the teaching of so-called socialism (and communism), which does not understand either the universal, mystical root of evil, the necessity of saving mankind by Christ, or the blissfulness of this salvation.

The question of whether mankind consists of one or several kinds has, up to the present, been controversial in the natural sciences. To the teaching of the unity of mankind is connected the question: Is the origin of all mankind from one initial pair possible, or not? There are no scientific data forcing us to doubt the truth of the biblical teaching of the origin of all mankind from Adam and Eve.

16.1. *New findings in Genetics.*

From what had seemed like irreversible oblivion, archaeologists and population geneticists believe they are on the verge of retrieving a record of human history stretching back almost 50, 000 years.

The record, built on a synthesis of archaeological and genetic data, would be a bare-bones kind of history without individual names or deeds. But it could create a chronicle of events, however sketchy, between the dawn of the human species at least 50, 000 years ago and the beginning of recorded history in 3, 500 B.C. The events would be the dated migrations of people from one region to another, linked with the archaeological cultures and perhaps with development of the world's major language groups.

The new element in this synthesis is the increasing power of geneticists to look back in time and trace the history of past populations from analysis of the DNA of people alive today. "It is astonishing

how much archaeology is beginning to learn from genetics,” Dr. Colin Renfrew, a leading archaeologist at the University of Cambridge in England, said at a conference on human origins at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory on Long Island.

Geneticists believe that the world outside Africa was populated by the migration of a very small number of people who left east Africa about 50, 000 years ago. These modern humans, with their more advanced and inventive culture, are thought to have displaced the archaic hominids like the Neanderthals, which had emigrated from Africa many thousands of years earlier.

These Paleolithic populations created sophisticated stone tools and left evidence of their advanced culture in the cave paintings of southern France, dating to at least 30, 000 years ago.

Geneticists are now improving their dating methods, even though the dates are still very approximate, to the point that they can begin to correlate their findings with the archaeologists'. The geneticists' first foray into human prehistory was the famous “mitochondrial Eve” article of 1987 by the late Allan Wilson, showing that when people around the world were placed on a family tree constructed from their mitochondrial DNA, the tree was rooted in African populations, in an individual who lived about 70, 000 years ago.

Though the methodology of the paper was imperfect, its result was unchanged after the method had been corrected, and geneticists have developed a growing confidence in mitochondrial DNA dates. The first major branch points in the mitochondrial Eve tree have been called the daughters of Eve and they fall in a geographic pattern with some daughters of Eve being characteristic of Africa, some of Asia and the Americas and some of Europe and the Near East.

Dr. Richards and his colleagues have analyzed the ancestry of the present European population by looking within the major daughter of Eve branches for sub-branches that occur both in Europe and the Near East, from western Iran through Turkey and Arabia to Egypt, because the Near East is the probable source of most of the ancestral populations that entered Europe.

The sub-branches from each region were then dated by counting the number of mutations that had occurred in the mitochondrial DNA sequence from the beginning of the sub-branch until today. If the sub-branch was older in the Near East than Europe, it indicated a migration into Europe. By this method Dr. Richards' s team was able to date the migrations into Europe. They also picked up a sizable back-migration from Europe to the Near East.

The geneticists working on the Y chromosome may eventually be able to date migrations with similar precision. The major class of mutation on the Y is so rare that the ticks of the mutation clock are too many thousands of years apart to be reliably averaged. But a second kind of mutation occurs more rapidly and the combination of the two may make a reasonable clock.

Analysis of the Y chromosome has already yielded interesting results. Dr. Ariella Oppenheim of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem said she had found considerable similarity between Jews and Israeli and Palestinian Arabs, as if the Y chromosomes of both groups had been drawn from a common population that began to expand 7, 800 years ago.

These genetic findings are important for us in that they prove the all human beings on earth are descendents of a single set of parents who lived not very long ago, in terms of the appearance of other species.

16.2. Conclusion.

In our era of geological and paleontological research and discoveries, the world of the past is depicted on an immeasurably vast time scale; the appearance of humanity itself is ascribed to immensely distant millennia. In questions of the origin and development of the world, science follows its own path, but it is not essential for us to make efforts to bring the Biblical account into congruence and harmony in all points with the voice of contemporary science. We have no need to plunge ourselves into geology and paleontology to support the Biblical account. In principle we are convinced that the words of the Bible and scientific data are not in contradiction, even if at any given time their agreement in one respect or another is still not completely clear to us. In some cases scientific data can show us how we should understand the facts in the Bible. But in other respects these two fields are not comparable, because they have different purposes.

Moses' task was not the study of the physical world. However, we agree in recognizing and honoring Moses for giving mankind the first elementary natural history; for being the first person in the world to give the history of early humanity; and, finally, for giving a beginning to the history of nations in the book of Genesis. He presents the creation of the world and its history in the small space of a single page of the Bible; hence it is already clear, from this brevity, why he does not draw the thread of the world's history through the deep abyss of the past, but rather presents it simply as one general picture. Moses' immediate aim in the account of the creation was to instill basic religious truths into his people and, through them, into other peoples.

The principal truth is that God is the one spiritual Being independent of the world. This truth was preserved in that branch of humanity which the fifth and sixth chapters of the book of Genesis call the "sons of God," and from them faith in the one God was passed on to Abraham and his descendants. By the time of Moses, the other peoples had already lost this truth for some time. It was even becoming darkened among the Hebrew people, surrounded as they were by polytheistic nations, and threatened to die out during their captivity in Egypt. For Moses himself, the greatness of the one, divine Spirit was revealed by the unconsumed burning bush in the wilderness. He asked in perplexity: Behold, I shall go forth to the children of Israel, and shall say to them, "The God of our fathers has sent me to you" — and they will ask of me, "What is His name?" What shall I say to them? Then, Moses heard a mystical voice give the name of the very essence of God: And God spoke to Moses, saying, I am the Being. Thus shall ye say to the children of Israel, the Being has sent me to you (Ex. 3: 13 - 14).

Such is the lofty conception of God that Moses is expounding in the first words of the book of Genesis: In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth. Even when nothing material existed, there was the one Spirit, God, Who transcends time, transcends space, Whose existence is not limited to heaven, since heaven was made together with time and the earth. In the first line of the book of Genesis the name of God is given without any definitions or limitations: for the only thing that can be said about God is that He is, that He is the one, true, eternal Being, the Source of all being, He is the Being.

A series of other truths about God, the world, and man, are bound up with this truth and follow directly from the account of the creation. These are:

- God did not separate a part of Himself, was in no way diminished or augmented in creating the world.
- God created the world of His free will, and was not compelled by any necessity.
- The world does not, of itself, have a divine nature; it is neither the offspring of the Deity, nor part

of Him, nor the body of the Deity.

- The world manifests the wisdom, power, and goodness of God.
- The world which is visible to us was formed gradually, in order, from the lower to the higher and more perfect.
- In the created world "everything was very good "; the world in its entirety is harmonious, excellent, wisely and bountiful ly ordered.
- Man is an earthly being, made from earth, and appointed to be the crown of earthly creation.
- Man is made after the image and likeness of God, and bears in himself the breath of life from God.

From these truths the logical conclusion follows that man is obliged to strive towards moral purity and excellence, so as not to deface and lose the image of God in himself, that he might be worthy to stand at the head of earthly creation.

Of course, the revelation about the creation of the world supplanted in the minds of the Hebrews all the tales they had heard from the peoples surrounding them. These fables told of imaginary gods and goddesses, who a) are themselves dependent on the existence of the world and are, in essence, impotent, b) who are replete with weaknesses, passions and enmity, bringing and spreading evil, and therefore, c) even if they did exist would be incapable of elevating mankind ethically. The history of the creation of the world, which has its own independent value as a divinely revealed truth, deals, as we see, a blow to the pagan, polytheistic, mythological religions.

The Old Testament concept of God is expressed with vivid imagery in the book of the Wisdom of Solomon: For the whole world before Thee is as a little grain in the balance yea, as a drop of the morning dew that falleth down upon the earth ! (Wis. 11: 22). The book of Genesis confesses pure, unadulterated monotheism. Yet Christianity brings out a higher truth in the Old Testament accounts: the truth of the unity of God in a Trinity of Persons. We read: Let us make man according to our image; Adam is become as one of us; and later, God appeared to Abraham in the form of three strangers.

Such is the significance of this short account. If the whole book of Genesis consisted only of the first page of the account of the world and mankind, it would still be a great work, a magnificent expression of God 's revelation, of the divine illumination of human thought.

17. The origin of evil.

17.1. *On the primary state of man.*

The biblical teaching about the primitive state in Paradise and then the Fall of man is the connection between Old Testament and New Testament teachings. On it is also based the teaching of Redemption.

Of the primitive life of man, science has no data at all. According to the remarkable expression of the famous French anthropologist Katrefage: "Neither experience nor observation give us the slightest facts concerning the very beginning of mankind. Strict science must therefore leave inviolate this problem. He who acknowledges his ignorance in the given case recedes less from the truth than he who does not acknowledge it and strives to press it on others." The one oblique proof of the correctness of biblical teaching in this question is the ancient tradition of diverse peoples about the primitive state of the race of man. Comparative study of these traditions forces us to conjecture their common source — the actuality in the past of a "golden age" or Paradise.

Dim traditions about Paradise and its loss through the Fall are met among peoples of Assyria-Babylon, the Persians, the Chinese, the Indians, the Egyptians, the ancient Greeks, the Romans, etc. In other words, the biblical teaching about the primitive state of man is not alone. Various versions of this teaching are met in traditions of people of Asia, Europe, Africa, Australia and America (in Mexico, Paraguay, and other places). What can explain this remarkable mutual accord in traditions of various peoples about the primitive state and Fall of man? The only explanation can be the historical actuality of Paradise and its loss through the Fall.

Biblical teaching about the primitive state of man embraces the state of mankind before the fall, and the first ages after the Fall. According to the description in the Book of Genesis, before the Fall, the first people found themselves amid exceptionally favorable conditions for physical, mental, and especially, religious-ethical improvements aspiring to perfection.

Physically, they were free from sorrows, illnesses, and death. Mentally, they possessed great creative abilities, since they were created in the image and likeness of God, and had to develop their abilities in order to rule over the whole earth. As to the religious-ethical state of the first people, it was a highly blissful and blessed state. Their main happiness consisted of a direct personal communion with God. Their veneration of God had the character of a child's devotion to God; their virtue consisted of a faithful keeping of the commandments of God.

Abundant blessedness pouring out on them did not destroy their personal freedom — that greatest of all blessings given to them which makes them godlike in truth. A full personal freedom, not limited but only guarded by a prohibition of not eating the fruits of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, created for them two possibilities: to grow spiritually and to be strengthened through personal, self-active moral strivings toward perfection, or to fall morally, transgressing the blessed and perfect will of God.

17.2. *Primordial Sin.*

According to Genesis (chapter 3), Adam and Eve, having obeyed the flattery of the serpent-devil, transgressed the will of God, fell morally and sinned. Sin destroyed the blessed and good harmony of the whole life of the transgressors.

The physical consequences of the fall are diseases, hard labor, and death. These were the natural results of the moral fall, the falling away from communion with God, man's departure from God. Man became subject to the corrupt elements of the world, in which dissolution and death are active.

Banished from Paradise, the first people came to know hard labor in the struggle with nature, illnesses, suffering, and death. Their spiritual forces began, not to develop, but to fall. Vices and crimes appeared and began to increase. Already the first steps of man outside the state of Paradise were sprinkled with the blood of fratricide. Then came polygamy, wars, corruption, and innumerable crimes.

Sin, in the Christian view, is not only the transgression of divine law or a state of lawlessness, even though there is no doubt it is that. It is not only what can be called a judicial evil. Not only is sin an offence to divine truth, but it is also treachery against God's love on the part of man, a transgression by him of loyalty to God, and an arbitrary violation of his sacred union with God. Through sin, mankind, in the depths of his free will, rebelled against his divine Creator, Who presented man with all the blessings, including the most important of all blessings: the image and likeness of God. From such a conception of sin stems the biblical teaching of the extreme criminality of sin and the utmost gravity of its consequences for the "fate of man."

