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Translator's Note

Throughout the text Fr. Daniel sometimes uses the Russian Synodal Version and sometimes a Russian translation of the Septuagint. Consequently, in the English translation scriptural quotes are primarily taken from the King James Version, but are sometimes taken from the Brenton Septuagint Version (denoted as LXX), abbreviated, or paraphrased. Occasionally, scriptural references and minor additional text for readability have been inserted in brackets. Unless otherwise noted, quotes from the book of Psalms are taken from *The Psalter According to the Seventy* published by Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Brookline, MA (all rights reserved). Excerpts from the Menaion are taken from *The Menaion of the Orthodox Church*, translated by Isaac E. Lambertsen and published by The Saint John of Kronstadt Press.

Much of the reference information for works cited was missing from the source text, particularly parts VI–IX. Where no reference information is provided in the footnotes, the quoted text has been translated by the current translator from the Russian text given in the source.

Foreword

In the name of the Holy, Consubstantial, Life-creating, and Indivisible Trinity!

The existence of the Church is the linchpin of world history. This fact is often forgotten for the sake of fidelity to the “ideals of scientific knowledge.” Nevertheless, the fact remains, and unless it is taken into account, history as a discipline has no objective value.

In this work, which constitutes a continuation of our book *The Beginning: A Chronicle*, we will examine from this standpoint the ancient history of post-diluvian humanity, as well as the history of the Old Testament Church and its relations with a world that had abandoned its Creator.

This work is of an apologetical nature, and is devoted to the refutation of the widespread errors of modern pseudo-scientific mythology, which unfortunately are even supported by certain Christians. In analyzing sacred history we must start by qualifying our stance on “the latest scientific data.” As our standard of truth we adopt the teaching of the Word of God, understood as interpreted by the majority of the holy fathers. All theories that contradict this are considered “guilty until proven innocent.” In this work we will also examine a number of recently invented “theologoumena” that distort the Orthodox teaching on Holy Scripture.

To give a systematic exegesis of the text of the Bible is beyond the scope of this work. If the Creator so wills, we will do so at a later date. This work will primarily concern those passages of the Lord’s Word upon which unbelievers most frequently cast doubt. In this, O reader beloved of God, may the compassion of the merciful Lord aid both you and us!

“If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?” (Jn. 3:12).

In our time among Orthodox theologians there is a popular hypothesis affirming the “theanthropicity” of Scripture. This opinion, which they claim to be based on Chalcedonian dogma, asserts that both divine and human elements must be discerned

in the Bible. To the first pertains the dogmatic and moral content of revelation; all else is attributed to the human factor. This questionable claim, in their opinion, infers that Scripture can err in its historical and scientific aspect—an inference that is completely devoid of logic. For according to the dogma of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, human nature is united with the Divinity not only without mingling or changing, but also inseparably and indivisibly, and hence in Christ there is no antagonism between the natures, and in Him the human will is infallible due to the hypostatic union of the two natures. Consequently, by taking the Chalcedonian dogma as our starting point, we cannot allow for the possibility that Holy Scripture is in error either in matters of science or in matters of history. Man is by no means a liar by nature, and ignorance is characteristic of him only by dispensation. Consequently, that the Bible contains a human element does not mean that it contains errors. Here we have an overt logical fallacy being substituted for the concept of sin and of man.

This hypothesis, which makes revelation out to be a fairy tale and is propagandized by anti-Christian science, is pointless, for it fails to satisfy the requirements either of theology or of the militant atheism that makes every effort to destroy the Church. It has no basis either in Scripture itself or in the fathers, and hence it must be discarded.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16), writes the holy apostle Paul, thereby denying us the right to dissect the living word of God. “The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man,” adds the apostle Peter, “but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:21). Hence, everything in Scripture is true, authentic, and indubitable, and there is not a shadow of falsehood or error, as the Author of the Bible attested when He said, “It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail” (Lk. 16:17).

Our objective in composing this text is an attempt to demonstrate that authentic science affirms Orthodox teaching, and through this to help Christians to unite in their hearts two different spheres of life, formerly sundered by modern pseudo-sci-

tific mythology, which separates faith from knowledge and God from creation, and banishes the Church to a remote corner of human consciousness.

In interpreting passages from Holy Scripture we will attempt, firstly, to adhere to the teaching and interpretations of the holy fathers, and only then to employ the natural sciences and historical data, in accordance with the requirements of the 19th canon of the Council of Trullo (that is, the Sixth Ecumenical Council, as it is customarily but imprecisely termed):

“Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Wisd. 30:5–6).

Part I

THE BEGINNING: A CHRONICLE



Chapter 1

A Theological Interpretation of Evolution

Is it possible to separate science from theology? Modern-day theologians, who to some degree have become inveigled in the process of apostasy, frequently dismiss the existing problem of the relationship between science and the Church. They say that science and religion can “freely develop without hindering each other,” and that “science studies the visible world; its object is the material universe. Religion, conversely, is a spiritual aspiration toward the supersensory world, which cannot be perceived by purely scientific methods.” These words of one heretical theologian, unfortunately, have become the model which many Orthodox have chosen to emulate. The attempt to split the spheres of application of science and religion enslaves the former to occultism, while relegating the latter to the periphery of life and making it “a cultural relic of Holy Russia.”

In practice, however, the practical fruits of this terrible heresy pale in comparison to its theological consequences.

If we cannot evaluate the visible world according to the mind of the Church, if the bride of Christ does not teach her children how to live on this earth whose civilization is permeated with science, of what use is it? We are not incorporeal angels, after all: we need guidance in our corporeal life, and that life lies within the domain of science.

Let us enumerate the heresies that inevitably arise from this worldview:

Manichaeism: for if the Church turns away from the visible world, this is obviously because it is evil by nature, and hence it is

the creation of an evil god. The practical consequence of this is militant atheism and an aspiration to destroy one's body as being the vessel of sin. (Indeed, is this not why similar tendencies have become widespread among neophytes, and why these very concepts are encouraged by sects such as the "Mother of God Center"?)¹

Docetism: if this world is unworthy of being known by the Church, then the incarnation could not have occurred, for Christ Himself is the chief mystery of Christians. If the modern opinion that divides the spheres of science and faith is correct, then Jesus was a phantom. Consequently, our salvation is a hallucination! The cross and the resurrection are a myth and a fairy tale! And if we attempt to apply this approach to Holy Scripture, not one verse will remain intact.

The Church speaks to us not of the essence of God, nor of the relations between the bodiless hosts, but of our salvation from death (which awaits us on earth, and not in the spiritual world) and of the resurrection in the flesh, bestowed upon us by the Incarnate God.

These examples could go on interminably.

Clearly, this kind of division is the fruit of the satanic humanism that dwells in the consciousness even of some Orthodox, for whom the Church ends at the temple threshold. They frequently say that the Church has no right to interfere in the arena of science, since the Bible allegedly teaches concerning what is spiritual, and that everything in it pertaining to the material is not divinely inspired. Let us suppose for a moment that this is so. What grounds do we then have for trusting Holy Scripture in those matters that are unknowable, if it is false concerning those facts that can be known? As Christ Himself inquired, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" (Jn. 3:12).

Clearly, by deciding to reject Scripture in part we reject it in full! By renouncing the Creator we divorce ourselves from the Trinity! Without a doubt, Russian censorship was right in prohibiting the publication of Darwin's ravings, as opposed to Alexey

¹ *Bogorodichny tsestr*—a modern Russia-based religious sect.—*Trans.*

Tolstoy, who in his well-known poem attempted to pass off evolution as the means of the world's creation.

Modern science, despite its claims, has been unable to present a cohesive picture of the world that encompasses all known data. It is asserted that today only one tenth of the contents of school textbooks comprises facts, while the remaining nine tenths are various speculations regarding them! Thus, in casting off the Christian worldview, science has not and could not have become objective truth, for the sole Truth is Christ. It has been transformed into a powerful tool for anti-Christian forays against faith, although it thieveryly retains fragments of the Orthodox worldview, such as belief in the singularity of the world.

Naturally, Scripture is not a textbook on astronomy and geology, but without it all science proves a soul-destroying falsehood. Revelation should not supplant the work of scientific researchers, but it should serve as the foundation of their worldview. How much better would medicine develop if scientists ceased to believe the evolutionary fable regarding rudimentary organs! How much less suffering there would be in the world if the fascists and communists had not believed in evolution!

Science must return to its master—to the theology from which it fled during the Renaissance—if mankind wishes to survive upon this fallen planet. True are the words of Solomon the Wise, who said that the earth trembles when “an handmaid is heir to her mistress” (Prov. 30:23). The “handmaid” science has imagined itself to be god, and it is not good for us to bow the knee before this emperor in his new “clothes.” On the contrary, we must learn to distinguish authentic scientific discoveries from humanistic and evolutionary nonsense. A medieval, Christian picture of the world should be reconstructed on the basis of Holy Scripture and Tradition, taking what can be taken from this modern idol. In the same way the fathers borrowed what was useful from the pagan sages while discarding the myths. St. Gregory Palamas gives the following advice concerning techniques for employing modern so-called wisdom: “If you were to examine the problem, you would see that all or most of the harmful heresies derive their origin from this source. So it is with the ‘iconognosts’ [‘knowers of the image of God’], who pretend

that man receives the image of God by knowledge, and that this knowledge conforms the soul to God. For, as was said to Cain, ‘Have you not sinned if you make your offering correctly, without dividing correctly [that is, without separating that which is humanly perverse from that which is of God]?’ (cf. Genesis 4:7 LXX). But to divide well is the property of very few men. Those alone ‘divide well,’ the senses of whose souls are trained to distinguish good and evil. ... In the case of secular wisdom, you must first kill the serpent, in other words, overcome the pride that arises from this philosophy. ... Having overcome it, then, you must separate and cast away the head and tail, for these things are evil in the highest degree. By the head, I mean manifestly wrong opinions concerning things intelligible, divine and primordial; and by the tail, the fabulous stories concerning created things. As to what lies in between the head and tail, that is, discourses on nature, you must separate out useless ideas by means of the faculties of examination and inspection possessed by the soul, just as pharmacists purify the flesh of serpents with fire and water. ... We may benefit even from serpents, but they must first be killed, opened up, and medicines prepared from them, and only then employed with discernment against their own bites.”² It is this principle and no other that must guide modern missionaries and apologists, if they do not wish to create a new heresy, as did Arius.

In any case, a Christian must not, as St. Theophan the recluse says, “secretly weave his own beliefs, in which he thinks to combine spiritism and geological ravings with divine revelation.”³

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:8–9).

² Gregory Palamas, *The Triads*. Text taken from <https://www.saintstylianos.org.au/salvation> on 10.27.2022, with edits by the current translator for readability and compliance with the Russian source.

³ St. Theophan the Recluse, as quoted by St. Philaret of Moscow, *Notes on the Book of Genesis*, p. 82.

Chapter 2

Evolutionism and the Origin of Death

Every defender of “Christian evolutionism” is faced with an impossible task: to reconcile the Orthodox teaching on the origin of corruption and death in the world through the sin of Adam with the “fact” that evolution was in progress long before the origin of man, on the principle of elimination of the weak and survival of the fittest.

Every Orthodox Christian clearly sees the logical incompatibility of evolutionism and Christianity at their very foundations. Indeed, if we accept as correct the statement that death is not the result of human sin, the need for redemption is rendered moot.

Suppose we join the evolutionists in supposing that the world in its current state, wholly permeated with death, is perfectly normal. What must we then suppose concerning its Creator? Either He is evil and created everything from sadistic motives, or else He is powerless to prevent anyone from distorting His design! Both these suppositions flatly contradict the faith by which the Church lives, and have long been condemned as the most pernicious of heresies (duotheism and Manichaeism).

To both these objections of the “Christian” evolutionists we respond in these words of Wisdom: “For God made not death: neither hath he pleasure in the destruction of the living. For he created all things, that they might have their being” (Wisd. 1:13–14).

Let us examine how the self-contradicting “Orthodox” evolutionists explain this.

The most well-meaning of these, Fr. Stefan Lyashevsky, prefers not to notice the heart of the problem whatsoever. He exhorts his readers: “Was there death in paradise? Then Adam alone was created immortal. But there is a widespread opinion that all the animals in paradise were immortal. Where does this idea come from? Where does it say this in the book of Genesis?” And yet it does say this—in Genesis 1:29–31. And why stop

at Genesis? Is the apostle Paul not authoritative for Fr. Stefan (Rom. 8:19–21)?

Fr. Stefan goes on to quote words that directly disprove his theory: “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” (Gen. 1:30). It is obvious to any unbiased person that this clearly refers to all the animate, higher animals, and not to the inhabitants of a paradise which had not yet then been created and in which, according to many of the fathers, no dumb animals lived at all (the creation of paradise is described in the second chapter of Genesis). Nothing in Scripture suggests that the animals’ subjection to man lay in the absence of a struggle for survival. Nor do the holy fathers teach this, but Fr. Stefan prefers not to cite them. From the above-cited text Fr. Stefan draws a perfectly incomprehensible conclusion: “And it was so. Consequently, prior to the creation of paradise”—of which there is not even a hint in this passage—“it was not so: living beings devoured each other” (?!).