The world, created by God, represented a complete harmony of beauty and blessings. The human spirit, violating the law of divine Truth, treacherously breaking away from God's love and entering a state of struggle against God, undergoes suffering which would have been impossible had divine will been fulfilled. For this will is a blessing for all. Sin breeds evil, and evil breeds suffering. That there should be an absence of suffering as a result of perpetrated sin would be the greatest logical absurdity, the greatest wickedness, the greatest ethical injustice, and itself the greatest moral evil !

17.3. *The question of creature mortality.*

Some believe that the decay of the universe (along with death of all living things) is the result of Adam's sin. Scripture does not say this, but because we are trained to think it does, that is what we believe. In fact Scripture does not say when this groaning began, only that it continues to the present time. Also notice that creation was subjected to frustration by the will of the one who subjected it. Now, did Adam will the universe to decay? Of course not. It is by the sovereign will of God that the laws of nature behave as they do, not by the sin of man.

We have been taught that Adam's sin affected the entire universe because six times in Genesis chapter 1 we read that God saw His latest creation and it was good. Further, after all of God's creating has been completed we are told: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day" (Gen 1: 31).

It is understood that if it was good by God's standards it must have been perfect. So if it was very

good how much more divinely perfect the universe must have been! This sure sounds right, doesn't it? And it is, just not the way it has been taught. This misconception is based on the same reasoning that caused Ptolemy to construct his model of the geocentric universe with complex epicycles. Since the universe must be perfect, the planetary orbits must follow a geometric pattern of mathematical perfection. But Ptolemy was wrong. The earth is not the center of the universe and the planets do not orbit in perfect circles. Ptolemy and countless others since have made the same mistake by forcing their preconceived idea of perfection on God's creation. That the universe was created very good is true. It perfectly accomplished the purpose for which it was created.

Cosmology provides some insight here. The birth and death of stars was necessary from the beginning to form the heavy elements in the universe in sufficient quantity that planets could form and life would be possible. The laws of thermodynamics also point out why the universe is decaying. It takes energy to run a universe, but the universe is a closed environment. All the energy that is available to run the universe was created with the big bang. For the past 15 billion years the universe has been running down, using up its available energy. This is necessary because without entropy, no work could be done. Planets wouldn't form, stars wouldn't light up, and life couldn't reproduce or even exist in our current universe.

The fact that Adam and Eve persisted biologically after sinning, while having been warned that "in the day that you (sin) you will die" (Gen 2: 17), leads us to conclude that when they sinned they died spiritually in the sense of separation from God. Physical death came later as a consequence of the fact that they had no more access to the Tree of Life.

The soul's persistence after bodily death suggests that the soul is inherently immortal. "At the death of the body the spirit is 'given up' to God," according to Eccl 12: 7; Luke 23: 46. Correspondingly, man in the beginning might have been wholly immortal, and then lost his bodily immortality only because of sin. Prior to the fall, the human body was not liable to death from internal causes, but only from external. It had no latent diseases, and no seeds of death in it. It could, however, be put to death if deprived of food or air. This original immortality of the body was mutable and relative only. It might be lost. Adam's immortality before the fall was therefore probationary.

The whole of Scripture teaches that man's existence is never autonomous but is always dependent on providential support from God. Adam and Eve had to be banished from the Garden of Eden. This was necessary to deny them access to the Tree of Life, which itself was necessary for eternal life. Taken first in the literal sense, the verse implies that eating a physical fruit was necessary for eternal life, and hence Adam and Eve were not inherently immortal.

Augustine believed that "Adam's body (was) a natural and therefore mortal body." Further, he said that "Adam's body (was)... mortal because he was able to die, immortal because he was able not to die.... This immortality was given to him from the Tree of Life, not from his nature. When he sinned, he was separated from this tree.... He was mortal, therefore, by the constitution of his natural body, and he was immortal by the gift of his Creator."

It is concluded, therefore, that Adam and Eve before the fall were not by nature immortal but instead had access to immortality as provided by the God through the Tree of Life. Sin produced loss of spiritual life as it distanced them from God, the only source of life. This is precisely what God warned Adam and Eve about (Gen 2: 17; 3: 19). Upon sinning, Adam lost fellowship with God and died spiritually.

Since animals do not have the moral capacity to sin, their death cannot have arisen because they sinned, as in the above prescription. Therefore, animal death came with creation. Scientific evidence shows one that there was disease and death and bloodshed in Nature long before man

appeared on the earth. So ideal conditions must have existed only for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Because Adam was not immortal by nature, there is no reason to expect that the first animals were immortal by nature either. Moreover, the animals, like Adam, were created with physical sensitivity to pain and suffering, as well as susceptibility to death. Unlike Adam, however, animals were not offered access to the Tree of Life. Of course this is especially so for beasts outside the Garden. Therefore they had no possible way to achieve immortality. On such considerations one should conclude that animals were created mortal by nature. This view is supported by scientific evidence.

18. The question of good and the evil.

The problem of good and evil is handled by religion, philosophy, psychology and social sciences. In a very generic way, good can be defined as everything that attracts us, inducing exalted emotions, what we wish to imitate or make remembered. Evil is everything opposed to the good, receiving negative evaluation, and what in our opinion should not exist. Evil includes suffering, diseases, destruction, injustice, oppression, and death.

We accept good as a natural thing and evil as unnatural. Evil is a problem which people have been trying to understand since the earliest ages. The elusiveness of this problem for the human mind can be illustrated by the fact that different judgments about evil are as numerous as the world's religions and philosophic schools. There can be physical and moral good. Evil can also be classified as physical and moral.

18.1. Moral good and moral evil.

By the experience, roots of good and evil go down to the depth of a human's moral core. On the one hand, the wish to learn the truth and rethink one's own life from the moral viewpoint is natural. Things that are good attract man. He has inherent compassion toward other people and living creatures in general. A product of this emotion is his desire to help, protect, or save. Man feels moral satisfaction when he pleases others, loves, forgives, gives up his own interests, or fulfills an obligation of a member of his family or community. By doing good, man develops positive qualities of his soul: intelligence, will power, consistency, courage, tolerance. In a word, he gains nobility of spirit.

On the other hand, from the earliest age of man's life, tendencies opposed to those listed above start to manifest themselves. At times, man does consciously wish to hurt a neighbor. He can offend, lie, defame, harm, injure, or deprive another of his life. Sometimes man can do this for personal advantage, and sometimes for no obvious reason, as though he were taking pleasure in evil. If man does not constrain his bad tendencies, then as time passes, he becomes bad himself: greedy, insatiable, rude, impudent, lying, hypocritical, insidious, brutal, stuck-up, depraved. After the repetition of transgressions, the evil, which was initially a mere predisposition for violation of the moral law, becomes a sinful habit, a vice, and weaves itself into the spiritual nature of man, making him bad morally. The inclination toward evil is like a buckle on cardboard: it makes a sheet defective, because cardboard always folds along it. Science cannot explain why good tendencies coexist with bad ambitions. The Bible's explanation for this is original sin.

As good makes man nobler, so evil cripples him. It darkens intelligence, weakens will, perverts taste. In a while, man's moral condition starts to alter his appearance. A morally degraded person can be recognized merely from his looks.

18.2. *Physical good and physical evil.*

Nature abounds in kindness. A variety of food can sustain and please us. The riches of nature, abundance and diversity of vegetables, fruit and crops that nourish man are innumerable. Sun, water and air warm and refresh our organism. The beauty of nature, singing of birds, fragrance of flowers make man joyful. This is why a believer senses the caring hand of the Maker in every blade of grass.

However, despite the plenitude of physical goods, man cannot avoid suffering. Diseases and misfortunes cast a shadow on our life daily. Death is the unavoidable end of a physical life. Sometimes the inevitability of physical suffering pushes man to the thought that physical evil has autonomous substance. Some believe that nature is a product of two opposed elements, good and evil (the two deities in Persian dualism), or that matter bears evil in itself (Buddhism, Gnostic and modern theosophist teachings).

Contemplating the problem of good and evil, man has always endeavored to understand whether these are absolute or relative notions. Can the evaluation of good and evil differ depending on the circumstances and the level of human development, or good and evil are such in substance? We will see that the notion of physical evil (suffering) is relative because, when viewed from the standpoint of man's moral development, it can result in good. On the contrary, moral evil, i.e. absolute evil, can only result in evil.

18.3. *Absolute and relative evil.*

At close examination, we can see that physical evil does not constitute an autonomous substance but only is perceived as such in certain situations. Indeed, childbirth is painful for a mother, but at the same time it develops her love for her baby. Labor under the wrong conditions can wear and harm health, while in proper conditions it strengthens man, saves him from idleness and serves the development of his abilities. Suffering can embitter and cast down, but it can also enhance man, sharpen courage and patience, and teach compassion. Poverty can make man steal and swindle, or it can promote humility and reinforce our confidence in God. From the viewpoint of moral development, a lot of things that we consider physical evil can serve a good purpose, and thus lead to eternal bliss. That is why physical evil is not a substance but represents a relative notion.

This is not the case with moral evil. Often, evil things are done for the sake of temporary material benefits; however, together with its seeming advantages, the evildoing cripples the moral self of the transgressor and harms others. We can imagine a case when someone indirectly promotes moral good by doing moral evil. For example, by making a Christian suffer, the torturer lets him manifest his faith and patience. In this situation, though, good does not directly result from the action of moral evil (torturer's brutality). It occurs due to the dual effect of physical evil: the martyr's suffering causes the manifestation of his faith and patience. However, moral evil as such always results in evil. That is why moral evil, as well as moral good, is an absolute concept.

18.4. *Moral from the perspective of God and eternity.*

Some facts of life may receive controversial interpretation: are they morally good or evil? As an example, divorce is considered evil because it is linked to adultery, breach of vows, destruction of family and disregard for children. But what should we think about divorce by mutual consent, which apparently leads to the parties' betterment? Can it be counted as good? The Gospel teaches that any divorce is an act of disobedience to God's will. Man is a creature with limited and imperfect notions, and his ideas of good and evil are not always correct. Only the One Who is the Cause of the moral law can precisely know what is good and evil. That is why a Christian, willing to do good in all, should always submit his will to the Will of the Creator.

Sometimes, man can be bewildered: why does infinitely good and wise God permit evil? Could He not create an ideal world, without struggling, suffering and death? The answer to this is not easy. In "The Karamazov Brothers," Ivan justified his disbelief by the argument about an innocent child's suffering.

It is not possible to understand why God permits evil, if we view it within the range of this material life. Materialists explain suffering as a phenomenon which is undesirable but statistically inevitable. They understand human life as a tangle of injustice, which essentially has no sense. Scholastic theology treats suffering as retribution for sin, either personal or original. This is a very legal, formal answer that fails to match the Christian teaching about God who is loving and all-forgiving. In order to understand undeserved suffering, we need to look at it in the perspective of eternity, to which man is called. We believe that God does not send physical adversities but permits them to happen, so that suffering and patient ones receive the reward of eternal bliss. Philosophers, trying to make out the problem of good and evil from the temporary life's perspective only, are unable to produce a sufficient answer.

What can we say about God's permitting of moral evil? Why does He allow sin to ruin man? This question is inseparably bound to the man's free will. God could create us and give us not the opportunity to choose between good and evil. Had it happened this way, we would have been robots or beasts, but not humans. Without freedom of choice, there cannot be moral good, and only mechanical, pre-programmed motion can occur. The All-Good Maker wished to give us freedom of will and let us develop spiritually, by this attaining a certain degree of likeness to Him — comparable to children's likeness to parents in appearance. That is why freedom of will is the supreme good which exalts man above the entire nature. However, we need to be able to use this good properly. It is similar to fire, which is necessary for life, but which can be very dangerous when handled without due care and caution.

19. The universal flood.

The Biblical teaching about the Flood (Genesis 6 and 7), which ended the primitive “pre-Flood ” stage, raises important historical and theological questions. First off all, was the Flood mentioned in the Bible geographically universal? global? or was it only anthropologically universal, that is, affecting only the regions where the tribes described in Genesis lived?

Putting together all available data — both Scripture and scientific — we lean toward the second possibility, in other words, that the Flood covered mostly regions in and around Mesopotamia, the Near East, Asia Minor and South of Russia. The Bible repeatedly states that the purpose of the Flood was to punish sinners and to cleanse the earth of all wickedness. Obviously the Arctic, Antarctica, Greenland, Australia, and the American continents, and many other regions on the earth, had little, if any, population at that time.

Let us examine this topic now in more detail.

19.1. *Geographical extent of the Flood.*

The Bible gives the following brief account of this event. God sees the wickedness of men, and determines to destroy them excepting Noah and his family (Genesis 6: 1 - 8). He reveals his decree to Noah and instructs him how he may save himself and the seed of all animal life by means of an ark to be built according to certain dimensions (6: 9 - 22). Seven days before the Flood, God commands the patriarch to enter the ark (7: 1 - 5). Noah completes his entrance into the ark on the very day on which the Flood begins; the rain falls for forty days and nights; all living things outside the ark are destroyed; the waters prevail upon the earth a hundred and fifty days (7: 6 - 24). The waters decrease, the earth dries up; Noah ascertains its condition by means of a raven and a dove sent out from the ark (8: 1 - 14). Noah obeys the Divine command to leave the ark, builds an altar, offers sacrifice, makes a covenant with God, and begins to be a husbandman (9: 1 - 27).

A good rule of Biblical interpretation is to analyze that which is less specific in the light of that which is more specific. The Bible is very specific about the extent of the defilement of man 's sin and about God 's response. The defilement is limited to the sinners and their progeny for several generations. The extent of the Genesis flood would be limited to the extent of the defilement of man 's sin.

Genesis 8 gives us the most significant evidence for a universal (with respect to man and his animals and lands), but not global, flood. The four different Hebrew verbs used in Genesis 8: 1 - 8 to describe the receding of the flood waters indicate that these waters returned to their original sources. In other words, the waters of the flood are still to be found within the aquifers and troposphere and oceans of planet Earth. Since the total water content of the earth is only 22 percent of what would be needed for a global flood, it should be clear that the Genesis flood could not have been global. The expression “under the entire heavens ” must be understood in its context. What would constitute “under the entire heavens ” for the people of Noah 's time? It probably refers to the extent of their view from the entire region in which they existed or operated. Perhaps a verse from the New Testament will clarify my point. In Romans 1: 8 the Apostle Paul declares that the faith of the

Christians in Rome was being “reported all over the world.” Since “all over the world ” to the Romans meant the entire Roman Empire (and not the entire globe), we would not interpret Paul 's words as an indication that the Eskimos and Incas were familiar at that time with the activities of the church at Rome.

What does the geological data tell us about massive floods in the earth 's history? The evidence shows that the only place in the world where massive flooding has occurred since the advent of modern man was in the regions near Mesopotamia.

Biblical clues to the geographical limits on human habitation can be found in the places Genesis mentions or does not mention. In Genesis 1 - 9 the text mentions place-names only in the environs of Mesopotamia. From Genesis 10 onward, we encounter references (by name or direction) to places beyond Mesopotamia, in fact, to places covering much of the Eastern hemisphere.

This sudden shift from narrow to wider geographical range after Genesis 10 strongly suggests that until the time of the Flood, human beings and their animals remained in and around Mesopotamia. Therefore, to fulfill His purpose in sending the deluge, God would need to flood only the Mesopotamian plain and probably some adjacent territories.

The Genesis account of the great flood is not an embarrassment for the Christian. We are not saddled with a contradiction between the established facts of science and the words of the Bible. Rather, we have one more piece of objective evidence that the Bible is indeed unerring.

Does all this evidence for a regional flood mean that the Genesis flood was not universal? Not at all. The Genesis flood was “universal ” in that it destroyed the sinful mankind that surrounded Noah. There many other regions of the world not settled by humans at the time of the Flood — the whole Western Hemisphere, for one. In fact, the human race had remained localized in the environs of Mesopotamia. That was the only place God needed to inundate — the region that constituted the whole world to the antediluvians.

Noah and his family 's post-Flood activities argue against the global cataclysm hypothesis. Genesis records that Noah and his family began profitable agriculture immediately after leaving the ark — impossible if such extreme erosion and tectonics had rearranged the landscape. We recall, too, that an olive leaf was available to be plucked by the dove while the floodwaters were still receding. No olive tree, let alone its leaves, would have survived tens of thousands of feet of erosion, tectonics, and volcanic activity packed into a few months or even a few years.

The effects of such monstrous erosion, tectonics, and volcanic activity would be easily measurable by geophysicists today if they had occurred. Just as a rock dropped into a pond disappears but sends ripples radiating outward for many seconds, so huge tectonic events cause the core of Earth to “ring ” for many tens of thousands of years. Seismologists hear no such ringing. Nor do geophysicists find a shred of evidence for recent volcanic activity and erosion on a scale as great as the hypothesis demands.

One might assume that a Flood of such immense proportions would leave behind substantial evidence, a deposit that geologists today should be able to find. Several large alluvial flood deposits have been found in the Mesopotamian plain (T. C. Mitchell, “Geology and the Flood,” in *New Bible Dictionary*, 2d ed., eds. J. D. Douglas, et al., Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1982, pp. 382 - 383). One or more could fit in the time range for the Genesis Flood. The lack of a precise enough date for the Flood, however, hinders any positive identification.

The Flood, though massive, lasted but one year and ten days. A flood of such brief duration typically does not leave a deposit substantial enough to be positively identified thousands of years later. As an example, consider the flooding that occurred in California 's San Joaquin Valley in the

1970s. The valley lay under three to four feet of water for a few months. Ten years later, all geological evidence of the disaster had been erased. Similarly, a one-year flood in the region of Mesopotamia, even to a depth of two or three hundred feet, would leave behind insufficient evidence for a positive geological identification ten to forty thousand years later.

In summary, the flood event described in Genesis 6 - 9 did, indeed, accomplish the ends God clearly intended — and explicitly stated — without covering the entire planet. It may be accurately described as universal, with respect to humans and the animals associated with them, but not as global:

Biblical phrases such as “under the entire heavens ” and “the face of the earth ” must be interpreted in the writer 's (and most readers ') context as true, where these terms are used elsewhere in Scripture. The extent and spread of human population and, thus, of sin 's impact, was limited, not global. In fact, God rebuked the human race for its failure to spread out over the globe. Genesis mentions no geographical place-names beyond Greater Mesopotamia until chapter ten. Earth 's water quantity supports a regional rather than global Flood. The floodwaters came from Earth 's underground and atmospheric resources, which are plentiful but inadequate to cover the globe. Mountain ranges and ocean basins cannot erode in forty days nor build up in eleven months, as would be required by one explanation of a global Flood, without leaving evidence easily visible today. The creatures earmarked for rescue included only Noah, Noah 's family, and birds and mammals that had significant contact with the people in the region where Noah lived. No one could claim that all animals from all continents of the world came to Noah to be saved and after the Flood returned to their native places. Even 100 vessels the size of Noah 's arc would not suffice to allocate them. The million-plus animal species on Earth today could not have evolved in just a few thousand years from the thirty thousand species, maximum, the ark could have carried. Genesis 7 does not claim that water stood above the highest mountains like Everest; rather, it says that a deluge covered the highest hills visible to Noah. Genesis 8: 4 records that the ark landed in the mountains or hills of the Ararat region, not specifically on top of Mount Ararat itself. The designated area encompasses more than one hundred thousand square miles. Olive leaves do not grow at high altitudes, nor could they survive a global flood. The water of a global flood could not recede in less than a year. A strong wind (Genesis 8: 1) would be useful for dissipating a regional but not a global flood. No viable scientific evidence has ever been found for a recent global flood.

On the other hand, there are many indications and hints that a huge flood did occur in the time of Noah in Mesopotamia and in the regions close to it.

19.2. Evidence of the Flood.

According to Genesis 7: 11 - 12, the floodwaters came from “the springs of the great deep ” and “the floodgates of the heavens.” The respective Hebrew phrases are ma ' yemoth tehom rabah and ' aruboth hashamayim. These terms refer to subterranean reservoirs, today called aquifers, and to heavy rain clouds.

Like most desert plains, Mesopotamia has the characteristics that would favor formation of an enormous aquifer. Certain well-timed geologic events could bring all that water to the surface. And while rain is rare now in Mesopotamia, an “act of God ” could certainly bring it to the region and sustain the 40 - day torrent which Genesis records.

1. There are more than seventy different reports from various peoples around the world that are supportive of the narration of the Flood as found in the sixth chapter of the Book of Genesis. The closest to the Bible is the Babylonian report. The universality of the tradition of the flood speaks seriously for its having a basis in some actual world-wide event which was imprinted on the memory of peoples and preserved during the course of many ages.

The historicity of the Biblical flood account is confirmed by the tradition existing in many places as to the occurrence of a similar catastrophe. F. von Schwarz (*Sintfluth und Völkerwanderungen*, pp. 8 - 18) enumerates sixty-three such flood stories which are, in his opinion, independent of the Biblical account. R. Andree (*Die Flutsagen ethnographisch betrachtet*) discusses eighty-eight different flood stories, and considers sixty-two of them as independent of the Chaldee and Hebrew tradition. Moreover, these stories extend through all the races of the earth excepting the African; these are excepted, not because it is certain that they do not possess any flood traditions, but because their traditions have not as yet been sufficiently investigated. Lenormant pronounces the flood story as the most universal tradition in the history of primitive man, and Franz Delitzsch was of opinion that we might as well consider the history of Alexander the Great a myth, as to call the flood tradition a fable. It would, indeed, be a greater miracle than that of the deluge itself, if the various and different conditions surrounding the several nations of the earth had produced among them a tradition substantially identical. Like the Hebrews, Babylonians, Greeks, Norsemen, and other peoples of the Old World, many Indian tribes of North and South America had traditions of a deluge.... 'When the earliest missionaries came '..., the Reverend Myron Eells reported in 1878, 'they found that those Indians had their traditions of a flood, and that one man and his wife were saved on a raft.'" (Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest).

One Bible scholar correctly observed that “the destruction of well nigh the whole human race in an early age of the world 's history by a great deluge appears to have so impressed the minds of the few survivors and seems to have been handed down to their children, in consequence, with such terror-struck impressiveness, that their remote descendants of the present day have not even yet forgotten it. It appears in almost every mythology, and lives in the most distant countries and among the most barbarous tribes.”

2. The geological research suggests there was indeed a vast, sudden and deadly flood around 5, 600 B.C., close enough to the possible time of Noah. Until now, the best stab at modern scientific corroboration of the Flood was the work of British archeologist Charles Leonard Woolley, who caused a sensation with his 1929 book “*Ur of the Chaldees,*” said to be the most widely read archeology book ever published.

Digging in present-day Iraq at the site of ancient Ur, the birthplace of the first patriarch Abraham, the Bible-believing Woolley found an ancient blanket of waterborne silt without human remains. It was evidence of a deadly flood that appeared to substantiate Genesis.