The logic of Fr. Stefan is staggering! It turns out that prior to their creation birds crawled; then “it was so” and off they flew. The light was dark before “it was so,” and so on. Absurd! Could God really not have preserved the animals He had just created without food for the few hours that passed before they were blessed? Could they really have appeared on the earth so hungry that they promptly began devouring their own kind who had not yet been vouchsafed God’s approval?

In the thinking of our liturgical theology, after the end of the world paradise restored awaits us. Concerning this we have the prophecy of Isaiah: “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox” (Is. 11:6–7). As it will be following the end of the world, so it was in the beginning, for God Himself said of all His creation: “It is very good!”

Incidentally, Fr. Stefan is indeed nearer to Christ’s teaching than other evolutionists. He found the courage to reject the fairy tales about man originating from animal ancestors, acknowledging his creation from the dust of the earth and Adam’s immortal-

ity in paradise. In this he was not of course consistent, rejecting one thing only to accept another that is based on no less shaky a foundation.

Far more consistent in his rejection of revelation is the position of Archpriest Alexander Men. For him, “creation is the conquering of Chaos by the Logos, which achieves a conscious level in man and is focused on the Future. Thus, struggle is the law of world-making, the dialectics of the establishment of creation.” And in the world this is manifested in evolution. Clearly, for Fr. Men, death is the essential and original state of the world, and it leads to good.

He deliberately confuses the providential work of the Lord with the creative. True creation (as the Church understands the word) for Father Alexander is limited to the initial occurrence of heaven and the Earth (equated with the Big Bang), life, and intelligence. For Fr. Men, man is not the cause of death in the universe, but was to overcome it. Death and decay, in the opinion of this “theologian,” were spawned by the rebellion of Satan. In confirmation of his opinion he interprets the second verse of Genesis, claiming that the darkness upon the face of the deep was the action of satanic forces. But this understanding of this passage was already deemed heretical by St. Basil the Great in his *Hexaemeron*. This teaching is overt Manichaeism, which ascribes to Satan a might equal to the power of the Creator. But the Ecumenical Church, together with the venerable John of Damascus, hymns a Lord “Who has no one for His opponent.”

“Our God is in heaven and on earth; all things soever He hath willed, He hath done” (Ps. 113:11). All things—not merely what Satan allows him to do. “He spake, and they came to be; He commanded, and they were created” (Ps. 148:5). There was no struggle or failure on the part of the Almighty. It is clear that the heretical inventions of Fr. Men are foreign to revelation. God indeed limited Himself in the act of creation (for He created something other than Himself), but He did not lose His nature. Hence, Satan could not have hindered Him from creating the world according to His design.

Orthodox theology strictly distinguishes creation, when God manifested the full extent of His completely unlimited omnipotence; the world created as a result, in which all was “very good”

(Gen. 1:31); and providence, when He accomplishes His designs through the free will of His creatures. Confusing these various manifestations of the Lord's power leads to heresy, which rejects both the omnipotence and the goodness of God.

Fr. Alexander falls into a still deeper pit when he attempts to create a sort of mythical "universal man" in place of the personal Adam, thereby attempting to reject the reality of the fall and of original sin. In confessing this false teaching he needs no refutation, for Fr. Men falls under the anathema of the Council of Carthage: "That whosoever says that Adam, the first man, was created mortal, so that whether he had sinned or not, he would have died in body—that is, he would have gone forth of the body, not because his sin merited this, but by natural necessity, let him be anathema" (Canon 109).⁴ We will merely note that if there was no first Adam, there is no need for the second—Christ. We will refrain from further analysis of the work of Fr. Alexander Men, not wishing to repeat the excellent work of Archpriest Sergiy Antiminsov, *Archpriest Alexander Men as a Commentator of Holy Scripture*, which sufficiently exposes the anti-Christian nature of this "theology of chaos."

For us, the fruitlessness and peril of attempts to reconcile evolutionary pseudo-religion and Christianity have become apparent. They inevitably spawn monsters of theology that undermine the very foundations of the faith of the Church.

The above-cited theologians failed to notice that, in the words of Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose), "the state of Adam the first-created and of the whole world will forever remain beyond the bounds of scientific knowledge, beyond the insurmountable barrier of the fall into sin, which altered the very nature of Adam and of all things related, along with the nature of knowledge. Modern science knows only what it is capable of observing and of rationally deducing from what is observed. ... Adam and the primordial world can only be known (within beneficial bounds) from divine revelation or from the divine visions of the saints."

There is however yet another modern evolutionary theologian who accounted for this fact, and went to the opposite extreme. This is Bishop Vasily (Rodzyanko) and his new book, *The Theo-*

⁴ *The Rudder* (NPNF² 14:496).

ry of Decay and the Faith of the Fathers.⁵ On the very first pages of this work we encounter a very odd statement for an Orthodox bishop to make: “This world in which we live was not created by God: God worked no evil, but in this world, as we all know, evil abounds. Its source is not God, but ‘the prince of this world.’” The author equates the fall into sin with the Big Bang, and evolution with divine providence. It is apparent that this theologian likewise ascribes to evil a greater degree of reality than that for which revelation allows. For him, evil is ontological (though this claim is not made directly).

For Bishop Vasily, even consuming plants is the fruit of decay, though this was established as the norm even before the fall into sin (Gen. 1:23–30).

The bishop blindly accepts evolution as a reality of the fallen world, though, as stated above, there is no proof of its existence. For him, even unmingled personalities and immunity are manifestations of sin, though even after the Judgment personalities will not mingle (as Chardin would have it), but will commune with God face to face (1 Cor. 13:12).

But for Bishop Vasily the key concept is that of the eternal creation of all mankind in paradise in the person of Adam. He begins with the assertion that Satan has nothing in what is rooted “in Me,” “created by Me”—that is, by Him, Christ God. Ergo, “the world” of the prince of this world—Satan—is not “Mine,” and “not created such by Me.” The logical question arises: is Satan then uncreated? Is not his nature good in and of itself? Is not the very nature of this world “very good” in and of itself? Does evil really have substance? The bishop does not answer these questions, leading one to suspect him of Manichaeism. His statements contradict the explicit words of the Gospel: “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (Jn. 1:3). To the mind of the Church it is clear that evil lies not in nature, but in the perverse inclination of free creatures. As for so-called evil in nature, it is under God’s authority and is sent to men as a remedy for their correction. It is called evil not in an inherent sense (for this is true only of sin), but in a figurative sense,

⁵ Bishop Vasily (Rodzyanko), *Teoriya raspada i vera Otsov* [*The Theory of Decay and the Faith of the Fathers*] (Moscow, 1996).

as something that causes us sadness. Hence, these ideas of Bishop Vasily are un-Orthodox.

In the bishop's rather "original" interpretation, the one who subjected creation to vanity (Rom. 8:20) is Satan. Yet in the unanimous opinion of the holy fathers—St. Symeon the New Theologian, the blessed Theophylact, and St. Theophan the Recluse—it was God, Who committed His marvelous creation to the infirmity for the sake of man, who had become stricken with sin.

According to another unusual teaching of Bishop Vasily, the kingdom of God is "before all ages" and "at the end of time"—that is, outside of time and above time, and outside of space. By what means then does paradise exist? According to this definition of it which our author holds, a dilemma arises: either it exists in God's eternity, in which case it and all its inhabitants are uncreated; or else paradise was located in a zone of created eternity, where the angels abide following their self-determination. But in that case it is linked to space (albeit distinct from it) and a semblance of time connected with it, which no longer permits free will to waver, but enables it to mature in a previously selected direction. In both the first and the second cases, however, the fall into sin could not have taken place, for this is only possible for rational beings who live in time, which was made by the Creator specifically so that they could choose between love for God and love for self. Thus, prior to the fall of Adam, paradise could not have been outside of time, for man had not yet made his decision. Afterward, however, it may be held to have been in this zone, since after the Redemption it is inhabited by righteous ones who are incapable of falling. The opinion of Bishop Vasily, however, is completely incongruous with and contradicts Orthodox tradition.

The key error of His Grace is the teaching that the logoi of creation are identical to the creations themselves. Quoting Chrysostom's commentary on the word *katabole* ("casting down from a height"), which signifies the gulf between creation and the Creator (Eph. 1:4), Bishop Vasily incomprehensibly infers from this his idea that all mankind was created in paradise. In the same way, all the words of the fathers who say that our nature was created prior to the fall into sin or that the image of God was embedded in all men, from the first to the last, by the Lord's foresight, are understood by this theologian as confirmation of his concept

of personal (hypostatic) existence of us all in Adam (the universal man). For him, the existence of mankind in Adam in the form of an impersonal nature contradicts “the whole tradition of the Church.” This is the more strange in that several lines later he cites the words of St. Symeon the New Theologian, who explicitly disproves his opinion (p. 103). It must be said that these fairy tales have no basis in the works of the Cappadocian fathers. Naturally, there is no impersonal nature, and it is clear that human nature likewise exists only in hypostases (persons), but it by no means follows from this that all hypostases have existed from the beginning. In paradise human nature was contained in two hypostases—Adam and Eve—from whom as from a wellspring all other people proceed, being of one nature with them, but manifested in existence only at the time appointed by God. For the Lord they naturally exist in His foreknowledge, for He Himself lives outside of time, but it does not follow from this that all men preëxist somewhere outside of time, and are deposited from there at an appointed time. This is the heresy of Origen, condemned at the Fifth Ecumenical Council.

By confusing the logoi of creatures with the creations themselves, Bishop Vasily veers either toward pantheism, declaring creation to be an energy of God, or toward the false teaching of Barlaam, who claimed that the energies (logoi) of the Creator are created.

It is obvious that equating uncreated energies (logoi) with creation, and the opinion that we supposedly fell personally along with Adam in eternity, leads to an acknowledgment of some tragedy in the depths of the Divinity, and to the statement that God sinned by His energies, or that He succumbed to madness in bestowing hypostasity to His logoi. This is of course the pinnacle of impiety! The heresy that energies exist personally in God was condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 1351.

The whole theology of Bishop Vasily may be defined in the words of Vladimir Lossky, which he wrote concerning this theologian’s triadology: “Christian theology that is faithful to patristic tradition knows no jumps to ‘superlogic’: it continually places us face to face with antinomies, but always attempts to resolve them through discernment, which enables us to think and speak of the metalogical without violating the laws of identity, contradiction,

and excluded middle, outside which human thought and speech are impossible.”

From the above it is clear that any attempt to reconcile or unite Orthodox theology and the theory of evolution leads to the spawning of monstrous chimeras that undermine the very roots of revelation. And no wonder, for evolutionism is not a scientific theory in the ordinary sense of the word, but an anti-Christian pseudo-religion of progressism. Any attempt to accommodate it is condemned by the words of the apostle: “What communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” (2 Cor. 6:14–15).

The evolutionists are far more honest than our unhappy theologians in their declarations: “Christianity has fought, still fights, and will continue to fight science”—that is, the theory of evolution, which the author of the quote certainly considers science—“to the desperate end over evolution, because evolution destroys utterly and finally the very reason Jesus’ earthly life was supposedly made necessary. Destroy Adam and Eve and original sin, and in the rubble you will find the sorry remains of the son of God ... and if Jesus was not the redeemer who dies for our sins, and this is what evolution means, then Christianity is nothing.”⁶ This testimonial from the enemy requires no comment, for it reveals the true goal of evolutionism with absolute clarity.

Chapter 3

How Long did One Day of Creation Last?

The “new theologians,” disregarding the injunctions of the apostle Paul not to be conformed to this world (Rom. 12:2) and attempting to reconcile biblical chronology (Gen. 1, 5, and 11) with the

⁶ G. Richard Bozarth, *The American Atheist*, 1978, p. 19, as cited in *The Christian News*, November 11, 1996.

fantastic time periods required for evolution, have advanced the hypothesis of “day-ages,” according to which one day of creation lasted millions and billions of years.

A particularly fierce defender of this hypothesis was Arch-priest Stefan Lyashevsky, on whose opinions we have already touched in the present work. Unfortunately, his reasoning serves as the foundation for a seminary course in biblical history. For this reason we will examine the arguments of the supporters of this hypothesis, citing the writings of this theologian.

Before commencing our examination of this idea, however, we must turn to the unsullied fountainheads of Truth, and learn what Holy Scripture teaches us and how the holy fathers understood it.

In the Bible the word *day* is first used in the fifth verse of the first chapter of Genesis: “And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.”