3. More recently archaeologists have discovered the remains of a man-made structure more than 300 feet below the surface of the Black Sea, providing dramatic new evidence of an apocalyptic flood 7,

500 years ago. The expedition also spotted planks, beams, tree branches and chunks of wood untouched by worms or mollusks, a strong indication that the oxygen-free waters of the Black Sea 's 7, 000 - foot-deep abyss may shelter intact shipwrecks dating back to the dawn of seafaring. Late the team discovered the outlines of an ancient coast 550 feet below the current waterline, the first visual evidence that a flood had occurred in the region eons ago. The expedition also found old tree branches, pieces of wood and a trash heap with polished stones and other debris indicating human habitation, Ballard said.

Interest in the Black Sea quickened last year with the publication of “Noah 's Flood ” by Columbia University geologists William Ryan and Walter Pitman, suggesting that the modern-day sea was formed 7, 500 years ago when melting glaciers raised sea level until the waters of the Mediterranean breached the natural dam at the Bosphorus.

Later a cataclysmic deluge followed. Seawater from the Mediterranean poured into the Black Sea basin at 200 times the volume of Niagara Falls. The heavier salt water plunged to the bottom of the existing fresh water lake and began to fill the basin like a bathtub. Then the rising lake-sea inundated and submerged thousands of square miles of land, destroying communities, killing people and wiping out uncounted species of plants and animals as the ecosystem flipped from fresh water to salt water in a period of only two years.

19.3. The Ark 's resting place.

Many unjustifiably think that Noah 's ark came to rest on the actual Mount Ararat. Given Ararat 's elevation, 16, 946 feet (5, 165 meters) above sea level, this seems to be highly unlikely! This misconception arises from an uninformed reading of the Biblical text. Genesis 8: 4 reports that the ark came to rest on the “mountains ” — plural — of Ararat, not on the Mount Ararat of our days. The distinction makes a huge interpretive difference. The entire Ararat range, actually a complex of ranges, extends from the vicinity north and east of Mount Ararat all the way down to the foothills skirting the Mesopotamian plain. It covers more than 100, 000 square miles (250, 000 square kilometers). Noah 's ark could have come to rest anywhere within this enormous region.

19.4. Significance of the Flood.

The question of the flood is not just a detail but one of the exceptionally important circumstances of a Christian 's world-view. Besides its historical meaning, the universal flood also has a dogmatic and ethical meaning.

The flood is referred to in several passages of Scripture as historical fact; the writings of the Fathers consider the event in the same light, and this view of the subject is confirmed by the numerous variants under which the flood tradition lives in the most distant nations of the earth. The following

are some of the New Testament passages which imply that the Deluge was a real historical event: "And as in the days of Noe, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, even till that day in which Noe entered into the ark, and they knew not. till the flood came, and took them all away; so also shall the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24: 37 - 39). In these words, Christ regards the flood with its circumstances as being not less real than the last days will be of which He speaks in the passage. Christ implies the same view concerning the flood in Luke 17: 26 - 27. In the Epistle to the Hebrews 11: 7, the inspired writer is no less clear about the historicity of the flood: "By faith, Noe having received an answer concerning those things which as yet were not seen, moved with fear, framed the ark for the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world; and was instituted heir of the justice which is by faith." Apostle Peter (I Peter 3: 20) too refers to the ark and the flood as historical facts: "When they waited for the patience of God in the days of Noe, when the ark was a building: wherein a few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water." He returns to the same teaching in II Peter 2: 5. We might appeal to Is. 56: 9; Nah. 1: 8; Ezech. 14: 14; Eccclus., 44: 18 sq.; Ps. 28: 10; 31: 6. These texts shows that the Bible urges the historicity of the deluge story.

20. Biblical teaching on redemption.

The problem of evil is closely related to the problem of redemption. From eternity the idea of redemption is perpetually entering into the plan of divine creation. For this reason, in the Holy Scripture, the Redeemer is named “the Lamb, sacrificed from the beginning of the world.” The substance of the idea of redemption is the presupposition from eternity that the voluntary Fall of man, anticipated in the “council of the Holy Trinity,” would be redeemed by the voluntary offering of the Son of God, thus reestablishing the blessed state lost by man as a result of sin, and, in such a way, defeating evil at its very root and reestablishing the harmony of the creation of the world, disrupted by the free arbitrariness of man.

Besides, the harmony of the world, after its reestablishment, not only becomes unimpaired, but, on the contrary, acquires an even greater perfection. Lost Paradise not only returns, but is transformed into the Kingdom of Heaven, more perfect than Paradise. According to the remarkable definition of Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, man’s state in Paradise was natural; after the sinful fall, it became less than natural; but in the Kingdom of Heaven, it will be supernatural. By this also is redeemed the suffering which appeared as a result of sin and evil. The idea of redemption has meaning world-wide. The feeling of a necessity for redemption comprises the common basis of all ancient religions. The tendency to reinstate the lost union between God and man — the tendency to make amends (to redeem) for the sin and to make peace with Heaven — is a tendency common to all the pagan world. The universal expectation of deliverance is a point of contact between these two worlds. That is the reason why, in the Holy Scripture, the Redeemer is designated by an exalted expression, “the expected hope of the peoples.”

From deep antiquity, the thirst for redemption gave rise in the conscience of man to the idea of sacrifice. Religious cults of all ancient peoples present to us spectacles of bloody sacrifice. Among the bloody sacrifices which were performed for the sins of man — standing out especially by their profound tragedy — are human sacrifices. Among all the pagan peoples, through the sensual form of these oblations can be observed a hazy sense of a profound idea: that only the guiltless can make a satisfying sacrifice for the guilty and that only in innocent blood shed does a conciliating power reside.

It is remarkable that many ancient peoples possess myths about some sort of a mysterious serpent, the cause of evil, and about a deliverer, obliged to defeat this serpent. In these myths, one cannot but see traces of an actual promise about the seed of a woman, obliged to obliterate the head of the serpent.

All myths of natural religions represent but “dreams and divinations of the ancient pagan world concerning the future redemption.” However, a clear and true idea of the redemption of mankind begins to be apparent only in the light of revealed biblical teaching. The amazing phenomenon of the universality of the idea of redemption can in no way be explained by a “universal delusion,” for delusions are never universal, and do not pass through a whole succession of ages and a whole succession of peoples. However, faith in the propitiating and redeeming force of a voluntary sacrifice, is found everywhere and among all peoples. And sacrifice constitutes an implement of all religious cults.

But nowhere — not in any religion except the biblical one — is the teaching about redemption so completely unfolded. The New Testament religion is the unfolded teaching about redemption, filled with the vital content of the purest religious experience: communion with the Personality of the Savior Himself, the Redeemer of the world.

21. The ethics of Old Testament religion.

The essence of the moral world-view of the Old Testament religion is summarized in the Ten Commandments given to the people of Israel by God through Moses. And so, the ethics of the Old Testament are, first of all, theonomous; that is, governed by God. Ethical life for man is necessary because it is prescribed by the good will of the Lord. The foundation of all Old Testament ethics is love for God. On this foundation arises the necessity of love for neighbor. On love for God and neighbor are based all ethical obligations in relation to God, neighbor, and oneself.

Although the principle of love in the Old Testament religion does not have such a universal application as is given to it in the Christian faith, as we shall see later, this principle itself, nevertheless, is clearly and exactly proclaimed. Hear, O Israel: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might (Deut. 6: 4 - 5). Not restricting itself to a general indication of the necessity of love for God and neighbor, the Old Testament religion also points out very concrete aspects of it and aspires to put into practice the principles of love in the family and social life of the people. As examples, the necessity for honoring parents is commanded; the infliction of harm into the life of neighbors is forbidden; purity of morals, a respect for the right of property and the good name of a neighbor is demanded, etc. Even more particular aspects of the practical love for neighbor are pointed out in the numerous precepts of Old Testament legislation, which prescribes such things as: respect for the aged, solicitude for the welfare of widows and orphans, forbearance to insolvent debtors, assistance to the poor, philanthropy to slaves, generosity to enemies, etc. If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink (Proverbs 25: 21).

However, the morality of Old Testament religion did not comprise a complete expression of the moral ideal in all its universal width and profundity. In conforming with the principle aim of this preparatory religion — to rear and prepare the people of Israel for the reception of the loftier Christian Revelation — its ethics suggested to Israel love for one another; however, the general application of love for all peoples and for mankind as a whole was not yet its special undertaking.

The basic thought of civil legislation of the Old Testament religion was comprised in the assertion that the King of Israel is God ! In this, Old Testament legislation differed from other primitive legislation. The latter always had chiefly in view the achievement of good external national order, interesting themselves little in the ethical meaning and purpose of man 's personality. On the contrary, on the basis of Old Testament civil legislation resided the thought that, first of all, man is chiefly a moral being. Because of this, the purpose of man consists not only of being employed at a certain duty to his state, but that he should constantly — in all his actions in relation to society, the state and to himself — adapt his natural will to the holy will of God and the divine law, and be solicitous in gratifying, not people, but God ! And the fundamental relationship of man to God is beautifully expressed in these words: Serve ye the Lord with fear, and rejoice in Him with trembling (Psalm 2: 11).

The ritual law of the Old Testament cult did not limit itself to general precepts in regard to the worship of God, but surrounded it with numerous private rites in order to take possession of the complete lift of the people. The most important aspect of the Old Testament cult was constituted in the sacrifice of reconciliation offered for the sins of the whole people. The limitless necessity to expiate one's sins was the most characteristic feature of Old Testament man.

"The thoughts and reflections of great Old Testament men," says Professor Rozhdestvensky, "ascended to that great propitiating Sacrifice for the sins of the world which alone can have a truly

redeeming meaning, to the divine Sacrifice, in relation to which all Old Testament sacrifices of reconciliation and purification were nothing other than symbols and prototypes, foreordained to awaken and call forth in the soul of man the necessity of forgiveness. It is possible that in no other passage of all the Old Testament Scripture is this knowledge of the necessity for the divine reconciliatory and propitiating Sacrifice for the sins of the world expressed so firmly as in the familiar words of Job addressed to God: Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me? (Job 17: 3). Such an intercession and guarantee was an object of the most ardent religious hopes and desires of the best people of the primitive world; but the Old Testament religion did not satisfy these desires. Only the Christian religion does satisfy them.” (Professor N. P. Rozhdestvensky’s Apologetics, Book 2, page 352).

21.1. The teaching of the Old Testament on life after death.

The Old Testament teaching about the future life was insufficiently developed and could not fully comfort, encourage and soothe. However, the idea of immortality was contained in it, without a doubt, even though this is disputed by some materialistic investigators. Their mistake can be explained by their paying attention only to the letter and not to the spirit of Old Testament religion. Biblical opinion of man as an image and likeness of God, without doubt already contained in itself also the idea of immortality, since God Himself was understood, first of all, as an immortal Being. God created man for immortality and made him the image of His Own eternal existence (Wisdom of Solomon 2: 23).

The very outlook of Old Testament religion on the origin of death, so different from naturalistic views, says that death is not a necessary phenomenon but only an accidental phenomenon as a punishment for sin. The influence of death extends only over the bodily composition of man, created from the dust of the earth for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return, (Gen. 3: 19), but is not concerned with the spiritual side of man’s nature (Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it (Eccl. 12: 7).

In Old Testament religion there is doubtless the belief in retribution beyond the grave. Although, for the encouragement of a good moral life of the Hebrew people (insufficiently ethically developed and as yet unprepared for the perception of the loftiest ideas about eternal life), the Old Testament religion chiefly indicated the well-being of the earthly life of the righteous; nevertheless, an indication can be found of the possibility of retribution only after death. For I was jealous of the transgressors, when I beheld the peace of sinners. For they make no sign of refusal in the time of their death, and they have steadfastness in the time of their scourging (Psalm 72: 3 - 4).

The teaching about the future life in Old Testament religion is imbued with a sad tone which, however, is softened by the hope of future redemption and improvement of the future destiny of the dead. The dwelling-place of the dead was called “sheol,” which meant Hades or the lower regions. This pit of hell was most often represented as a kind of “region of darkness and shadow of death” in contrast to heaven. All those who died went to the lower regions, even the righteous. Concerning the state of those departing to another world, there is very little information in the Old Testament. There is no doubt, however, that even in the lower regions, the righteous had consolation in the future hope

of deliverance. Yet God shall redeem my soul out of the hand of hades (Psalm 48: 16).

This hope received the most vivid expression in the prophecies of Isaiah about the advent of the Messiah: then, says the prophet, He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces (Isaiah 25: 8). Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise (Isaiah 26: 19). But in the Old Testament religion, hope in the future resurrection did not yet have the full assurance which was manifested and became triumphant only after the Resurrection of Christ. For this reason, the Old Testament righteous person of even such a spiritual loftiness as the prophet Ezekiel, in regard to the question asked of him by God: Can those bones live? could only answer: O Lord God, thou knowest (Ezekiel 37: 3).

22. The foundation of Christianity.

Old Testament religion, notwithstanding its exceptional superiority over all natural religions and in view of its clearly divine character, was nonetheless only a preparation for the religion of Christianity. Old Testament religion was foreordained, not for the whole world, but only for the people of Israel selected by God, for which reason many of the legislative and ritualistic decrees bore only a local, national character. The people of Israel were elected in order to give the world from amongst them a series of prophets and teachers and, through them, to prepare the whole world for the reception of the New Testament.

All the dogmatic and ethical teachings of the Old Testament, notwithstanding their loftiness, were not complete, not wholly clear, and, in themselves, represented only steps to the higher Revelation. The Old Testament prophets profoundly understood this and fixed their gaze on the future religion of the New Testament. For example, the Prophet Jeremiah says: I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah (Jer. 31: 31). This new covenant is Christianity, which, without any basis, is denied by modern Judaism.

Christianity possesses an amplitude of proofs of its truth and divinity. These proofs are so numerous and diverse that they can satisfy the questions of the most dissimilar habit of mind and character as we see in the history of Christianity. Besides general proofs, suitable for all eras, Christianity contains many particular proofs suitable for definite periods. Any epoch can find exceptionally convincing proofs of the truth of Christianity for itself.

The most important and most interesting question is the one of the origin of Christianity. The question is summarized as follows: Is the appearance of Christianity in the world natural or supernatural?

The naturalistic (rationalistic) school of investigators comes to the conclusion that Christianity was wholly conditioned by all preceding history and was the natural product of the primitive world. From the point of view of this school, Christianity is totally and completely explained by a combination of naturalistic, historical reasons. It made its appearance as a regular historical synthesis of struggle and completion (logical) of two elements: Judaism and paganism. Such is the opinion of the so-called New Tubingen (negatively critical) School of Baur and Strauss.

But with this abstract reasoning and assertion, the Orthodox Church can in no wise agree. On the contrary, for the Orthodox Church, the supernatural, divine origin of Christianity is completely indubitable.

For this assertion there are very well-grounded proofs. First of all, we are led to this by an objective examination of historical circumstances preceding and accompanying the appearance of Christianity. Christianity appeared as a long-awaited “fulfillment of time.” Before the time of the Nativity of Christ, an expectation reigned in the East of a great change in the world, during which the central and initial point of this change, according to the unanimous evidence of such notable world historians of antiquity — such as Josephus Flavius, Tacitus, and Suetonius — was designated as Judea ! (For example: the coming of the Magi from the East to salute the new-born Savior at the same time that there was a special sign in the heavens, the appearance of a particular star). Even in far-off China, during the period before the Nativity of Christ, the coming of a “great holy one” was awaited, for it was foretold in antiquity by Chinese sages. The era preceding the Nativity can be characterized as a trepidation in the general expectation of an upheaval, combined with the appearance of a particular personality.

This was reflected, too, in classical literature; for example, the fourth eclogue of the Roman

poet Virgil, in which is mentioned the expected birth of a miraculous child who will bring with him the golden age. (For which Dante in his Divine Comedy represents Virgil as the guide of the author).

Especially clear, alarming, and definite was the expectation of the Messiah amid the people of Israel, chiefly reflected in the works of the prophets. It should be noted that, in general, the expectation of the Messiah was the very soul of Old Testament religion. (For example, “the seed of the woman ” which was to destroy the power of evil, in Genesis 3: 15; the prophecies of Isaiah, Daniel, Malachi, Haggai, and others). It was accurately established in Old Testament religion that the Redeemer would come 1) during the period of the existence of the Judean kingdom 2) preceding the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, and 3) after the appearance of a great prophet (the Forerunner). The place — Bethlehem; and the time — after seventy year periods; and the name — Christ or the Savior, were all known.

But the most convincing proof — not to be doubted — of the divinity of the origin of Christianity is the personality and character of its Founder.

23. The personality and character of Christ.

First of all, we are struck by the exceptional completeness and harmoniousness of both the personality and character of the Savior. Such complete harmony is not represented by any other historical personality. Then, the astonishing, crystal purity of His moral personality ought to be pointed out — the ideal humility and gentleness, the inexhaustible longsuffering, the invincible courage and the wholehearted firmness of religious will.

There are none equal or even similar to Him in all the world's history. It is enough to mention the name of Christ, and before our moral and intellectual glance arises an image of incarnate goodness and holiness. In reflecting on Him and in exploring His image, we discover an inexhaustible completeness of perfection.

The character of Christ — all-embracing, universal, and common to mankind — represents in itself the ethical ideal of all times and all peoples. This character is without comparison in the power of His blissful influence on the historic life of man. When the name of Christ is uttered, every human grandeur pales. Christ can be compared to no one. Christ is the prototype and symbol of every perfection; the rays of His most perfect personality are reflected from the greatest saints, comprising the heights of Christian mankind, but all of these saints are similar to stars in comparison with the sun.

It is not possible to extol Christ; one can only reverently respect Him, kneeling before Him wholeheartedly and loving Him supremely, for within Him was concentrated in the fullest measure everything that is worthy of love ! The most exact word which comprehensively defines the Savior is Man-God.

How biased is the conjecture that Christ never existed, that He is just a myth ! The invention of such a character and such a personality is inaccessible to any person, even a super-genius; all the more impossible is its ascribed as a creation by such uneducated people as were the Galilean fishermen. How could it have been possible to fabricate the personality and activity of Christ, with His sermon on the mount, miracles, parables, the tragic details of His suffering and the triumph of the Resurrection — stunning millions of souls of all times and peoples? If the Evangelists "invented" Christ, they are then more miraculous than Christ Himself!

Faith in Christ, love for Him, suffering for His sake, and death for Him throughout the world for over 2,000 years — these acts of faith could have been only for a vital personality and not an invented image ! The personality of Christ is absolute proof of the reality of the Divinity in history !

24. The essence of Christianity.

Many opinions have been expressed in regard to the essence of Christianity. But nobody has been able to define this essence in such a convincing way as it is defined by the Orthodox Church. First of all, the complete inability to resolve this question in only a rationalistic way should be noted. For rationalism, Christianity will forever remain an insoluble puzzle to this greatest world phenomenon. Among rationalistic attempts to make clear the essence of Christianity, two basic tendencies should be noted: 1) to reduce the whole essence of Christianity only to its moral principles, and 2) to represent Christianity in the form of a system of abstract ideas.

A striking instance of the former is the opinion of Christianity held by the well-known German philosopher Immanuel Kant. According to Kant, Christianity differs from all other religions only in its moral superiority over them. According to this reasoning, Christ is the ideal type of moral perfection. His precepts are the most complete and perfect expression of the morally ideal demands of man's nature. His Church is a society where ethical good is accomplished. The whole nature of a Christian is in his ideal system of morals. However, the dogmatic teaching of Christianity has no special meaning. In general, the whole objective meaning of the Christian religion — the Redemption of mankind for its salvation and eternal blessedness — is denied by the system of Kant as transcendent and not essential to man's life on earth. Such reasoning is deeply mistaken. In the presence of an attentive attitude toward Christianity, it becomes deeply clear that it is not possible to view it as morality without dogma (as Buddhism may be), since the moral teaching of Christ is found to be in more than just an external, formal bond with religious doctrine. Christianity is not restricted, like some systems of ethics, only to a tendency to justify ethical demands with religious sanction and to base the ethical obligations of man on the will of a higher Being. All Christian morality is founded on dogmatics, and lacking these it loses its full meaning.

The dogmatic teaching on the most holy and undivided Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God, the Redemption of the race of man and its salvation, has, in Christianity, not secondary but fundamental meaning. Dogma does not appear in Christianity simply to add a higher authority to moral teaching. On the contrary, it is the center of all Christian religion, and the morals result from it.

Christian morality, even deprived of its dogmatic roots, without a doubt represents the same enchanting, attractive, and fascinating phenomenon which cannot be compared to any other system of morality, excelling them all by its fullness, simplicity, and persuasiveness. And this one circumstance directs the thought to the divine origin of such ethical teaching. With deeper penetration, however, into the roots of this system of ethics; that is, into the dogmatic meaning, which illuminates like the sun all the harmony of the whole and the endless diversity of the parts, the ethical teaching of Christianity completely transforms man's soul and reveals to it the possibility of seeing, here on earth, the rudiments of that blessed eternal state which is prepared by God for man in another, better, eternal world.

Only by this eternal root is it possible to explain the undying attraction of the Christian ideal of morality which has passed the test of time, gaining with every success of man's spiritual culture a new beauty and strength, contributing its charitable influence into all phases of life. Only Christianity is capable of kindling love toward Truth, for the sake of Truth itself, without which no real spiritual progress of man is possible. The undoubted ethically charitable influence of the ethical Christian ideal on all mankind is one of the most convincing proofs of its divine dignity.

From the Gnostics of the first centuries of Christianity to Hegelianism in its contemporary currents, the essence of Christianity is treated as an abstract system of higher knowledge, as an

abstract philosophy theoretically solving the problems of cosmogony and theogony. But the most important side of Christianity, without which it is nothing — the fact of the Incarnation of the Son of God and the Redemption by Him of sinful mankind; that is, that unusual phenomenon of history eternally issuing from a series of ordinary historical phenomena — has been relegated to the domain of myths by the rationalistic school from antiquity to the present. For example, the pastor and professor Arthur Drives came to this when he wrote the book, *The Myth of Christ*.

Feuerbach, a leftist Hegelian, wrote a long investigation, *About the Substance of Christianity*. Contrasting the essence of Christianity with the essence of paganism, Feuerbach came to the conclusion that in Christianity, subjectivity predominates over objectivity; the heart and imagination over intellect. He sees in Christianity a system or world-view for which the external world with all its laws of nature has no meaning. As a result, Feuerbach finds in Christianity a hostility to intellect, knowledge, and all progress: social, scientific, political, economic, etc. The teaching of Feuerbach penetrated into Marxism and, through it, into Bolshevik communism, becoming the state irreligion in Soviet Russia.

The gross mistakes of Feuerbach are completely clear to genuine critical thought. Firstly, Christianity, as we pointed out earlier, was never hostile to genuine intellect, genuine science, and genuine knowledge. But Christianity has never rated human intellect higher than spiritual development. Without humbling the intellect, it only placed the latter in a harmonious relationship with other spiritual forces. Christianity does not make a god of man's intellect, but regards it as a talent given by God which should be applied to life, and encourages knowledge which serves as a weapon in the search for and service to Truth, goodness and beauty.

Christianity does not at all break the ties of man to the world and does not resist the progress of genuine science. It simply points out the eternal superiority of the Creator over the world created by Him, the immortal designation of man, and the transient meaning of the material world; it points to temporal life as only a preparatory phase to eternal life. By this teaching, Christianity simply assists the spiritual development of man and his moral growth in the present temporal life. History shows how much Christianity assisted the progress of natural science, that is, that science which was especially engaged in the investigation of nature.