If we approach this text from the standpoint of modernist theology, it is instantly and entirely stripped of its meaning. What, one asks—was there no night for millions of years on Earth? As far as we know, not one scientist believes this. How then were those years measured? Why today is the period when it is light called “day,” and not by some other term? How would they have us symbolically interpret the use of the words *night*, *evening*, and *morning* in this same verse? The “new theologians” give us no answer, though the phrase “and the evening and the morning” accompanies the description of each day of creation (excepting the seventh, for the blessing given it extends to the entire current period of the world up until the dawning of the eternal day when there will “be time no longer” [Rev. 10:6]).

It is clear to any honest Christian that in this verse the word *day* means, just as it does in our ordinary language, firstly the time of day when it is light, and secondly the day itself. This word usage is normal for any human language.

The evolutionist theologians do not wish to view the Six Days in the context of all of revelation, because it contradicts their fabrications.

The Lord Himself bore witness from Mount Sinai to the literal understanding of these days when He compared them to an ordi-

nary work week. “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ... For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Ex. 20:8, 11). “Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed” (Ex. 31:16–17).

These living words of God cannot possibly be interpreted symbolically without perverting their meaning, for how can a person’s ordinary work week be compared with the mythical billions of years of evolution? Must a person really work for N billion years, then rest for another N billion? This is complete absurdity!

According to the fifth chapter of Genesis, Adam begat Seth at the age of 130 (230, in the Septuagint translation), and died at the age of 930 years from the day of his creation. He was created on the sixth day, lived in paradise on the seventh, fell and was cast out, and only then begat children. If instead of one 24-hour period a day of creation lasted for even 1,000 years, the entire chronology of the fifth chapter of Genesis loses all meaning.

The New Testament also clearly testifies in favor of a literal understanding of the Six Days. The apostle Paul says that “the works [of God] were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works” (Heb. 4:3–4). It is not possible to reconcile the clear teaching of the Spirit Who says that the Six Days are accomplished “from the foundation of the world” with the teaching of the “new theologians” which asserts that they ended (if they indeed ended; Chardin, for one, rejects this also) at the very end of its existence.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Who created all things, confirmed the literal authenticity of Moses’ words: “He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female?” (Mt. 19:4).

Man was made at the beginning, Christ says. “No, at the end!” fashionable theologians teach today. Let each decide for himself

which is right. It is up to him with whom to spend eternity—with the modernist evolutionists or with Christ.

Let us now learn what the holy fathers taught concerning this, of whom Fr. Stefan Lyashevsky writes, “None of the holy fathers of the Church who wrote commentaries on the book of Genesis concerning the days of creation understood this literally.”

Let us now give them the floor:

St. Irenaeus of Lyons:

“This day accordingly our Lord would go over again with the rest, in His own Person, and so came to His Passion the day before the Sabbath, which is the sixth day of Creation, on which day man was formed: by His passion conferring on man a second formation, that which is [deliverance] out of death.”⁷

St. Ephraim the Syrian:

“Let no one think that there is anything interpretive (*turgama*) in the works of the six days. No one can rightly say that the things that pertain to these days were symbolic, nor can one say that they were meaningless names or that other things were symbolized for us by their names.”⁸

St. Basil the Great:

“‘And there was evening and morning, one day.’ Why did he [Moses] say ‘one’ and not ‘first’? ... [Moses] said ‘one’ because he was defining the measure of day and night and combining the time of a night and day, since the twenty-four hours fill up the interval of one day, if, of course, night is understood with day. Therefore, even if at the time of the solstices of the sun it happens that one of them exceeds the other in length, still the durations of both are entirely included in the time defined. It is as if one would say that the measure of twenty-four hours is the length of one day, or that the return of the heavens from one point to the same point once more occurs in one day.”⁹

⁷ Irenaeus of Lyons, *Five Books of S. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, Against Heresies*, John Keble, trans. (Oxford and London: James Parker and Co.; London, Oxford, and Cambridge: Rivingtons, 1872), p. 504.

⁸ Taken from <https://sites.google.com/site/aquinasstudybible/home/genesis/st-ephrem-the-syrian-on-creation>, accessed on 10.27.2022.

⁹ Basil the Great, *Exegetical Homilies* 2.8, “The Hexaemeron,” in *The Fathers of the Church Series*, vol. 46, Sister Agnes Clare Way, trans. (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), p. 34.

St. Athanasius the Great:

“All the visible creation was made in six days:—in the first, the light which He called day; in the second the firmament; in the third, gathering together the waters, He bared the dry land, and brought out the various fruits that are in it; and in the fourth, He made the sun and the moon and all the host of the stars; and on the fifth, He created the race of living things in the sea, and of birds in the air; and on the sixth, He made the quadrupeds on the earth, and at length man. And ‘the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made;’ (Rom. 1:20) and neither the light is as the night, nor the sun as the moon; nor the irrational as rational man; nor the Angels as the Thrones, nor the Thrones as the Authorities, yet they are all creatures, but each of the things made according to its kind exists and remains in its own essence, as it was made.”¹⁰ We should note that Athanasius the Great rejects the opinion of the evolutionists that natures can be altered.

St. John Chrysostom:

“The sun was also created only on the fourth day, so that man should not regard him as the author and the principle of light. Because, what I said about the production of plants, I can say it again of the light, to know that three days preceded the creation of the sun.”¹¹

“It was the Lord’s good will to prescribe that we dedicate one day in the weekly cycle to spiritual matters.”¹²

St. Leo the Great, pope of Rome:

“What is the sun and what is the moon except the sources of visible creatures and of physical light? One has a greater shine, the other a lesser light. Just as there is day time and night time, so the creator has given the luminaries a different quality—although, even before these were made, days went ahead without the function of the sun and nights without the service of the moon. These lights were set up for the use of the human beings that were going to be made. That way, this rational animal would

¹⁰ Athanasius the Great, *Against the Arians* 16.19 (NPNF² 4:358–359).

¹¹ Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis* 6.4 (translated from the Russian by current translator).

¹² Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis* 2.3 (translated from the Russian by current translator).

not lack the means to distinguish months, to count years, and to divide up seasons. It is through the varying durations of different measures of time and through the clear signs of distinct revolutions that the sun measures years and the moon cycles through months.”¹³

St. John of Damascus:

“We have a period of a day and a night from the beginning of one day to that of the next—for Scripture says: ‘And there was evening and morning one day.’”¹⁴

St. Philaret, metropolitan of Moscow:

“The six days of creation do not literally mean ... a duration of time in which things, according to the laws of nature alone, might take form and develop from the heaven and earth created in the beginning, for in that case the days of creation would not differ from the days of providence, and we could not say that God finished His work and rested on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2). Thus, the days of creation show the true order of the direct actions of creative power, which were accomplished at a specific time.”¹⁵

In addition to these holy fathers, the same was taught by St. Theophilus of Antioch, St. Hippolytus, St. Ambrose of Milan, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Epiphanius of Cyprus, Blessed Theodoret of Cyrus, and others. Note that the sacred canons prohibit interpreting Holy Scripture arbitrarily, without taking patristic theology as one’s basis (2 Pet. 1:20–21).

How do the “new theologians” substantiate their understanding of this divinely inspired text? How do they prove that a day in the first chapter of Genesis was an immeasurable epoch? Their first argument is the claim that “the Semetic language at the beginning of the second millennium BC was so lexically impoverished that quite frequently one word expressed several concepts, such as in the present instance, in which the word *yom* meant

¹³ St. Leo the Great, *Sermons* 27.5, in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 93, Jane Patricia Freeland and Agnes Josephine Conway, trans. (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 1996), p. 114.

¹⁴ John of Damascus, *Orthodox Faith* 2.7, in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 37, Frederic H. Chase, Jr., trans. (New York, NY: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1958), p. 215.

¹⁵ Met. Philaret of Moscow, *Zapisi na knigu Bytiya* [*Notes on Genesis*] (translated from the Russian by current translator).

both a day and a period of time.” This claim is invalid, both generally and particularly. The ancient languages are far richer than modern ones in synonymic constructs and in vocabulary. “In comparing the lexical and grammatical fabric of ancient and modern languages, we see that the grammatical structure [of ancient languages] is distinguished by greater variety and polish.”¹⁶ Did Fr. Stefan really think that our late 20th-century speech had vastly surpassed the language of the Pentateuch, the book of Job, or the book of Joshua? Did the creator of Psalm 89 really not know of a suitable term to denote time? Of course he did. To denote an epoch Moses used the word *olam*—age, eternity, epoch (Gen. 49:26), while to denote the daytime or one day he used *yom* (Ex. 15:18). Why then did he not use the word *olam* in the first chapter of Genesis? Obviously, because he meant what he said!

Archbishop Makary quite rightly notes: “Without a doubt, the words of every writer should be understood in precisely that sense in which he himself understood them. ... There is no reason to depart from the historical meaning of Moses’ narrative: for ... it contains nothing contrary to the truth and, consequently, nothing out of keeping with the dignity of the divinely inspired writer.”¹⁷

Another objection raised against the literal understanding of “a day of creation” as a twenty-four hour period is the assertion that since all of Scripture is permeated with symbols, here too this is the case. Naturally, there is a spiritual meaning in all of Scripture (2 Cor. 3:6, 13–18), but “the veil lying upon it is removed by Christ,” and not by the inventions of the “new theologians.” Only the saints, illumined by the Holy Spirit, are able to learn the mysteries of the Bible, and not “armchair theologians” who do not trouble themselves to adhere to the fathers.

It should be noted that in the Bible we find no instances of the historical narrative being annulled by a symbolic interpretation. If we employ the methods of the “new theologians,” we may unhesitatingly reject all of sacred history, for each will reinterpret it

¹⁶ Archimandrite Raphael Karelin, “*Znachenie slavyanskogo yazyka dlya pravoslavnogo bogoslužheniya*” [“The Significance of the Slavonic Language for Orthodox Worship”] (translated from the Russian by current translator).

¹⁷ Archbishop Makary (Bulgakov), *Pravoslavno-dogmaticheskoe bogoslovie* [Orthodox Dogmatic Theology], vol. 1 (Moscow: 1993), pp. 416–417.

as he wishes. Ultimately we will end up denying the Incarnation and the “crucifixion under Pontius Pilate,” for the method itself sets no limits on its application.

People often say that the ancient Hebrews were too crude to have understood the subtleties of evolutionary cosmology, and so they were given a “primitive” version of the six days of creation. It is remarkable how primitivizing a complex worldview can transform it into its direct opposite, for the teaching that God created the world and the fables about its arbitrary occurrence are wholly incompatible.

On the contrary, the ancient Hebrews were acquainted with evolutionary thinking. All the mythologies of the surrounding nations (such as the Egyptians and the Babylonians) are filled with descriptions of endless epochs and the gradual evolution of the world out of chaos, which they were taught by Nimrod, who was himself inspired by Satan. They are mistaken who consider the evolutionary mythologem “modern and progressive.” Whereas in the time of the prophets and the holy fathers it was clothed in the guise of myths, today it veils itself in a semblance of science, while remaining essentially the same as ever. Truly did Solomon say, “There is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us” (Eccl. 1:9–10).

What grounds, then, do evolutionary Christians seek out for their inventions in Holy Scripture? Most often they cite only two texts: “One day is with the Lord as a thousand years”—here they usually stop—“and a thousand years as one day” (2 Pet. 3:8). Clearly, this does not refer to the days of creation, but to divine eternity, which is not altered by the flow of the river of time and is not subject to its waters. The text that follows says the same: “For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday that is past, and as a watch in the night” (Ps. 89:5). Here, too, the second part of the quote is “forgotten,” and the meaning of these words is thereby obscured. If we understand the Bible thus, we find that Christ likewise came to his disciples across the sea not in the fourth watch of the night, but in the fourth millennium of the night (Mt. 14:25), and that He rose not on the third day, but in the third epoch! The flawed nature of this kind of scriptural interpretation is patently obvious.

Small wonder, given this approach to revelation, that the evolutionist theologians make short work of the holy fathers, as well. From their works they cite passages that either have nothing to do with the subject at hand, or else they grossly distort their meaning. As an example, let us take the words of St. Basil the Great, whom the supporters of the “day-ages” theory love to quote, in the context in which that great theologian presents them. Fr. Stefan quotes the psalms, [but] “no; this day without evening, without succession and without end is not unknown to Scripture, and it is the day that the Psalmist calls the eighth day, because it is outside this time of weeks. Thus whether you call it day, or whether you call it eternity, you express the same idea. Give this state the name of day; there are not several, but only one. If you call it eternity still it is unique and not manifold.”¹⁸

This quote, which the evolutionists so love to cite, has simply been twisted to support the idea of fantastic epochs. St. Basil is not speaking of the days of creation here at all, but of the eternal day of the age to come. Here the modernists permit a clear falsehood—a thing wholly impermissible for people who write concerning the word of God!