Of all religions, only Christianity does not contain in its basic truths anything hostile to true progress. To nature it gives a warm and happy regard, as to a creation of God. In contrast to pagan culture which deifies the sun, moon, and stars, the Christian faith places them at the feet of the Creator. It is Christianity which liberated mankind from the degrading slavery to the elements of the world and taught man to rule over nature to a much greater degree than is dreamed of by rationalistic science (walking on water and resurrection of the dead).

The idea of the unity and solidarity of peoples is purely a Christian idea. The great structure of international law rests on this Christian ideal. In its social relationship, the charitable influence of Christianity is irrefutable. It created Christian marriage and the Christian family. It has elevated to an extraordinary degree the ethical dignity of woman: maiden, mother, wife. In contrast to the pagan neglect of children, Christianity set up the precepts of Christ, dooming every tempter and corrupter of children's innocence to the most bitter fate of drowning with a millstone round the neck.

Paganism, even in the persons of its best representatives, justified and supported slavery; Christianity, however, by systematically destroying a part at a time the foundations by which it was justified in antiquity, led finally to its destruction. Christianity softened cruelty to criminals. We shall remind you that the Lord Himself, while on earth, selected the disparaging calling of a workman and, by this, removed the brand of scorn from all honest labor. "To work and to pray" became the motto

of Christian life. All monasticism passed its time in labors and prayer.

In order to correctly understand and determine the essence of Christianity, it is necessary to keep in mind that it is entirely beholden for its origin to the divine Personality of its Founder and carries a vital imprint of this Personality in everything. The Christian religion, like its Founder, is first of all complete, harmonious, and all-embracing. It has no deficiencies and is not subject to improvement. It is ideal. Only the Christian himself is subject to improvement, without limits. The ideal of his perfection is endless. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5: 48).

Only the Christian religion has a complete right to be called, in the proper sense of the word, a religion, that is, a union with God. Christianity embraces our whole existence, spiritual and bodily. It enlightens all our family, social, and political relationships. It satisfies all the demands of the spiritual, intellectual and bodily life of man.

To fully comprehend the essence of Christianity, the basic truths of the Christian religion ought to be investigated. First of all, Christianity is not so much a new system of religious and ethical doctrine as it is a new principle of life and activity of man. Although not everything is new in the New Testament or Christian religion in comparison with the religion of the Old Testament, nevertheless, even that which is taken by Christianity from the religion of Israel shines with the new light of a more profound and perfected meaning.

Even though there are in both Old and New Testaments general dogmatic truths (of the unity of the divine Being, of divine virtues, of the origin of man, of his primal state, his fall, and others), nevertheless, these truths are presented more clearly, purely, deeply and spiritually and are more free from elements of anthropomorphism in the New Testament, while in the Old Testament, anthropomorphism veils the spiritual nature of the divine Being. The words of Christ that God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4: 24), would be impossible to find in the Old Testament.

Some revealed truths in the Old Testament were expressed so covertly that even some more spiritually developed Old Testament people were forced to ponder such things as the indication of the mystery of the Trinity, the mystery of the Word and Spirit of God, and others. These mysteries which were concealed from Old Testament prophets were revealed only by the Savior Himself. Present-day Hebrew scholars unjustly affirm that in the entire Old Testament there are no indications of the mystery of the Trinity. But it is impossible not to see in the Old Testament an undisclosed understanding about the special powers of God: the Word of God and the Spirit of God. The appearance of the Triune God to Abraham in the form of three angels also remains undisclosed in the Old Testament. Only in the New Testament was the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity finally revealed in all its completeness and made accessible to man's understanding.

The mystery of the Holy Trinity is the heart of Christian dogma ! This mystery has an immense, inexhaustible meaning, purely theoretical as well as ethical. The theoretical meaning of the Christian teaching about the Holy Trinity consists, first of all, in the purification, elevation and elucidation of the idea of monotheism. The Christian teaching of the Holy Trinity is no tri-godliness or tri-theism, which is directly and decisively censured by the Christian Church. The teaching of the Trinity is a special aspect of monotheism, but very profound, lofty and pure, and one we do not meet in any other monotheistic system.

The essential point in the Christian teaching about God is that, by revealing the dogma of the Holy Trinity, it both preserves the inviolability of the Old Testament teaching of the unity of the Divinity, and adds to it a special, new, exceptionally significant, highly ethical character, which was not

and could not have been present in any other system of monotheism. Not without cause did Origen, Blessed Augustine, and St. Gregory of Nyssa, in analyzing the mystery of the Holy Trinity, demonstrate the Truth and divinity of Christianity.

Strict monotheism bestows little to the loftiness and ethical worth of the religion that is preaching it; you can imagine for yourself a religion of one idol. Some of the thinkers of pre-Christian antiquity reached the understanding of the unity of the highest Being, but the idea about the inner nature of such a Being outside of His relation to the world, that is, the life of God in Himself, was incomprehensible. As a result of this, monotheism transformed itself into either pantheism, acknowledging eternal disclose of divine life and substance in the world, or barren deism.

Only Christianity, through the disclosure of the dogma of the Holy Trinity, has given a solution to the question of the nature of the one God in Himself. Only Christianity discloses the truth that God (in His essence, one eternal Spirit) has definite realities of existence, outside His relationship to the world; i.e., in His tri-personal Being and in the eternal fullness of His inner life He is unknown to us. Not explaining the very essence of the mystery of the Trinity, this dogma clarifies for our mind something concerning the divine Being: namely, that there is in the divine Being an activity not dependent on the world, and there are conditions for its manifestation. Although an understanding of the triune God is exceptionally difficult, still, an understanding of His bare oneness is more difficult. "The Christian God is one but not solitary" (St. Peter Chrysologus, 60th Word).

But besides its theoretical meaning, the dogma of the Holy Trinity also has an ethical meaning (The Ethical Idea of Church Dogma, by Anthony Krapovitsky). Through the mystery of the Trinity, Christianity taught mankind not only to respect God with reverence, but also to love Him. Through the mystery of the Holy Trinity a new idea was disclosed: that God is love — most lofty, ideal love, and an inexhaustible fountain of love. Blessed Augustine affirmed with profound thoughtfulness: "The mystery of the Christian Trinity is a mystery of divine Love. You see the Trinity if you see Love."

The mystery of the Trinity teaches us that divine Love was manifested not only in the creation and contemplation of the world, but that it appears in its most perfect, infinite fullness in the very bosom of the Divinity, where a life of love resided from eternity: the eternal communion of the holy love of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Thus, it can be asserted that barren monotheism of ancient religions, not impregnated by the revealed truth of the Trinity, did not have and could not have had a true understanding of divine Love.

The main distinction between the strict monotheism of contemporary Judaism and the Christian faith consists in the understanding of the basic divine Essence. Only Christianity, through the Revelation of Christ Himself, knows and understands the truth that God is Love and what love is! As expressed by the Christian poet, A. Tolstoy, Christ "subordinated all the laws of Moses to the law of love." To understand this idea of a God of Love is impossible in barren monotheism, for whom could God have loved except Himself? Though the mystery of the Trinity does not initiate us into the complete profundity of the essence of Divinity (being too vast for man's mind), it alone allows us to understand that divine Love was never inactive, never remained without manifestation, and never was self-love, but points to the eternal divine communion of the Persons of the Holy Trinity.

The complete depth of the love of the Divinity for the race of man is elucidated for us with finality in the light of the mystery of the Holy Trinity. This mystery is also the foundation of the whole Christian teaching on Redemption. The supreme example of love in the sacrifice by God the Father of His Only-begotten Son for the salvation of the race of man, in the voluntary suffering on the cross of the Son of God for our redemption; and in the descent of the Holy Spirit for our sanctification — stunning the soul of man — begets a responsive, thankful, self-denying love for God, Whom the

Christian begins to understand as the loving Father of all mankind.

If we will also meditate just as deeply upon the Christian teaching of the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, we shall see that it likewise has not only a deeply theoretical but also a universally ethical meaning. It elevated the moral conscience of man to a height which would have been impossible to reach without the aid of God. This truth was formulated by some of the ancient teachers of the Church in this way: "In the mystery of the Incarnation, God condescended to the state of man in order to raise man to God."

The miracle of the Resurrection of Christ is the crown of all the other miracles and comprises, according to the vivid expression of Professor N. P. Rozhdestvensky, "the fundamental stone of Christian Apologetics." The proof of the truth of the Resurrection of Christ is exceptionally plain and very convincing. This proof comes to the conclusion that without the actual fact of the Resurrection, the following points would be completely inexplicable: the beginning of the Apostle's preaching, the appearance in the world of historical Christianity with its martyrs, apologists, teachers of the Church and holy zealots, and, finally, the existence on earth to the present day of millions of faithful Christians, ready to give their lives for Christ.

25. The Providence of God.

A heedless and absent-minded man can believe that things just take their normal course, and all events occur by accident and coincidence. It can seem to such an inconsiderate man that God, if He even exists, is somewhere high in the heavens and has no interest in this world, which is small and insignificant in His eye. People who think so are called deists. Deistic teaching about God has become especially widespread in the West during the last centuries, when people started to lose live contact with God in the Church, Sacraments and prayer. Usually, these people are superstitious at the same time, attaching great importance to stars' influence on human life, watching tokens and omens, e.g. cats crossing their way, scattering salt on the table, shaking hands across a threshold, not sleeping with their feet turned toward doors and so on. Some people have an immense numbers of superstitions, which wastefully complicate their lives.

It is best not to pay attention to these stupid superstitions at all, because everyone's life in particular, and the universe as a whole, are governed by God.

We pray: "Our Father which art in heaven," but at the same time we know that God is everywhere, because He is a genuine Spirit, who is "living everywhere." That is why David the Psalmist exclaimed, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee" (Psalm 139).

Some agree that generally, the world is ruled not by accidents, but by God. However, they think that God does not care about each and every person, because man is unworthy and negligible, and God will not look after this uncountable multitude of creatures. But this reasoning is incorrect and sinful. To express it in human notions, if God decided that microbes were worthy of existence and gave specific organization and form to all of them, why then would these creatures be unworthy of His care further on? God cared to give them life; He also cares about the continuation of their lives. Some say that there are too many living beings. But how dare we assign our limitations onto God, Who is infinite in perfection? Had He created billions of worlds with myriads of humans, beasts, insects and germs, it would not have worn Him out to care about each particular life. One might say that these creatures are too small and insignificant, but we create our concept of size by comparison to ourselves. What is huge in our sight is negligible before the majesty of God, and what seems little to us is great for His goodness and love. The Lord provides for everything, gives life to all, and leads to the victory of truth and good.

The Savior said that even a sparrow shall not fall on the ground without the will of our Father (Matthew 10: 29); this shows all the more that nothing in our lives can happen without His will. Things that are good and kind are given from the Lord, Who is the eternal source of goodness. Things that are evil are not sent from God directly, because there is not even a shade of evil in God. For our benefit and salvation, though, the Lord permits evil to harm and hurt us. In this case, various troubles have the effect of bitter, unpleasant, but saving medicines. Almost all pills and medical operations are unpleasant for us, but we have to take them because we know they are necessary and health-giving.

Everyone should clearly know that only God is the source of happiness, peace and bliss. God created consolations and joys of the visible world for the sake of our corporeal nature. Man with intelligent soul, using everything moderately, should not forget God. The soul cannot be satisfied with

anything worldly and tangible. In most cases we follow our bodily lusts insatiably, and absolutely forget about soul and its spiritual needs. Because God does not want us to step back from our vocation as children of God toward the state of plain beasts, He sends us sorrows. Being beaten by things we were seeking irresponsibly, we slowly start to understand the futility of our activities and turn to God.

We be firm in our knowledge that God is infinitely good and wishes our happiness and salvation only; this is why we should also be thankful in accepting grief from Him. Children do not stop loving parents when parents punish them justly, because they know that parents want better for them. The Scripture says that the Lord punishes him whom He loves.

If the Lord provides for us all the time, meaning that He always cares about our life and salvation, then we also have to learn how to follow His Providence in our lives. Sometimes we notice that things happen not as we want them to. We get angry and indignant, murmur about fortune, but after years pass we understand that what happened was for the best, and it would be worse for us otherwise. We Christians should thank God for our sorrows, rather than triumph over our success, because sorrows renew our passions, while worldly success leads to forgetting God and the purpose of our life on the earth.

26. Conclusion.

The appearance of Christ on earth and the spreading of historical Christianity roused against itself the mobilization of all the forces of Hades. In answer to this, Christianity presented to the world its defense. It answered persecutions with professions of faith and martyrdom; it answered heresies, schisms and false doctrines with Ecumenical Councils, the doctrines of the Holy Fathers and dogmas. It answers the continual torrent of nagging criticism with impartial apologetics, it answers slander with holiness, and it answers the efforts of all the power of Hades with the Holy Church.

27. Appendix I.

27.1. *Archaeology and the Old Testament.*

Understanding Archaeology

Christianity is a historical faith based on actual events recorded in the Bible. Archaeology has therefore played a key role in biblical studies and Christian apologetics in several ways.

First, archaeology has confirmed the historical accuracy of the Bible. It has verified many ancient sites, civilizations, and biblical characters whose existence was questioned by the academic world and often dismissed as myths. Biblical archaeology has silenced many critics as new discoveries supported the facts of the Bible.

Second, archaeology helps us improve our understanding of the Bible. Although we do not have the original writings of the authors, thousands of ancient manuscripts affirm that we have an accurate transmission of the original texts. Archaeology can also help us to understand more accurately the nuances and uses of biblical words as they were used in their day.

Third, archaeology helps illustrate and explain Bible passages. The events of the Bible occurred at a certain time, in a particular culture, influenced by a particular social and political structure. Archaeology gives us insights into these areas. Archaeology also helps to supplement topics not covered in the Bible. Much of what we know of the pagan religions and the intertestamental period comes from archaeological research.

Unfortunately, only a fraction of available archaeological sites have been surveyed, and only a fraction of surveyed sites have been excavated. In fact, it is estimated that less than two percent of surveyed sites have been worked on. Once work begins, only a fraction of an excavation site is actually examined, and only a small part of what is examined is published. For example, the photographs of the Dead Sea Scrolls were withheld from the public for forty years after their discovery.

It is important to understand that the Scriptures remain the primary source of authority. We must not elevate archaeology to the point that it becomes the judge for the validity of Scripture. Randall Price states, "There are indeed instances where the information needed to resolve a historical or chronological question is lacking from both archaeology and the Bible, but it is unwarranted to assume the material evidence taken from the more limited content of archaeological excavations can be used to dispute the literary evidence from the more complete content of the canonical scriptures." The Bible has proven to be an accurate and trustworthy source of history.

Noted archaeologist Nelson Glueck writes, "As a matter of fact, however, it may be clearly stated categorically that no archeological discovery has ever controverted a single biblical reference. Scores of archeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible."

The Discovery of the Hittites

The Hittites played a prominent role in Old Testament history. They interacted with biblical figures as early as Abraham and as late as Solomon. They are mentioned in Genesis 15: 20 as people who inhabited the land of Canaan. 1 Kings 10: 29 records that they purchased chariots and horses

from King Solomon. The most prominent Hittite is Uriah the husband of Bathsheba. The Hittites were a powerful force in the Middle East from 1750 B.C. until 1200 B.C. Prior to the late 19th century, nothing was known of the Hittites outside the Bible, and many critics alleged that they were an invention of the biblical authors.

In 1876 a dramatic discovery changed this perception. A British scholar named A. H. Sayce found inscriptions carved on rocks in Turkey. He suspected that they might be evidence of the Hittite nation. Ten years later, more clay tablets were found in Turkey at a place called Boghaz-koy. German cuneiform expert Hugo Winckler investigated the tablets and began his own expedition at the site in 1906.

Winckler 's excavations uncovered five temples, a fortified citadel and several massive sculptures. In one storeroom he found over ten thousand clay tablets. One of the documents proved to be a record of a treaty between Ramesses II and the Hittite king. Other tablets showed that Boghaz-koy was the capital of the Hittite kingdom. Its original name was Hattusha and the city covered an area of 300 acres. The Hittite nation had been discovered !

Less than a decade after Winckler 's find, Czech scholar Bedrich Hronzny proved the Hittite language is an early relative of the Indo-European languages of Greek, Latin, French, German, and English. The Hittite language now has a central place in the study of the history of the Indo-European languages.

The discovery also confirmed other biblical facts. Five temples were found containing many tablets with details of the rites and ceremonies that priests performed. These ceremonies described rites for purification from sin and purification of a new temple. The instructions proved to be very elaborate and lengthy. Critics once criticized the laws and instructions found in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy as too complicated for the time they were written (1400 B.C.). The Boghaz-koy texts, along with others from Egyptian sites and from a site along the Euphrates called Emar, have proven that the ceremonies described in the Jewish Pentateuch are consistent with the ceremonies of the cultures of this time period.

The Hittite Empire made treaties with civilizations they conquered. Two dozen of these have been translated and provide a better understanding of treaties in the Old Testament. The discovery of the Hittite Empire at Boghaz-koy has significantly advanced our understanding of the patriarchal period. Dr. Fred Wright summarizes the importance of this find in regard to biblical historicity.

Now the Bible picture of this people fits in perfectly with what we know of the Hittite nation from the monuments. As an empire they never conquered the land of Canaan itself, although the Hittite local tribes did settle there at an early date. Nothing discovered by the excavators has in any way discredited the Biblical account. Scripture accuracy has once more been proved by the archaeologist.

The discovery of the Hittites has proven to be one of the great archaeological finds of all time. It has helped to confirm the biblical narrative and had a great impact on Middle East archaeological study. Because of it, we have come to a greater understanding of the history of our language, as well as the religious, social, and political practices of the ancient Middle East.

Sodom and Gomorrah

The story of Sodom and Gomorrah has long been viewed as a legend. Critics assume that it was created to communicate moral principles. However, throughout the Bible this story is treated as a historical event. The Old Testament prophets refer to the destruction of Sodom on several occasions (Deut. 29: 23, Isa. 13: 19, Jer. 49: 18), and these cities play a key role in the teachings of Jesus and the

Apostles (Matt. 10: 15, 2 Pet. 2: 6 and Jude 1: 7). What has archaeology found to establish the existence of these cities?

Archaeologists have searched the Dead Sea region for many years in search of Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 14: 3 gives their location as the Valley of Siddim known as the Salt Sea, another name for the Dead Sea. On the east side six wadies, or river valleys, flow into the Dead Sea. Along five of these wadies, ancient cities were discovered. The northernmost is named Bab edh-Drha. In 1924, renowned archaeologist Dr. William Albright excavated at this site, searching for Sodom and Gomorrah, and discovered a heavily fortified city. Although he connected this city with one of the biblical "Cities of the Plains," he could not find conclusive evidence to justify this assumption.

More digging was done in 1965, 1967, and 1973. The archaeologists discovered a 23 - inch thick wall around the city, along with numerous houses and a large temple. Outside the city were huge grave sites where thousands of skeletons were unearthed. This revealed that the city had been well populated during the early Bronze Age, about the time Abraham would have lived.

Most intriguing was evidence that a massive fire had destroyed the city. It lay buried under a coating of ash several feet thick. A cemetery one kilometer outside the city contained charred remains of roofs, posts, and bricks turned red from heat.

Dr. Bryant Wood, in describing these charnel houses, stated that a fire began on the roofs of these buildings. Eventually the burning roof collapsed into the interior and spread inside the building. This was the case in every house they excavated. Such a massive fiery destruction would match the biblical account that the city was destroyed by fire that rained down from heaven. Wood states, "The evidence would suggest that this site of Bab edh-Drha is the biblical city of Sodom" { 5 }.

Five cities of the plain are mentioned in Genesis 14: Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zoar, and Zeboiim. Remnants of these other four cities are also found along the Dead Sea. Following a southward path from Bab edh-Drha there is the city called Numeria. Continuing south is the city called es-Safi. Further south are the ancient cities of Feifa and Khanazir. Studies of these cities revealed that they had been abandoned at the same time, about 2450 — 2350 B.C. Many archaeologists believe that if Bab ed-Drha is Sodom, Numeria is Gomorrah, and es-Safi is Zoar.

What fascinated the archaeologists is that these cities were covered in the same ash as Bab ed-Drha. Numeria, believed to be Gomorrah, had seven feet of ash in some places. In every one of the destroyed cities ash deposits made the soil a spongy charcoal, making it impossible to rebuild. According to the Bible, four of the five cities were destroyed, leaving Lot to flee to Zoar. Zoar was not destroyed by fire, but was abandoned during this period.

Although archaeologists are still disputing these findings, this is one discovery we will be hearing more about in years to come.

The Walls of Jericho

According to the Bible, the conquest of Jericho occurred in approximately 1440 B.C. The miraculous nature of the conquest has caused some scholars to dismiss the story as folklore. Does archaeology support the biblical account? Over the past century four prominent archaeologists have excavated the site: Carl Watzinger in 1907 - 1909, John Garstang in the 1930 's, Kathleen Kenyon in 1952 - 1958, and currently Bryant Wood. The result of their work has been remarkable.

First, they discovered that Jericho had an impressive system of fortifications. Surrounding the city was a retaining wall fifteen feet high. At its top was an eight-foot brick wall strengthened from behind by an earthen rampart. Domestic structures were found behind this first wall. Another brick wall enclosed the rest of the city. The domestic structures found between the two walls is consistent

with Joshua 's description of Rahab 's quarters (Josh. 2: 15). Archeologists also found that in one part of the city, large piles of bricks were found at the base of both the inner and outer walls, indicating a sudden collapse of the fortifications. Scholars feel that an earthquake, which may also explain the damming of the Jordan in the biblical account, caused this collapse. The collapsed bricks formed a ramp by which an invader might easily enter the city (Josh. 6: 20).

Of this amazing discovery Garstang states, “As to the main fact, then, there remains no doubt: the walls fell outwards so completely, the attackers would be able to clamber up and over the ruins of the city.” This is remarkable because when attacked, city walls fall inward, not outward.

A thick layer of soot indicates that the city was destroyed by fire as described in Joshua 6: 24. Kenyon describes it this way. “The destruction was complete. Walls and floors were blackened or reddened by fire and every room was filled with fallen bricks.” Archaeologists also discovered large amounts of grain at the site. This is again consistent with the biblical account that the city was captured quickly. If it had fallen as a result of a siege, the grain would have been used up. According to Joshua 6: 17, the Israelites were forbidden to plunder the city, but had to destroy it totally.

Although the archaeologists agreed Jericho was violently destroyed, they disagreed on the date of the conquest. Garstang held to the biblical date of 1400 B.C. while Watzinger and Kenyon believed the destruction occurred in 1550 B.C. In other words, if the later date is accurate, Joshua arrived at a previously destroyed Jericho. This earlier date would pose a serious challenge to the historicity of the Old Testament.

Dr. Bryant Wood, who is currently excavating the site, found that Kenyon 's early date was based on faulty assumptions about pottery found at the site. His later date is also based on the discovery of Egyptian amulets in the tombs northwest of Jericho. Inscribed under these amulets were the names of Egyptian Pharaohs dating from 1500 - 1386 B.C., showing that the cemetery was in use up to the end of the late Bronze Age (1550 - 1400 B.C.). Finally, a piece of charcoal found in the debris was carbon-14 dated to be 1410 B.C. The evidence leads Wood to this conclusion. “The pottery, stratigraphic considerations, scarab data and a carbon-14 date all point to a destruction of the city around the end of the Late Bronze Age, about 1400 BCE.”{ 8 }

Thus, current archeological evidence supports the Bible 's account of when and how Jericho fell.

House of David.