The contemporary Protestant creationist scholar Henry Morris finds 15 contradictions between the biblical narrative and evolutionary cosmogeny, which allow for no reconciliation between the two without doing violence to the meaning of both.¹⁹

(a) Geologists claim that the waters of the earth seeped through to its surface gradually, over the course of many years. But Genesis claims that the earth was covered with water from the very beginning (Gen. 1:2).

(b) Geologists hold that life originated in the primordial ocean. Genesis 1:11 states that the first living things appeared on dry land.

(c) It is surmised by orthodox geologists that fish and other marine organisms appeared far earlier than fruit trees. Genesis 1:11, 20–21 clearly attests to the opposite.

¹⁸ Basil the Great, *The Hexameron*, homily 2 (NPNF² 8:65).

¹⁹ Henry M. Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), pp. 119–121.

(d) Evolutionary geology teaches that the sun and the moon are at least as old as the earth, whereas Genesis 1:14–19 states that they appeared in the middle of the process of creation, on the fourth day. The same may be said of the stars.

(e) According to the Bible, birds and fish appeared at the same time (Gen. 1:21). But geologists hold that fish appeared hundreds of millions of years before birds.

(f) Evolutionists claim that the first marine life was a minuscule clump of complex chemical components, from which the higher mammals later developed. The Bible however says that God created numerous marine creatures, including whales (marine mammals), that were diverse from the beginning.

(g) The Bible emphasizes ten times that the creatures created multiply “after their kind.” Evolutionists say that all organisms branched off from common ancestors.

(h) The Bible claims that God created man in His own image (Gen. 1:26), forming his body “of the dust of the ground” (Gen. 2:7), and not from the body of a beast, as anthropologists claim. After his death he turns back into the same “dust” (Gen. 3:19), and by no means back into his animal ancestor.

(i) God created woman after man, from the body of the man. Evolutionary anthropologists state that man and woman developed simultaneously, and that the first true man (like all men thereafter) was formed in the body of a woman.

(j) God commanded man to rule over all the creatures He had created (Gen. 1:28), and Adam gave names to them all. Geologists claim that many of them became extinct long before man appeared.

(k) Man was originally a vegetarian, as the Scriptures say (Gen. 1:29). Anthropologists hold that early man hunted and ate the meat not only of animals, but also possibly of their own kind. The same extends to the animal world.

(l) The author of the Bible divides the history of the world’s origin into six days of creation. But there is no geological division of time into six periods that correspond to those days even remotely, either in the order of events or in their duration.

(m) God saw at the end of creation that all He had created “was very good.” But geologists claim that by that time much of

it had disappeared, and the world in which man appeared, which groaned from its sufferings, was not perfect.

(n) Genesis 2:1–3 summarizes as follows: in six days “the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them,” meaning that God is no longer creating and perfecting. Modern geologists and biologists say that the process that led to the creation of the world in its current form continues even now, and that “creation” continues to this day, meaning that the seventh day has not even begun.

Clearly, there is not the slightest need for fictitious day-ages, for this does not help to reconcile the incompatible—divine revelation and anti-Christian evolution.

This theory fails to resolve the impossible task set before it, and at the same time leads its adherents into a terrible error—the supposition that corruption and death are not the result of original sin—which leads them far astray from Christianity. Hence, for the Orthodox it is impermissible to “remove ... the ancient landmark, which [their] fathers have set” (Prov. 22:28), and to understand divinely inspired teaching in accordance with “fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith” (1 Tim. 1:4).

Chapter 4

Evolutionism and the Nature of Things

In addition to the issues already mentioned, any attempt to reconcile evolutionist doctrine with Christianity must also explain how it intends to combine the Orthodox teaching on the immutability of nature with its supposed fluidity. Let us recall that nature (*physis*) is the name given to what is peculiar to all beings of a certain kind. For example, man is a living being that is rational, mortal, social, and has an immortal soul. An angel is a living being that is immortal and incorporeal.

By the immutability of natures we mean that a being that possesses a given nature cannot arbitrarily transform into a being of a different nature. For example, a dog cannot become a cat, an ape cannot become a man, a fish cannot become a frog, and a man cannot become an angel or God. But this immutability of kind does not mean that each distinct representative of that kind cannot change within its own boundaries, for only God is wholly immutable.

Above we have already cited the words of the divine Athanasius, who asserted that “each of the things made according to its kind exists and remains in its own essence, as it was made.”²⁰

Basil the Great teaches the same: “The shoot of a reed does not produce an olive tree, but from a reed grows another reed, and from one sort of seed a plant of the same sort always germinates. Thus, all which sprang from the earth, in its first bringing forth, is kept the same to our time.”²¹

Likewise taught the other holy fathers. It is apparent that the supporters of “Christian evolutionism” are not guided by the patristic spirit. Their predecessors may have been either the Arians or the monophysites, who held that natures are capable of changing. The former said that Christ was a creature, and became God, and the latter—that two different natures were mingled in Him. Truly worthy predecessors of the new heretics!

What then will happen if we attempt to conform the Orthodox faith to these evolutionary fables? It will promptly become necessary to explain whose nature God the Son took upon Himself. For if man is an advanced ape/lemur/rat/reptile/amphibian/fish/invertebrate, the very concept of human nature loses all meaning. And if this is so, why can we not say that Christ is a god-fish, or some other such blasphemy? The Chalcedonian dogma loses all meaning, for why is the Lord known in two natures, and not a hundred? Why then did the Church reject the teaching of Origen, who claimed that multiple incarnations were possible? And so evolutionism ultimately renders us capable of easily accepting the pagan fables about multiple incarnations of the Divinity in

²⁰ Athanasius the Great, *Homilies* 2, “Against the Arians” (translated from the Russian by current translator).

²¹ Basil the Great, *The Hexaemeron* 5.6 (NPNF² 8:79).

the form of various animals. How can we laugh at tales of Zeus appearing in the form of a bull or a swan, if man himself is by nature the same as a bull or a swan? Why do we not join the Egyptians in worshiping onions and garlic? After all, evolutionism sets for us no clear boundaries between them and man. And if man is a particular variety of garlic or crocodile, and if there is no such thing as the very concepts of nature existing in hypostases, then why not believe that the god of the evolutionists became incarnate in these creations, as well?

We must acknowledge that this mingling of natures renders all morality completely pointless. For if man is a mere animal, why must he not fornicate or commit adultery? For many animals do not mate for life. Why is bestiality the worst of abominations, if every beast is the same thing as man? Why is the idea of fascism so repugnant, if evolutionists consider the struggle for survival a great good that leads to the improvement of one's kind (though what exactly that is remains unknown to theory)? It is no accident that already certain evolutionists are speaking out in favor of legalizing cannibalism, for how is human flesh different from pork, if they are of one nature?

Clearly, accepting evolutionism leads to the complete destruction of all of Christianity.

Part II

REVELATION OR EVOLUTION?



Chapter 1

Was There a Big Bang?

In any school we were taught that about 20 billion years ago all of space, time, and matter was contained in a tiny point called a “singularity.” Suddenly, for unknown reasons, a “Big Bang” occurred and the expansion of the universe commenced. Gradually, all the laws of nature came into force, and the universe began taking on its current form. Protogalaxies appeared, in which stars and planets developed, and on one of these, of its own accord, life occurred. In order to justify materialism, the theory of an infinitely oscillating universe was invented, based solely on the firm conviction of its supporters. Truly a firmness of faith which the Orthodox would do well to emulate!

Let us examine the facts that form the basis of this lovely myth concerning the world’s origins, which today is declared to be absolute truth.

There are only two:

1. The redshift of distant galaxies discovered by Edwin Hubble. In the galaxy spectra the lines of saturation incline toward the red part of the spectrum. This fact is customarily explained by the so-called Doppler effect: it describes how a spectrum shifts in a certain direction when an object moves away from an observer. Not wishing to acknowledge Earth to be the center of the universe, scientists put forward the theory of the expanding universe, which presupposes an increasing distance between any given objects in the universe. By this means they “avoided” geocentrism. Hubble determined that this constant expansion is equal to 500 km/s/Mpc, but as this number contradicted the evolutionary

age of the Earth, set at 5 billion years (according to Hubble the universe is not more than 2 billion years old), the “scientists” proceeded on the basis that “if the theory contradicts the facts, so much the worse for the facts.” And so with the stroke of a pen Hubble’s constant was “set” at 50 km/s/Mpc, which “provided” the 20 billion year-age that the evolutionists needed.

2. Another phenomenon that is held to “confirm” the Big Bang is so-called relic radiation, which is supposed to have appeared in the first minutes after the birth of the universe. Based on the Big Bang theory, the radiation ought to be of the same intensity in all directions. But it was discovered that the radiation background was not homogenous or isotropic (that is, not the same in all directions), as it ought to have been following the Big Bang.²²

Many scientists believe that this radiation can be explained without this hypothesis. But the fact is that the radiation itself gives no indication either of its origins or of the time when it occurred. It could easily be traces of the light that God commanded to shine forth on the first day of creation, and which was later contained in the celestial luminaries.

As such, Edwin Hubble’s discovery of the expansion of the universe does not contradict Scripture.

“[Thou] coverest Thyself with light as with a garment,” and “stretchest out the heaven as it were a curtain” (Ps. 103:2).

“He ... stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in” (Is. 40:22).

“I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded” (Is. 45:12).

“The Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens” (Zech. 12:1).

“He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing” (Job 26:7).

“He hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding” (Jer. 51:15).

See also Jer. 12:12; Is. 42:5, 44:24, 51:13.

This however does not mean that the Bible acknowledges the Big Bang hypothesis—indeed, it rather suggests the opposite. God did indeed spread out space, and continues to do so even now (Ps. 103:2), but not in the same way as during the Six Days. In the words of Gregory the Theologian, “He spread out [the heav-

²²Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, p. 150.

ens] with respect to His raiment, but in His providence he spreads it out always.”

There are a number of serious objections to the Big Bang hypothesis:

1. The primordial explosion would have had to set the entire mass/energy of the universe into motion in a radius from its center, and based on the law of angular momentum conservation there could possibly have been no spiral motion whatsoever. This contradicts what is observed in spiral galaxies and various star orbits, and consequently it strips this hypothesis of all probability.

2. The universe is not homogeneous in its large-scale structure, as it would have been following the Big Bang. Instead, there are gigantic clumps of matter in some places and voids in others. We know of around 4,000 galaxy clusters, which in turn comprise 10 superclusters, which form an enormous chain. A gigantic hole in the cosmos has also been discovered, of which St. Job also spoke (26:7)—in the Boötes constellation (located close to Earth’s North Pole), measuring about 300 million light years.²³ Thus, all talk of a Big Bang is simply inaccurate, given the recent hypothesis of the cellular universe.

3. This theory does not explain how any quantity of matter whatsoever could have accumulated in the universe (such as stars). For after the explosion, all matter and energy should have been scattered evenly throughout space.

Since the universe is a closed system, it is subject to the second law of thermodynamics, and consequently the emergence of order out of chaos is an absurdity.

As for the question of the mythical evolution of the stars, one must understand that no one has ever witnessed a single instance of the birth of a new star. All that can be observed are traces of decay (so-called “novae” and “supernovae” explosions). The very hypotheses of star formation contradict the laws of nature. For example, in order for a star to form from a gas cloud, entropy must decrease, which is impossible. The pressure within a gaseous body is always far greater than the force of gravity, and so the star formation process would be stillborn.

The stars’ consistency rather confirms the wisdom of the Creator than corroborates star evolution, for even the apos-

²³ Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, p. 246.

tle Paul said that “one star differeth from another star in glory” (1 Cor. 15:41)—that is, each of the luminaries remains in the place appointed for it by the Creator. The word *glory* means the rank or post belonging to the luminaries, which man has only recently discovered.

Frequently the Orion constellation is cited as an example of star evolution, where protostars were thought to form from a gas cloud. As it turned out, however, “the bright young protostars in Orion, instead of growing from the surrounding dust cloud, are actually losing mass to the cloud!”²⁴ Consequently, this hypothesis is not supported by the facts.

In this same constellation, four stars from the “Trapezium,” according to astronomer Georges Lemaître, are receding from the point of origin at a tremendous rate of speed. “Calculations have shown that they originated from a single point about 10,000 years ago. The riddle here is that this cluster contains stars that are millions of years old, according to the evolutionary model. Yet not one astronomer thinks that the stars appeared before their clusters.”²⁵

Other facts that are inexplicable given the hypothesis of evolution include the following:

1. The existence of O- and B-class hot stars. These radiate so much energy that their mass would fill the entire observable universe within a few thousand years.

2. These stars are often located beside colder stars, indicating their common origin. And yet they have not yet burnt out, though they should have done so millions of years ago.

3. Around these stars extensive dust clouds are observed, which ought to have long ago been pulled in by the extraordinarily powerful gravitational field of these giant stars.