One of the most beloved characters in the Bible is King David. Scripture says that he was a man after God 's own heart. He is revered as the greatest of all Israelite kings and the messianic covenant is established through his lineage. Despite his key role in Israel 's history, until recently no evidence outside the Bible attested to his existence. For this reason critics questioned the existence of a King David.

In the summer of 1993, an archaeologist made what has been labeled as a phenomenal and stunning discovery. Dr. Avraham Biran and his team were excavating a site labeled Tell Dan, located in northern Galilee at the foot of Mt. Hermon. Evidence indicates that this is the site of the Old Testament land of Dan.

The team had discovered an impressive royal plaza. As they were clearing the debris, they discovered in the ruins the remains of a black basalt stele, or stone slab, containing Aramaic inscriptions. The stele contained thirteen lines of writing but none of the sentences were complete. Some of the lines contained only three letters while the widest contained fourteen. The letters that remained were clearly engraved and easy to read. Two of the lines included the phrases “The King of

Israel ” and “House of David.”

This is the first reference to King David found outside of the Bible. This discovery has caused many critics to reconsider their view of the historicity of the Davidic kingdom. Pottery found in the vicinity, along with the construction and style of writing, led Dr. Biran to argue that the stele was erected in the first quarter of the ninth century B.C., about a century after the death of King David.

The translation team discovered that the inscription told of warfare between the Israelites and the Arameans, which the Bible refers to during this period. In this find, a ruler of the Arameans, probably Hazael, is victorious over Israel and Judah. The stele was erected to celebrate the defeat of the two kings. In 1994 two more pieces were found with inscriptions which refer to Jehoram, the son of Ahab, ruler over Israel, and Ahaziah, who was the ruler over the “House of David ” or Judah. These names and facts correspond to the account given in chapters 8 and 9 of 2 Kings. Dr. Hershel Shanks of Biblical Archaeological Review states, “The stele brings to life the biblical text in a very dramatic way. It also gives us more confidence in the historical reality of the biblical text.”

The find has confirmed a number of facts. First, the use of the term “House of David ” implies that there was a Davidic dynasty that ruled Israel. We can conclude, then, that a historic King David existed. Second, the kingdoms of Judah and Israel were prominent political entities as the Bible describes. Critics long viewed the two nations as simply insignificant states.

Dr. Bryant Wood summarizes the importance of this find this way. “In our day, most scholars, archaeologists and biblical scholars would take a very critical view of the historical accuracy of many of the accounts in the Bible.... Many scholars have said there never was a David or a Solomon, and now we have a stele that actually mentions David.”

Evidence of Caiaphas 's tomb.

The tomb of this priest was discovered in 1990. Israeli archaeologist Zvi Greenhut, who confirmed the finding, describes the event: “It was a cold day at the end of November when I received word at the Antiquities Authority that an old cave had been discovered... When I arrived I observed that the roof of the cave had collapsed. But even while standing outside, I could see four ossuaries, or bone boxes, in the central chamber of the cave. To an archaeologist, this was a clear indication that this was a Jewish burial cave... So it was that we discovered the final resting place of the Caiaphas family, one of whose priestly members presided at the trial of Jesus ” (“Burial Cave of the Caiaphas Family,” Biblical Archaeological Review, September-October 1992, pp. 29 - 30).

Two of the 12 stone boxes found had the name Caiaphas written on the side, and one contained the entire name “Joseph, son of Caiaphas.” Inside this box were the remains of a 60 - year-old man, along with the bones of a woman and four younger people, probably those of his own family.

Archaeologist Ronny Reich provides further details of the find: “The most elaborately decorated ossuary found in this cave contains two inscriptions relating to Caiaphas... The elderly man buried in the highly decorated ossuary was apparently Joseph. It was probably a forefather who had acquired this nickname [Caiaphas was apparently a nickname that meant “basket,” probably from “basketmaker.”]

“A person named Joseph with the nickname Caiaphas was the high priest in Jerusalem between 18 and 36 A.D. The New Testament provides only his nickname in the Greek form: Caiaphas (see Matthew 26: 3, 57; Luke 3: 2; John 11: 49, 18: 13 - 14, 24, 28; Acts 4: 6). Josephus [the first-century Jewish historian] gives his proper name as well: Joseph Caiaphas, or elsewhere, ' Joseph who was called Caiaphas of the high priesthood.' In short, we are explicitly told by Josephus that Caiaphas was indeed a nickname ” (“Caiaphas Name Inscribed on Bone Boxes,” Biblical Archaeological Review,

September-October 1992, p. 41).

Archaeologists have thus confirmed the existence of this important New Testament figure. They have also proven the existence of another leading character instrumental in the events surrounding Jesus' arrest, trial and execution.

The Pilate inscription.

Once Jesus was arrested, on Caiaphas' orders, He was tried before Caiaphas and later sent to the Roman governor Pontius Pilate. The New Testament portrayal of Pilate agrees with other historical accounts. "Philo and Josephus unite in attributing dire and evil practices to Pilate, so that a dark character is ascribed to him" (The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, 1989, Vol. 3, p. 813).

Philo, the Alexandrian Jewish philosopher (20 B.C. - A.D. 50), described Pilate as "a man of a very inflexible disposition, and very merciless as well as very obstinate." He says Pilate's rule was characterized by "corruption,... insolence,... cruelty,... continual murders of people untried and uncondemned, and his never ending, and gratuitous, and most grievous inhumanity" (The Works of Philo, translated by C.D. Yonge, "On the Embassy to Gaius," pp. 301 - 302).

Years after Christ's crucifixion, Pilate was sent to Rome to undergo a humiliating trial after ordering the massacre of some Samaritan pilgrims. Eusebius, the fourth-century historian, notes that Pilate was found guilty and exiled. In his shame he later committed suicide. Such was the end of this proud and corrupt governor.

For centuries Pilate was known only from scant historical records and the Gospels. No direct physical evidence had been found. Then, in 1961, a stone plaque engraved with Pilate's name and title was discovered in Caesarea, the Roman port and capital of Judea in Christ's day. "The two-foot by three-foot slab, now known as the Pilate Inscription, was... apparently written to commemorate Pilate's erection and dedication of a Tiberium, a temple for the worship of Tiberius Caesar, the Roman emperor during Pilate's term over Judea.

"The Latin inscription of four lines gives his title as 'Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea,' a title very similar to that used of him in the Gospels (see Luke 3: 1). This was the first archaeological find to mention Pilate, and again testified to the accuracy of the Gospel writers. Their understanding of such official terms indicates they lived during the time of their use and not a century or two thereafter, when such terms would have been forgotten" (Randall Price, The Stones Cry Out, 1997, pp. 307 - 308).

27.2. Our Savior as an Ideal of Perfection.

The unsurpassed and exceptional grandeur of Christian ethics lies in its having not only a true ethical law and abundant help in its fulfillment, but also in its possession of a living ideal image and most perfect personal example of ethical life in the Person of Its Lawgiver and our Savior — the Lord Jesus Christ. The Savior Himself commanded us to strive for this ideal: Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5: 48) and I and My Father are one (John 10: 31). The unconfused and indivisible union of the divine and human natures in Christ, that is, the Person of the God-Man, is given us as a living, real ideal of moral perfectibility. In other words, God gives every

Christian an example towards which to strive in the Person of the God-Man, Christ.

An exact and complete ethical image of Jesus Christ, possessing infinite ethical perfection, is impossible to exhaust with human words. According to the words of the Evangelist St. John the Theologian, an account of everything that Christ did would necessitate so many books that the whole world would be unable to contain them. Therefore, having noted the most essential and astonishing attributes of the Personality of the Savior — His infinite Love and the loftiness of His freedom and perfection — we shall only point out how these basic ethical features of His Personality were manifested in His attitude toward God the Father, toward Himself, and toward people.

In relation to God the Father, Christ was always in unity. I and My Father are one, said Jesus Christ Himself. He repeatedly asserted that He proceeded from God and to God He will return; that He is equal to the Father in self-existence and activity; he was incarnate by the will of the Father. Whoever saw the Son also saw the Father. The divine law was constantly in the heart of Jesus Christ, and the fulfillment of this law even unto death was the basis of His whole life and activity. The reason for this was that love for the Father comprised the foundation of the Spirit of Christ. His whole life on earth was like an unceasing prayer, in words, thoughts, feelings and deeds. The last prayer of Christ on the cross before dying was Father, into thy hands I commend My spirit (Luke 23: 46).

And so, in relation to the Father, Jesus Christ came to earth as an endlessly loving Son, completely, inalterably devoted, and giving up His life for the sake of the whole world in fulfillment of the most gracious and just will of the Father. Did not he command this, also, to us Christians as the first, basic and most important commandment? From the full, complete, all-consuming union of the human will and the will of God the Father resulted the remarkable virtue of the human nature of Christ: sinlessness. Does not every Christian also strive toward sinlessness? In full and boundless devotion of one's will to the will of God lies the way to sinlessness.

Completely putting His trust in the purpose of God, Jesus Christ as man was not solicitous of anything temporary (i.e. food, drink, clothing, shelter). But trusting in this help, He not only never complained if help did not come, but even concluded His prayer in the garden of Gethsemane with these words: nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done (Luke 22: 42). And in the Lord's prayer, He gave a pointed and clear indication of this in these words to God the Father: Thy will be done. Completely devoted to the Father, Jesus Christ displayed an ideally wondrous harmony of word and deed, tranquility of spirit and clearness of conscience. Passion and irritability were alien to Him. Even His righteous anger was an anger of love, deploring lawlessness, untruth and craftiness. In the most poignant moments of His greatest sufferings, He preserved fully both conscience and self-possession, praying for his executioners, solicitous of His Mother. Even in the dreadful hour of forsakenness, He appealed to his forsaking Father, confident in the existence of the God of Love. Can there be a more beautiful, more perfect, more moving and more blissful ideal for the Christian than the Crucified Savior of the World?

Of the character of the intellect of Christ, Bishop Nikanor of Kazan speaks these beautiful words in his course on "Ethical Theology":

"Poor, uneducated, He, Christ, stepped out into the field of community teaching without any experience, without friends and all other external support. And everyone listened to His mighty Word with endless thirst, forgetting food and their homes (being out in the desert). He taught simply, without any preparation. His knowledge did not appear to be borrowed from without but the fruit of His eternal thought. Fully possessing the loftiest mysteries, He was not agitated by them, like other humans, but spoke calmly and without tension. In His speeches there are no traces of dry education. On the most lofty subjects, He taught in such a way that His original thought was manifestly

understood. The most lofty thoughts were often presented in the plainest images and comparisons, and they appeared with unusual vivacity and attractiveness.”

Is not the example given here an ideal one for the meditation of the Christian? In truth “the intellect of Christ enlightens everyone” and in this light it becomes clear that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God (I Cor. 3: 19).

As basic features of His holiness, Jesus Christ Himself pointed to meekness and humility, saying, Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls (Matt. 11: 29). In His attitude toward people, Jesus Christ showed Himself an ideal Son, an ideal citizen, an ideal Teacher and Savior. Nobody left Him without having received the indispensable. Truly, He was to everybody — everything.

Ought not we, also, to strive to be the same in our careers and in all our relationships with our neighbors? The whole life of Christ was passed in benefactions and by this was established the law of communion of people one with another. Everyone can and must be a benefactor to every other person.

How simply, wisely, and happily would the excruciating and insoluble social problems of the world be solved if only this principle would triumph in people. An imitation in every way of the Personality and life of Christ, though not completely possible, seems, nonetheless, the most powerful means toward a reconstruction within us of the divine image and to the attainment of salvation and blessedness.

Being Himself the Way, the Truth and the Life, in the process of showing Christians His divine and abundant help, Jesus Christ established His Church which all the powers of Hades will not be able to destroy. Therefore, every Christian, desiring to walk in the footsteps of Christ, can accomplish this only with His help, in His blessed Church, established by Him.

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