Still greater difficulties await the evolutionists in resolving the question of the origin of the solar system. To this day the evolutionary “religion” offers no theory that would explain a number of particularities of the solar system:

1. The distance from the planets to the sun is subject to a remarkable mathematical rule known as Bode’s law. (If we take

²⁴ Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, p. 171.

²⁵ Dennis R. Petersen, *Unlocking the Mysteries of Creation* (Master Books, 2002).

a sequence of numbers—0, 3, 6, 12, 24—in which each subsequent number is doubled, and then create another series by adding the number 4 to each element of the first sequence and dividing the sum by 10, we end up with a sequence of 0.4, 0.7, 1.0, 1.6, 2.8, 5.2, 10.0, 19.6, 38.8.) This law shows the distance from the sun to the various planets in astronomical units (that is, in distances from Earth to the Sun).

2. The planets account for 98% of the angular momentum of the system, although the Sun accounts for 99% of its mass.

3. There are planets with excentric and even reverse orbits. The same is true of certain satellites.

4. Uranus and Venus rotate on their axes in the opposite direction from that of the rest of the planets.

5. The chemical makeup of the Sun, the planets, and their satellites differs sharply.

6. The heaviest elements are primarily found in minor planets.

It is important to note that there are convincing data in favor of a young solar system. It has been established that the diameter of the Sun diminishes by 1.5 meters every hour. If it had existed a million years ago, it would have touched the orbit of Earth, and 100,000 years ago life on Earth would have been impossible. Considering that the theory of nucleosynthesis did not find confirmation in the bowels of the sun, where an anomalously small quantity of neutrino was found, we must admit that the whole hypothesis of the evolution of the universe collapsed along with it, since it was this synthesis that was used to explain the occurrence of heavy elements.²⁶

2. It has been discovered that the moon moves two inches away from Earth each year. Consequently, 1 billion years ago they were touching. If the earth were 5 billion years old, we would no longer be able to see the moon.

3. In the solar system there exist a number of short-period comets, the age of which cannot exceed ten thousand years, since in that time they should have been destroyed by solar winds. Yet there are currently around 5 billion of them in existence. To explain this fact, which undermines the foundations of evolutionary cosmogeny, the hypothesis of a comet cloud was invent-

²⁶ Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, pp. 166–167.

ed—a cloud which no one has ever observed. There is no proof of this fairy tale. On the contrary, an analysis of comet movement shows them to be “local” in origin.

4. The Moon, like Earth, is continually accumulating meteoric dust. It was expected that the Moon would be covered with up to 300 meters of dust. But it turned out that the dust layer was around 7 cm deep, showing its age to be 8,000 years. As there is no atmosphere on the Moon, the dust could not have disappeared.

5. The existence of this dust in space is also evidence of a young solar system, since if it were over 83,000 years old, all the dust would have been “swept away” by gravitational forces and solar wind.

Let us now briefly list the cosmic indices and the upper estimate (or maximum value) of the age of the universe that may be deduced from them:

Shifting of spectral lines of the galaxies—10 million years.

Expanding intergalactic gas—60 million years.

Deterioration of long-period comets—1 million years.

Instability of Saturn’s rings—1 millions years.

Methane leakage from the planet Titan—20 million years.

All these data indicate not the actual date of the world’s creation, but the maximum possible duration of its existence. Clearly, only one is correct—these facts, or evolutionary cosmogeny. Hence, Christians must cast off evolutionary nonsense like the pagan fables of old and return to patristic sources and the biblical account of the creation of the world.

Chapter 2

The Anthropic Principle

“**T**hou hast ordered all things in measure and number and weight” (Wisd. 11:20). So the Catholic Church,²⁷ led by the Holy Spirit, has always taught. It has always known that this uni-

²⁷ Throughout the text, the term *Catholic Church* refers to the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church—that is, the Orthodox Church. The Roman Catholic Church is referred to as such. —*Trans.*

verse is arranged most wisely, and that it was created “as a tent to dwell in” (Is. 40:22). It has always known that God appointed man as king over creation, and that the whole universe was prepared for him as a wondrous palace. Hence, for us her members it is a particular joy that today, at the close of the 20th century, even atheist scientists are compelled to acknowledge this teaching. In the course of examining so-called “global constants,” theoreticians decided to test what would have happened if one of them had been altered. The result surpassed all expectations. It turned out that altering any one of the many parameters of the universe would have rendered the existence of life on Earth impossible. “So fragile is the structure of the universe that tiny changes in the patterns at work within it lead to catastrophic consequences.”²⁸

We have excluded data that is based on supposed millions of years or on the hypothesis of the Big Bang. But there are more than enough other examples of viability. If the mass of an electron were even three times greater than that which we observe, hydrogen as such would not exist: it would collapse when neutrons and neutrinos were formed. Consequently, there would be no chemical elements.

If the difference between the mass of a neutron and a proton ($m = m_n - m_p$) were even twice what it is, the deuteron would be unstable, and hence there would be no chemical elements.

If the interacting force between two baryons were even 10% greater, all protons that followed the pattern $1H + 1H \rightarrow 2He + \pi$ would form isotopes of helium. There would be no water, and, of course, no life.

If the weak interaction constant were slightly less, there would be no neutrons in the universe, which would consist solely of hydrogen.

If there were four dimensions in space instead of three, there would be no planets or force of gravity.

If Earth did not travel in its orbit, life would be impossible due to either high or low temperatures (the margin of error being percentage units of Earth's orbit and 15–20% of solar luminosity. This, incidentally, means that life on Earth could not have existed

²⁸ Rosenthal, 1984 (translated from the Russian by current translator).

15–20 thousand years ago, since the sun's diameter diminishes at a rate of 1% every thousand years.

If Earth were within Venus's orbit, tidal forces would have long ago caused it to stop: one half of it would be hellishly cold, while the other would be unbearably hot.

If Earth were in a binary star system, it would be torn apart.

If Earth had less mass, it would be incapable of having a dense atmosphere, which would render the existence of life impossible.

If all the planets of the solar system did not have set orbits, the solar system would fall apart. The current arrangement of the planets is the only one possible.

If Earth did not have an anomalously large magnetic field, ionosphere, and ozone layer, all life would have been destroyed.

If Earth's atmosphere contained more than 40% oxygen, everything would burn up, whereas if it contained less than the 21% that we have today, aerobic life forms could not exist. It has been proven that 70% of atmospheric oxygen is of abiogenic origin, meaning that self-regulation here is impossible.

If there were even 2–3 times more CO₂ in the atmosphere, Earth's development would resemble that of Venus, while if it were not present at all, the temperature on Earth would not exceed -17 °C.

If the moon were 5 times closer to Earth, a tidal wave would reach a height of several kilometers, with consequences that are not difficult to imagine.

If the tilt of Earth's axis toward the plane of its orbit were greater, all water would gather at the poles and form polar caps.

From a chemical standpoint we can say that if carbon did not form polymers (as silicon does not, for instance), there would be no life either. There are no elements besides carbon that are capable of forming so many polymers.

Water is of particular interest. If we examine Mendeleev's periodic table, it ought to be like its neighbors in the sixth group: quite poisonous, with an acrid smell and melting and boiling points below -50 °C. Due to hydrogen bonds, however, it has the properties with which we are familiar. In nature there are no substances similar to it.

If water did not possess these properties, the existence of life would be out of the question.

Water is nearly the only substance (aside from silver chloride) that expands when it freezes. For this reason water bodies do not freeze to the bottom, and life can exist within them.

Water reaches its maximum density not when it freezes, but at $t^{\circ} = +4^{\circ}\text{C}$, due to which fish live underwater in the winter. Water has the greatest known thermal storage capacity. For this reason the oceans function as a thermoregulator, maintaining a stable climate and thereby creating safe conditions for organic life.

Water is a universal solvent, which is why chemical reactions in cells are possible.

There is no need to mention here the rational way in which living beings are structured. Adherents of the evolutionary religion customarily respond that the universe is infinitely oscillating, and hence we simply were dealt a good hand. But considering that the Big Bang itself was invented, and knowing that the eternal existence of the universe contradicts the fundamental law of increasing chaos (entropy), we declare that these are all lies of people who have blinded the eyes of their own reason. Even at the very lowest estimate, the probability of even a few of these properties occurring by coincidence is equal to one chance in 10^{3000} , which is naturally impossible.

Therefore let the Orthodox Christian break forth in song, triumphant over the mindlessness of the foes of the Church: "How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all" (Ps. 103:26).

Chapter 3

The Age of Earth

According to the Bible, the universe and Earth were created in the course of 6 days, 5,508 years before the currently accepted date of Christ's birth. This date clearly differs strongly from the 5 billion years accepted as part of the evolutionary "religion." Let us therefore examine which date is supported by the greater number of scientific facts.

What data do the evolutionists cite in defense of their date for Earth's appearance? These are, firstly, the data of the so-called geological record, founded on fossils interpreted based on the theory of evolution. In the opinion of creationist scientists, all sedimentary rock was formed the year of the Great Flood. This issue will be addressed in the chapter devoted to this event. Here we will merely note that this argument is based on circular logic. Earth's age is determined based on sedimentary rock strata, which are dated according to evolutionary theory, which is based on a hypothetical age of Earth. Thus, this argument in favor of our planet's antiquity may be considered null and void.

Another argument "proving" Earth's antiquity is data from radioisotopic analysis of geological material and meteorites. This method is founded on four insufficiently substantiated premises.

1. It is presumed that we know the original number of substances involved in the reaction. But such is not the case. For example, there is the uranium-lead dating method. Uranium has a half-life of 4.5 billion years, meaning that in that time half of its mass will turn to lead. But we do not know how much uranium there was in the original rock, or whether it contained lead to begin with. Consequently, the findings of the dating depend on initial data that can be selected arbitrarily.

2. The decay of a radioactive substance must progress at a constant speed. This cannot be proven. Data from radiohalos (discolored bands in crystals formed around a radioactive substance) suggest that the rate of nuclear decay has changed in the past. Even modern theories allow for this possibility if, for example, a supernova explodes in close proximity to Earth (as has happened on multiple occasions), and our planet is subjected to radiation by a neutron flux. In this situation the "age" of the specimen increases sharply.

3. The system in which the changes occur must be completely closed throughout the entire process of decay. Otherwise the time measurement will lose all value. But on Earth there are no completely closed systems. Consequently, the measurements of the age of Earth are fabricated.

4. The laws of decay and conservation must be constant. And so they were, but only after the week of creation. The second law of thermodynamics came into effect in the world only

after the fall of Adam. Consequently, prior to that point nothing in the world can be assessed from the standpoint of contemporary laws.

This shows that the radioactive dating method is highly unreliable, as acknowledged by the evolutionists themselves.²⁹ It can be partially used to determine the age of rock when the baseline age is known, and only within the last 3,000–5,000 years.

There is strong evidence that rock age is inflated when using the radioactive analysis method. Using the potassium–argon dating method, modern volcanic rock formed in Hawaii in 1801 was estimated to be 3.6 billion years old. Other calculations by various researchers for the same geological material from the Hawaiian Islands ranged from zero to 3.3 million years.

In Russia, rock with an actual age of about 1,000 years was dated from 50 million to 14.6 billion years old.

A lunar soil specimen produced four different results: 4.6 billion years old, 5.4 billion years old, 4.8 billion years old, and 8.2 billion years old. Clearly, not one of them is correct.

All of the above is fully applicable to the C^{14} method, based on measuring the amount of the radioactive carbon isotope in a specimen. On top of all this, it has been discovered that many plants do not absorb this particular carbon isotope, meaning that the age of a specimen of organic matter will always be inflated. Furthermore, due to the weakening of Earth's magnetic field and the increase of C^{14} content in the atmosphere, all ancient specimens will have a significantly inflated age, since in the plants of today there is more C^{14} than in those of old.

The following is a list of examples of false dating using the C^{14} method:

1. Using this dating method, a freshly killed seal was found to be 1,300 years old.
2. The shell of a live mollusk was determined to be 2,300 years old.
3. When tested, the shells of live snails showed that they had died 27,000 years previously.

Naturally, in each particular case the reason for the error in determining the age may be determined. But how can one hope

²⁹ Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, p. 266.

to use this method to calculate the date of formation for rock of unknown origin and, consequently, unknown age?

Today there is a more precise, nonequilibrium method for calculating the formula of radioactive decay for C^{14} , according to which Earth's atmosphere is not more than 7,000–10,000 years old, which is perfectly in accordance with biblical chronology.

Thus, there are no objective data confirming the mythical advanced age of Earth that is essential to the theory of evolution.

On the contrary, there are a number of facts that speak more in favor of a young age for our planet.

1. The weakening of Earth's magnetic field.

Numerous measurements of Earth's magnetic field have determined that it is constantly weakening, and this process is superbly described as "a typical exponential decay curve with a 'half-life' of approximately 1,400 years. That means that the magnetic field was twice as strong 1,400 years ago, four times as strong 2,800 years ago, and thirty-two times as strong 7,000 years ago. From these data Dr. Thomas G. Barnes has calculated an upper limit of about 10,000 years for the age of the earth,¹² since the magnetic field would have been impossibly strong before that time,"³⁰ and our planet would simply have exploded due to the surplus energy.

This method of determining age is linked to underlying processes in the bowels of our planet, and hence speculations regarding constancy of speed and isolation of a system here are far more substantiated than with other methods of determining age.

2. Increasing radiocarbon content.

According to modern measurements of the ratio of carbon-14 and carbon-12 in the atmosphere, it turns out that a state of equilibrium between forming and decaying C^{14} has not been reached. Approximately 12% more of it is being formed than is decaying. According to calculations, equilibrium should have been established in the course of 30,000 years, but this has not occurred.

We will attempt to explain this process using the example of a barrel of water. We place an empty barrel and turn on the water. At first more water will enter the barrel than flows out of it. This will continue until the barrel fills with water and reaches a "state of equilibrium"—that is, just as much water will flow in as flows out.

³⁰Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, p. 263.

In the same way, if Earth were over 30,000 years old, equilibrium would already have been established. But the quantity of C^{14} shows the age of Earth's atmosphere to be 7,000–10,000 years (at most).

3. Atmospheric helium.

Due to the constant alpha decay of uranium and thorium, helium is constantly entering the atmosphere. The rate of its diffusion into the atmosphere is considered constant. This gas is inert, and hence there is nowhere for it to go from the atmosphere. It was presumed that it leaked off into outer space, but the research of Dr. Cook, which was nominated for a Nobel Prize, determined that it was incapable of doing so: on the contrary, the atmosphere itself pulls it from outer space (solar radiation flux). But its content is 100 thousand times less than it ought to be if Earth were 5 billion years old. In the opinion of Dr. Cook, the helium content in the atmosphere sets its age at 10,000–15,000 years old (at most).

There is much more additional evidence in favor of a young Earth. For example, if our planet were 5 billion years old, all the continents would have been entirely washed away 440 times over!

The maximum possible age of the oceans is 340 million years, since their volume is 340 million cubic miles, and each year volcanoes emit 1 cubic mile of “young” water—that is, water that has never been part of the water cycle. Thus, life could not have appeared in the oceans 1.5 billion years ago, since at that time they did not exist. It must be pointed out that no one has ever yet proven that there were no oceans on primordial Earth. Thus, the evolutionary geological table is no more than a fable.

The pressure in oil and gas reservoirs shows that they could not have been formed earlier than 5,000–10,000 years ago, since the pressure within them drops at a known rate, and if they were older their internal pressure would have ceased long ago. This is not surprising: oil and natural gas appeared during the Great Flood, which took place 5,500 years ago.

There is considerable additional evidence for a young Earth that is based on the rate at which salts from various metals enter the ocean. This evidence is wholly based on the same assumptions as the radioactive dating method, so it cannot be considered

entirely reliable. The initial metal salt content of the ocean is also unknown. We will however cite certain facts, arranged in a table for brevity.³¹

PROCESS	AGE INDICATED
The flow of magma from Earth's mantle (if the entire crust of Earth is of volcanic origin)	500 million years
Sediment transferred via rivers into the ocean (that is, in this time all the oceans would be filled in)	30 million years
Leaching from the mainland of:	
Natrium	32 million years
Chlorine	1 million years
Calcium	12 million years
Oceanic levels of:	
Carbonates	0.1 million years
Sulfates	10 million years
Chlorine	164 million years
Calcium	1 million years
Uranium	1.26 million years
River delta formation	5,000 years
Transferred to the ocean via rivers:	
Natrium	260 million years
Nickel	9,000 years
Magnesium	46 million years
Silicon	8,000 years
Potassium	11 million years
Transferred to the ocean via rivers:	
Copper	50,000 years
Gold	560,000 years
Silver	2.1 million years

³¹ Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, pp. 477–479.

PROCESS	AGE INDICATED
Mercury	42,000 years
Lead	2,000 years
Tin	100,000 years
Aluminum	100 years
Lithium	20 million years
Titanium	160 years
Chrome	350 years
Manganese	1400 years
Iron	140 years
Cobalt	18,000 years
Zinc	180,000 years
Rubidium	270,000 years
Strontium	19 million years
Bismuth	45,000 years
Thorium	350 years
Stibium	350,000 years
Tungsten	1,000 years
Barium	84,000 years
Molybdenum	500,000 years

Thus we see that the evolutionary age of Earth is devoid of any scientific grounds, and is a religious postulate essential to faith in evolution.

To an Orthodox Christian it is obvious that there is no scientific basis for rejecting an age of 7,500 years for Earth and adopting the theory of evolution, for which there has simply not been enough time. As for the wide divergence in the table data, they are linked to the uniformist approach on which they are based, and can only serve as the upper limit of the age of our planet.

Chapter 4

Did Life Occur by Accident?

In any school we are taught that life originated by accident, in a “primordial soup” several (1.5–3) billion years ago, after which it gradually developed until it achieved the variety in which it exists today. Although not a single instance of the spontaneous occurrence of life has ever been discovered, evolutionists are so enamored of their “religion” that they are willing to believe any absurdity rather than admit that life was created by God.

Back in the 19th century Louis Pasteur declared a great truth: “All life comes from life.” In order to reject this truth, which led naturally to “religious nonsense,” the facts had to be twisted to fit the requisite hypothesis. This goal was achieved, and today every school textbook describes the experiment by Stanley Miller, which supposedly proved that life occurred by chance.

What was the essence of this experiment? In 1953 Stanley Miller sent an electrical corona charge through a mixture of heated gases (water vapor, methane, ammonia, and hydrogen). Each cycle led to the formation of a minuscule amount of liquid, which was collected in a flask. A week passed before a sufficient amount of matter was collected to permit conducting an analysis of the liquid, in which several extremely simple amino acids (of which proteins are composed) and other organic compounds were discovered. It is claimed that this supposedly confirmed Oparin’s hypothesis about the spontaneous origin of life.

People usually forget, however, that this experiment involved the use of a flask, which could not have existed in nature, and without which those very electrical charges would have destroyed the presumed “protolife” at its inception. The process would be about as productive as trying to build a house, but smashing the bricks with a hammer as they came off the conveyor belt. People forget that amino acids and even proteins can hardly be called life. They forget that the most important part of a cell is its genet-

ic code, and that its origins are an unfathomable mystery for the evolutionists.

It should be noted that Stanley Miller's initial premises concerning the absence of oxygen in Earth's primordial atmosphere are invalid, and that it has been discovered that 70% of atmospheric oxygen is of abiogenic origin (as shown by the existence of Precambrian sulfurous iron ore); consequently, the very process of amino acid formation could not have occurred, as the amino acids would have oxidized before the simplest gases.

The evolutionists cannot explain why only left-handed amino acids are present in a living cell—indeed, the presence of even a single (optically) right-handed acid isomer renders the protein lifeless. Stanley Miller's experiment, however, produced a 50% split of both these isomers. Consequently, the probability of a chance synthesis of the necessary amino acids is negligible.

In general, when talking with evolutionists one frequently observes obvious counterfeits. Instead of explaining the occurrence of a specific organism, they start talking about some fantastic chimera—a “protocell” that no one has ever seen with their own eyes. And small wonder! For the complexity of even the most “primitive” cell is such that even today the best scientists in the world with all their technology are unable even to reanimate it, let alone synthesize it. How mindless must one be to believe that irrational, dead matter “accidentally” engendered life? Their thinking reminds one of the well-known song by Novella Matveyeva about a little ship:

There once lived a little ship, so gay and so sleek;
Like a falcon he soared over the waves.
That ship, people say, built itself.
That ship, people say, crafted itself.
That ship coated its own sides with pitch;
That ship arrayed itself in oak and in metal;
That ship set itself its own course;
That ship is its own pilot...³²

The mindset is perfectly analogous!

Let us quote several estimations of the probability of the spontaneous occurrence of life. Fred Hoyle cites the following data: “If

³² Novella Matveyeva, “Korablik” (“The Little Ship”).

one counts the number of trial assemblies of amino acids that are needed to give rise to the enzymes, the probability of their discovery by random shufflings turns out to be less than 1 in $10^{40,000}$.³³ And that is just the probability of the formation of enzymes—only a few of a cell’s components!

Marcel Golay asserts that in order for the simplest self-replicating system to occur, 1,500 chance events have to occur in strict order, each of which has a probability of 1 in 2. Consequently, the probability of the occurrence of the very simplest life form (not that which exists today—that is, all the simplest organisms known to science are far more complex than the hypothetical system for which the probability of the chance occurrence of life was estimated) would be equal to 1 in 10^{450} . This, naturally, is virtually zero, since any event with a probability of less than 1 in 10^{50} is considered impossible.

Thus, life naturally originated only from Life, and one who denies this merely proves the veracity of David’s words concerning the intellectual state of the atheist: “The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God” (Ps. 13:1). We Orthodox would do well to emulate the strength of their convictions—how they believe in what is completely mindless and foolish for any person of sound mind. Unperturbed by their false teachings and philosophies regarding man, let us remember and proclaim that “by the greatness and beauty of the creatures proportionably the maker of them is seen” (Wisd. 13:5).

Chapter 5

How Did Different Species Originate?

From the very beginning the holy Church has taught that God created *all* kinds of living beings during the days of creation. These subsequently developed under the guidance of the living logoi of creation, which guided them toward their goal. But they never leave the bounds of the initially created kinds. The experience of all of human history has vividly affirmed this truth,

³³Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, p. 234.

and miraculous examples of the adaptability of living beings to the conditions of their existence have always been viewed as teleological proof of the existence of God.

In the 20th century, however, there arose theologians who did not heed the counsel of the apostle Paul: "Be not conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2), and who attempted to twist theology to fit the false religion of evolution. Tragically, their position came to dominate in Orthodox education.

For example, V. Gubanov goes so far as to assert that the doctrine of deliberate creation, known to the Church for two thousand years, is paganism, as it does not presume the involvement of nature and of man in their own creation, which is allegedly essential. Without entering into a discussion of the theological aspect of this concept (which contradicts both the first and the ninth articles of the Symbol of Faith), which will be partially examined later (in the second part), let us examine the scientific veracity of the theory of evolution upon which they wish to rely and with which they want to reconcile the celestial gospel message.

Without going into the details of the theory itself, which is presented as the truth in any school textbook, let us present a whole series of facts that leave not one stone of this mythical edifice upon another.

1. The theory of evolution presumes a constant, spontaneous increase in complexity in the system of living organisms, while everyday experience suggests the reverse. All that is in the universe, if left to its own devices, tends toward chaos, and not toward order. This is precisely the position of the second law of thermodynamics, which precludes evolution. This law applies to both open and closed systems, and the chaotic influx of solar energy by no means decreases entropy (the measure of chaos within a system), but rather increases it. A good example of the effect of chaotic energy would be a rabid elephant attacking a pottery shop, or a bomb going off in a building supply warehouse. It is perfectly obvious that this will not produce a new building or an exquisite vase.

In order for energy to render a system more complex, a mechanism for its transformation and the necessary information for this process must be present. Otherwise entropy will increase instead of decreasing.

Well aware that this law of nature clearly contradicts evolution, people often assert that the example of water crystallization shows that it is possible for life to spontaneously increase in complexity. But it must be stated that this example does not apply, as it involves a decrease in the energy of the system, since the energetic potential of water is higher than that of ice. Conversely, the energetic potential of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, and nucleic acids is higher than that of the substances of which they are comprised. Thus, the second law of thermodynamics remains in effect both for snowflakes and for life. Consequently, evolution is categorically impossible.

Any person can see that if one does not tend a garden, it will run wild, and not become still more fertile or turn into a cultivated grove of firs; if one does not maintain the purity of a dog breed, it will become a mutt, and not a bear; etc. Thus, this objection alone is sufficient to put the question of evolution to rest. For if evolution existed, we would have no trouble building a perpetual motion machine.

2. As has been stated above, evolution is absolutely impossible, as there simply was not enough time for it to happen: in 7,500 years not even a new organ could have occurred by accident, let alone a new class.

3. This theory also contradicts the laws of mathematics, since the probability of the chance occurrence of any organism is practically zero. For example, the probability of a chance change in a genetic apparatus, which would involve five proteins at once, is equal to 1 in 10^{275} . "The numbers do not admit of discussion," wrote Lev Berg. "Given the probability of the requisite mutation, not a single complex trait could have developed in the entire history of the universe." The probability of all the bones in a human being (200) being correctly arranged, if they had come together by chance, is 1 in 10^{375} . Thus, mathematics likewise signs the death warrant for the evolutionary hypothesis.

4. In the 1960s it was discovered that all living things—from bacteria to human beings—share the same genetic code. "In other words," even the evolutionists write, "if life had occurred on the planet and developed according to Darwin's theory, the genetic code of one organism would have differed from

another.”³⁴ But such is not the case. In general, it must be said that the chance occurrence of two interrelated alphabets at once is completely improbable. (That the genetic code is an alphabet is clear, as it has all the traits of symbolic information.) It would be like taking up a volume of Shakespeare and concluding that it was produced by the chance self-arrangement of inanimate nature.

5. One of the most striking proofs that evolution never occurred is the complete absence of transitional forms in the fossil record. Creationists assert that all sediment rock occurred in the days of Noah’s flood, but even if this were not so, no transitional forms have been discovered in it. In sediment the remains of about 250 thousand species have been found, comprising tens of millions of specimens. Yet practically all of these are independent species, and not “unfinished forms.”

A particularly striking example, inexplicable in the context of the theory of evolution, is the so-called Cambrian explosion, when tens of thousands of species of invertebrates suddenly (in geological terms) “occurred,” and exist in unchanged form to the present day. To date there is not a single proof that these animals had any evolutionary ancestors. Examples of this kind number in the thousands. Vertebrates, insects, dinosaurs, and practically all modern species have no ancestors.

Evolutionists claim that they lack sufficient material for analysis, and that not all sediment rock has been researched, but this is merely a drowning man grasping at a straw. Geologist Thomas Neville George, for example, declared: “There is no longer any point in complaining of scanty excavated material. The number of fossils found is tremendous; we discover more of them than we are able to research.”

6. The study of various animal proteins and their comparison with one another has shown that evolution did not follow the advice of those scientists who thought that they could use biochemical clocks to determine the age of an offshoot of a given species from the evolutionary tree. On the contrary, it turned out that the

³⁴ Alexander Badak, *Vsemirnaya istoriya* [World History], vol. 1, as quoted in Shchedrovitsky, *Vvedenie v Vetkhiy zavet* [Introduction to the Old Testament], p. 31.

difference in protein structure among completely separate species was absolutely the same.

For example, take cytochrome C (a protein responsible for cellular breathing). The bacteria differ from an analogous protein in a horse by 64%, in a dove by 64%, in a silkworm by 65%, in wheat by 66%, and in yeast by 69%, while the protein of a silkworm differs from that of a horse by 27%, of a dove by 25%, of a turtle by 26%, of a carp by 25%, and of a lamprey by 20%.

Thus (if we believe the “molecular clock” theory), evolution did not occur through fish, or birds, or mammals. Quite obviously, it simply did not occur at all. At any rate, for some reason it did not affect living beings at the molecular level.

7. Evolutionary theory cannot offer any explanation whatsoever for how anything such as an eye or a wing appeared, whose structure and connection with the rest of the organism renders the life of an “incomplete ancestor” impossible. For example, if a certain animal chanced to develop an eye, it would simply be pointless without corresponding changes to the brain and the animal’s entire behavioral system, and all this would have to occur immediately. Furthermore, the mutation would have to “befall” no fewer than two such animals simultaneously; otherwise the trait would promptly disappear. This is a clear impossibility.

We must also remember that 99.99% of all mutations are harmful and even lethal to an organism. And natural selection obviously follows no plan or direction. Consequently, the very mechanism that Darwin proposed is only suited to microevolution, which even supporters of creation do not deny. It does nothing to explain the formation of larger taxons, such as families, kinds, orders, or classes.

Clearly, evolution did not exist and never could have. And yet there exists a series of so-called “proofs” of evolution that are greatly confusing to the faithful.

As examples of how evolution allegedly occurred, the supposed development of the horse is most often cited. It is claimed that a tetradactylous ancestor (hyracotherium) gradually transformed into the modern monodactylous horse. What is overlooked for some reason is that this whole chain of “ancestors” was not found in one place, but scattered throughout the entire

world. Furthermore, modern horses lived in the same period as these so-called “primitive” horses. Hence, they are not the “developmental goal” of the proto-horses.

Also remarkable are the “changes” in the number of ribs in these animals. First there were 18, then 15, then 19, then finally 18 again. Similar variations are observed in the number of lumbar vertebrae. The “proto-ancestor” itself indeed proved to be an ancestor ... of the modern badger.

And so it was that Dr. David Raup, curator of the Chicago Museum of Natural History, wrote in an article published in the museum’s bulletin: “Some of the classic cases ... such as the evolution of the horse in North America, have had to be discarded or modified as a result of more detailed information.”

Another “example” of evolution is the archaeopteryx—an “ancestor” of the birds. It received this designation due to having teeth in its beak and claws on its wings. But the archaeopteryx is not the only animal with these traits. Teeth were found in ancient birds, and claws are found on wings to this day—for example, in hoatzin chicks.

The archaeopteryx proved to have complete plumage, and in all other respects it was a true bird. This means it could not have been an ancestor of the birds, since both teeth and wings with hooks are not traits exclusive to reptiles.

“In 1984, the fossilized remains of birds were found in Texas. Their age, set by the evolutionists at ‘millions of years,’ exceeds the age ascribed to the archaeopteryx. And these birds are no different from those of today.”

The same may be said of the coelacanth, an “amphibian ancestor” that exists to this day, and of the “mammalian ancestors,” and so on. These are all fables, made up so as not to hear the voice of God: “Understand then, ye mindless ones among the people; and ye fools, at length be wise. He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? Or He that formed the eye, doth He not perceive?” (Ps. 93:8–9). “But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?” (Job 12:7–9).

Another argument cited in favor of evolution is the similarity in the structure of organs among various living beings—supposedly an indication of their kinship.

Orthodox theology, however, explains this circumstance superbly. God founded the world upon divine ideas, which form a hierarchy of existence and raise it up to the Word. These ideas are manifested through the all-wise arrangement of creation. The Lord, being the all-wise Artisan and Builder, employed a single principle for the structure of living beings that dwell in similar conditions.

The very structure of the hand or the eye, for example, clearly speaks of God the Creator, and not of chaotic evolution. It should be noted that if this similarity were caused by kinship, all homological organs would have originated from the same genetic and embryonic material, but such is not the case. There is also the following phenomenon, inexplicable for the evolutionists: although the front and rear extremities develop from different embryonic material, they follow the same plan. This clearly could not have come about by chance!

By the same token, without resorting to evolutionism, it is also necessary to explain the existence of various typological groups—classes, orders, etc. This is the reflection in matter of the immaterial hierarchy of the divine ideas, which establish the entire hierarchy of creation that can be experienced with the senses, the crown of which is man. This is an excellent explanation for the famous similarity of all vertebrates at the embryonic stage of development. They are all drawn toward man, through whom they are called to receive sanctification from God, for He “hath subjected all things under his feet” (cf. Ps. 8:6).

Chapter 6

Man: Ape or Image of God?

In recent times an opinion has been spreading in the bosom of the Orthodox Church that man was not created from the dust of the earth, but evolved from monkeys and was then imbued

with a soul by the Lord God. In support of this opinion people generally quote the words of St. Seraphim of Sarov, who stated that “before God breathed a soul into Adam, he was like an animal.” They forget, however, that God created even this “animal” from the dust of the earth, once again according to the venerable Seraphim (if, of course, Nikolay Motovilov relayed his words correctly), and did not evolve from some mythical ancestor.

It should be noted that this interpretation of Saint Seraphim is unique in the history of the Church, and has no parallels in the writings of the holy fathers. As such, it must be considered merely the private theological opinion of the saint; for, in the words of St. Gregory the Theologian, “One swallow does not make a summer, and the words of one father are no law for the Church.”³⁵

If we consider this opinion valid, we will be forced to acknowledge that the soul is mortal, for in the words of St. Seraphim, not only the body was taken from dust, but also the soul and the spirit mentioned by the apostle Paul (1 Thess. 5:23), while the Lord said, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen. 3:19). Hence, either the spirit and the soul return to dust, which contradicts Revelation (for example, 1 Pet. 3:19), or the opinion that the spirit and the soul are created of dust is unfounded (though the “soul,” meaning the lower elements of the human psyche that are closely linked with the body, could be considered mortal [Ps. 145:4], and this would be a more accurate understanding of St. Seraphim’s words).

God’s words that were spoken to Adam render erroneous any attempt to reconcile the evolutionary fables with the words of Scripture: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen 3:19).

Every person can see Adam’s origins for himself by going to any cemetery. There he will see not a troop of monkeys, into which the dead have transformed, but mounds of the earth from which they originated.

³⁵ An apparent paraphrasing the words of St. Gregory the Theologian in his *Orations* 39.14: “That that which is rare is not the law of the Church. For one swallow does not make a summer” (NPNF² 7:357). –*Trans.*

There are a number of “theologians” who do not even believe that Adam and Eve existed, and who say that these are symbolic names for some sort of mythical “universal man.” But we need not even discuss the matter with them, for if there were no Adam, there would also have been no original sin, and if there were no original sin, there would be no need of a Savior, for there would be nothing from which to save mankind. Consequently, Christianity likewise would not exist.

Scripture states repeatedly that all men proceeded from a single pair: “God ... hath made of one blood all nations of men” (Acts 17:24–26; see also Rom. 5:12–21, 1 Cor. 15:20–23).

Let us now analyze the “scientific” proof of the evolutionary fable of how man originated from animal ancestors.

In any biology textbook we are invited to believe a supposed schematic of man’s origin. Let us methodically examine the links of this mythical chain (one akin to Tibetan tales in which man originated from a union between an ape and a female demon).

It begins with a supposed “ancestor” common to both humanoid apes and to man. The problem here is that this ancestor is to be found solely in the imagination of the evolutionists. The fossil record contains no trace of him. “Gigantopithecus” turned out to be simply an extinct variety of ape, and even the evolutionist Richard Leakey removed it from the chain “that leads to man.”

The next “transitional link” is considered to be “Ramapithecus,” whose outward appearance was “reconstructed” entirely based on several fragments of a lower jaw found in India. What an imagination the artists must have had to be able to give the evolutionary fable a face for us! Not surprisingly, this transitional form likewise vanished from human ancestry.

Today, the “australopithecines” are most often cited as the most vivid “proof” that man evolved. What, then, are the characteristic traits of this animal? “Brain size: 450–600 cm³ (that of modern humanoid apes is 300–600 cm³, while that of modern man is 950–2,000 cm³), mass: 35 kg, length: 120 cm, long arms and short legs, prominent front teeth, less massive jaws than the majority of modern apes, comparatively small canines.” Previously it was thought that these animals walked erect, but it turned out that their leg structure was more suited to climbing trees.

Today a number of evolutionist scientists assert that *Australopithecus* was no more than a subspecies of the pygmy chimpanzee (or bonobo) that exists to this day.³⁶ It must be said that any equation of an extinct animal with a given species (whether extinct or existent) will always be controversial, as the chief distinguishing characteristic of a species—the ability to produce fertile offspring when crossed—is inapplicable to extinct animals.

Obviously, *Australopithecus* is merely an ape, and not an ancestor of man.

To this day our textbooks feature “*Pithecanthropus*” as the missing link. And yet it has long been clear that it is a mere counterfeit: the skull of a gigantic gibbon was attached to a human femur found about 15 meters from the skull. Other remains of “Java Man” were also identified as those of gibbons, which were in fact determined to have been eaten by actual humans.³⁷

The same must be said of Peking Man (lost, incidentally, under mysterious circumstances during World War II). This was an ordinary ape which people would hunt and kill: they would take the head, boil it, eat the brain, and toss what remained into the fire. Their bones were later found by evolutionists and declared the ancestors of the present-day Chinese. Incidentally, found not far from them were ten complete human skeletons and traces of human activity from the Mousterian (late Paleolithic) period—stone tools and bolas used for hunting.

The Neanderthals and Cro-Magnons were ordinary modern humans, and they lived concurrently. Today this is acknowledged even by evolutionists. They will be discussed in more detail after the account of Noah’s flood.

It must be said that there is a body of evidence proving that modern man lived far earlier (on the evolutionary timescale) than his supposed ancestors. Below the level at which the remains of *Australopithecus* were found, the ruins of a round stone hut were discovered.³⁸ There is also considerable data suggesting that man lived at the same time as the dinosaurs and trilobites (this will be further discussed later on).

³⁶ Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, pp. 399–400.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 394.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 400.

A striking proof that the theory of evolution is not science, but rather a pseudo-scientific false religion, is the known falsifications of supposed human ancestors. These include examples such as “Piltdown Man” (who owes his origins to the efforts of Teilhard de Chardin) and “Nebraska Man,” which was “reconstructed” from a single tooth—one that turned out to have belonged to a variety of pig.

Frequently the similarity between the structure of man’s body and that of the apes and other animals is cited in substantiation of evolution and of their kinship. The holy fathers, however, saw things rather differently. The venerable John of Damascus, immersed in the depths of the mysteries of creation, said that the apes were created to be the jesters of man. If we accept this, everything falls into place. A jester resembles a king, for otherwise he would not be humorous; but he is not a king, for otherwise he would not be a jester.

The similarity between man and the beasts, however, suggests something different. It attests to the wondrous Builder and Poet Who scattered the imprints of His Wisdom throughout the whole world and united them into a single ladder of the meaning of all beings, of which man stands at the head. Small wonder that the King of creation bears a certain resemblance to His subjects. After all, the whole universe is one, being the creation of the One.

But man is by no means a mere animal that began to walk upright. Even his external appearance harbors a distinction from other creatures. Only this creature is able to unite in himself both heaven and earth, for, standing with its feet on the earth, its head is immersed in the vault of heaven. In the excellent words of Chesterton, “Man is ... a very strange being; almost in the sense of being a stranger on the earth. In all sobriety, he has much more of the external appearance of one bringing alien habits from another land than of a mere growth of this one. He cannot sleep in his own skin; he cannot trust his own instincts. He is at once a creator moving miraculous hands and fingers and a kind of cripple. He is wrapped in artificial bandages called clothes; he is propped on artificial crutches called furniture. His mind has the same doubtful liberties and the same wild limitations. Alone among the animals, he is shaken with the beautiful madness called laughter; as

if he had caught sight of some secret in the very shape of the universe hidden from the universe itself. Alone among the animals he feels the need of averting his thought from the root realities of his own bodily being; of hiding them as in the presence of some higher possibility.”³⁹

Another fact cited as proof that man was not created is his so-called rudimentary organs and atavisms, as well as fetal development in the maternal womb. These arguments, however, rather turn back against their proponents. In the early 20th century there were about 100 known rudiments. Today, however, almost none remain (rudiments included the thyroid and pancreas). This could be expressed in the following “law of scientific development”: “The more science learns, the fewer rudiments there are.” It is obvious that rudiments do not exist at all: rather, there are organs with purposes as yet unknown to man. Atavisms “prove” that man originated from mammals the same way that two-headed babies prove he originated from dragons.

The same can also be said of the so-called “Haeckel’s Law,” which asserts that the embryo repeats the evolution of man. The example most often cited is the so-called gills of the embryo, but it must be stated that their function differs drastically from those of a fish. The infant receives oxygen and nourishment through the placenta, not through these growths. Consequently, the similarity here is imaginary. They are produced from completely different genetic material. Regarding this, Thomas Heinze said: “Gill slits prove that the human race underwent a fish stage during its development just as convincingly as the moon-shaped face of a young Chinese proves that he descended from the Moon.”

G.K. Chesterton once cleverly remarked that “science ... cannot experiment in making men; or even in watching to see what the first men make. An inventor can advance step by step in the construction of an airplane even if he is only experimenting with sticks and scraps of metal in his own backyard. ... If he has made a mistake in his calculations, the airplane will correct it by crashing to the ground. But if he has made a mistake about the arboreal habitat of his ancestor, he cannot see his arboreal ancestor

³⁹ G.K. Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man*.

falling off the tree. ... People talked of Pithecanthropus as of Pitt or Fox or Napoleon. Popular histories published portraits of him like the portraits of Charles the First and George the Fourth. A detailed drawing was reproduced, carefully shaded, to show that the very hairs of his head were all numbered. No uninformed person looking at its carefully lined face and wistful eyes would imagine for a moment that this was the portrait of a thigh bone; or of a few teeth and a fragment of a cranium. In the same way people talked about him as if he were an individual whose influence and character were familiar to us all.”⁴⁰

Clearly, anthropology today can by no means be considered a science; rather, it is a kind of fantastic late twentieth-century fairy tale. We have not the slightest grounds for thinking that man, or any other kind of animal or plant, has any ancestors. Consequently, the biblical account of Adam’s creation from the dust of the earth remains to this day the most logical and accurate explanation of our existence.

Chapter 7

In Summary

Let us briefly summarize. In the course of our analysis of the authentic scientific facts we have found that evolutionism is not a scientific theory, but a particular form of atheistic, anti-Christian religion. For this reason we will attempt to briefly set forth its “creed,” so as to then have something to debunk from the standpoint of Christian theology.

The evolutionists, as it were, state the following:

“I believe that there is no God, the Creator and Provider, but that there is blind, eternal Evolution; that the universe popped into being from out of nothing on its own, and on its own began to develop, despite the increasing chaos. I believe that subsequently, by chance, the cosmos emerged from chaos, life from

⁴⁰ G.K. Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man*.

death, reason from irrationality. I am firmly convinced that if any facts or laws of nature contradict evolution, these must be vehemently discarded, in keeping with the well-known saying: 'If our teaching contradicts the facts, so much the worse for the facts.' I also know with certainty that the greatest force in Evolution is the Lady Death, who creates worlds, and to whom I (an evolutionist) wholly belong, and for whose sake I am willing to destroy all her opponents. I do not believe in the existence of morality, and I want to live as I please, for I will die and again become the dead matter from which death and Evolution summoned me forth."

Opposing this brazen mutiny of Satan against the Church, let us sing the triumphant song:

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:55-57).

Part III

THE SEVEN DAYS OF CREATION



“By faith we understand that the world was framed by the word of God; that from invisible things visible things might be made”

(Heb. 11:3 DRB)

Chapter 1 The First Day

Turning from the empty fables of the false science of evolution, let us try to turn our thoughts back to the time of the dawn of the universe, guided by our most wise instructors—the holy fathers, led by the great Moses the God-beholder, who with the eyes of the Spirit beheld the mysteries of creation.

The almighty, bodiless, all-good God in Trinity, in the abundance of His love, desired that there might be other beings who would participate in His bliss, and for this reason He completely voluntarily created the universe from nothing.

Frequently the question is asked: what was God doing before the world was created? To this we may answer that, firstly, time was created at the same time as the world, and so to ask what God did before the beginning of time is not entirely correct, for this imposes temporal limitations upon the Eternal One. But a far better answer was given by St. Gregory the Theologian: “The Most High ... was moved in beholding his beauty’s cherished splendor, the like, equivalent radiance of thrice-shining Godhead which only to that Godhead, and God’s own, is plain to see. He was moved, too, in observing the world’s patterns he’d set

up, the world-engendering mind finding in these great thoughts what was yet to be, which to God, again, was present. All things are immediate to God, as much things future as things past, as well as things now present. Time for me is fractured in this way, with some things earlier, others later: but for God it all comes in one, and the great Godhead engulfs it in his arms.”⁴¹

Let us return to the revelation given to Moses.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). At the almighty command, from nonexistence there broke forth the river of time, which stretches all the way to the Last Judgment, and there appeared space, shared by material and spiritual beings alike. In an instant there appeared countless multitudes of heavenly hosts, followed by the matter, as yet unformed, that was Earth. All this came forth out of nothing, solely by the action of the might of the Lord. There was no matter or energy from which God molded the universe. It was purely the action of His omnipotence. Nor can the world be held to have been created of the divine nature. This Moses clearly said to us in the word *bara*—“created out of nothing.” The most wise mother of the Maccabean martyrs, in exhorting one of them not to fear death for the law, said: “I beseech thee, my son, look upon the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, and consider that God made them of things that were not” (2 Macc. 7:28).

To the cause of the world’s existence Moses gives the name “Gods,” *Elohim*, thereby mystically indicating the Tri-hypostatic nature of the One. All verbs here are used in the singular, but this sacred Name is in the plural. In the teaching of the holy fathers, God the Father is the primal cause of what was created, the Son is the creative cause, and the Spirit is the cause that brings to perfection. Yet the will, power, and authority of all three Persons is one!

“The heaven” (literally, “the heavens”) is not star-studded space or the atmosphere, but the invisible world, the world of bodiless, created spirits, who came into being in an instant and wholly formed. This is no surprise, for their nature is simple

⁴¹ Gregory the Theologian, Poem 1.1.4, *De mundo* (“Concerning the World”), in *On God and Man: The Theological Poetry of St Gregory of Nazianzus*, Peter Gilbert, trans. (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001), p. 51.

and estranged from all complexity. Moses also uses this word to indicate the creation of the space we share in common with the angels.

The “earth” mentioned here is not just our planet, but also the protomatter that contained the sum of the qualities of the beings to come. Earth itself, however, was not yet formed.

“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” (Gen. 1:2). The earth was covered on all sides by a measureless layer of waters, and its properties, which it acquired on the third day, then differed from those of today. The “darkness upon the face of the deep” was not, as Fr. Alexander Men believed, the powers of evil. St. Basil the Great writes: “The deep was not a host of adverse powers ... and the darkness was not some primordial evil power that stood in contrast to good.” Begone, ungodliness of the Manichees! No, this darkness is like the darkness of the maternal womb. It is good and holds within itself the potential for other creatures to appear.

“God is light” (1 Jn. 1:5), and for this reason before the beginning of creation endless day reigned. But when in an instant the heavens were unfolded, like a curtain they concealed the brilliance of the spiritual Sun, and for the first time darkness appeared, like a shadow cast by the created heavens. For this reason Moses proceeds to give evening the first place, for after the eternal day night fell, deprived of all light, and that night lasted for twelve hours.

During this time the Spirit of God moved upon the face of (literally, “warmed with His wings”) the deep containing the waters which filled the universe. St. Ephraim the Syrian writes: “He warmed, fertilized, and rendered generative the waters, like a bird when with outspread wings it sits upon its eggs, and thus outspread it brings about their fertilization with its warmth. This Holy Spirit then presented to us an image of holy baptism, in which by His moving upon the waters He engenders children of God.”

Thus the first waters became filled with life-giving power, that later they might bring forth living creatures.

For twelve hours that first wondrous night lasted, since the creation took place in March, when days and nights are equal.

And when it was six o'clock in the morning, "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. 1:3-5).

To whom did God give this command? Naturally, this is a mystical indication of the Only-begotten One, Who carries out the good pleasure of the Father. The word of God should be understood to mean the creative will (*logos*), the idea or power, instilled in every creature, which sustains its being and guides it toward the goal intended by the Creator. Through these immutable commands of the Lord, to this day the so-called laws of nature remain in effect in the world.

The moment God instilled His creative word into the world, everything was immediately illumined with a brilliance which, in the opinion of St. Gregory of Nyssa, broke forth from the bowels of the protomatter. This opinion of a holy father who lived in the fourth century has been confirmed by modern nuclear physics, which asserts that matter is energy structured in a particular way. If we hold that "relict radiation" is a reflection of that primordial radiance that was later gathered into the celestial bodies, it may be presumed that it was like the brilliance of a rainbow that adorned the whole universe (as suggested by cosmic photographs in the radio spectrum).

St. Ephraim says that "the light that appeared on Earth was like the light cloud, or the rising sun, or the pillar that lighted the way for the Hebrew nation in the wilderness. ... The primordial light was poured forth everywhere, and not contained in a particular place: everywhere it dispelled the darkness, having no movement; its movement consisted wholly of appearing and disappearing. Upon its sudden disappearance the reign of night ensued, and upon its reappearance that reign ended. And so light continued to be produced for the three days that followed. In order that light, having come forth out of nothing, might not return to nothing again, God attested to it particularly, saying that it is good."

On the unshakable foundation of this testimony and with the mighty support of the creative word of God, to this day the laws of conservation of mass, energy, and charge remain in effect.

Upon these all electrodynamics are founded. All this was established on the first day.

On that same day the Lord set the first bound for time: the twenty four-hour day, which to this day continues to bring about the rotation of day and night, moved by the command of the Creator. And so it will continue until the end of time, though God has power to change these rhythms, as it occurred in the days of Joshua's battle at Gibeon, in the time of the prophet Isaiah, and during the sacrifice on Golgotha. The holy fathers emphasize that the day was established before the Sun appeared, so that men might not hold the Sun to be the creator of the daily cycle and pay divine homage to it. In the words of Psalm 134, the Sun is merely the divinely appointed ruler of day and night, and not their creator, for they are older than their ruler.

The first day is called 'one'⁴² because "God who made the nature of time measured it out and determined it by intervals of days; and, wishing to give it a week as a measure, he ordered the week to revolve from period to period upon itself, to count the movement of time, forming the week of one day revolving seven times upon itself."⁴³ Another reason why the word *one*, and not *first*, is used here is that the duration of one day is invariably established as 24 hours, despite the seasonal variations in the length of day and night. Finally, there is here a mystical prefiguration of the unwaning day of the future age, which began through the Resurrection of the Savior on that one day which is now called Sunday. The world was saved on the same day when it was created!

Supplementing what was said by the prophet Moses, let us cite other narratives from Holy Scripture recounting the first day of creation.

The very Wisdom of God Incarnate teaches us: "When there were no depths"—possibly cosmic depths—"I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor

⁴² In the Greek and Slavonic, as well as in a number of English translations. —*Trans.*

⁴³ Basil the Great, *The Hexaemeron* 2.8 (NPNF² 8:64).

the highest part of the dust of the world”—elemental particles. “When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth”—established the orbits of the luminaries or introduced temporal cycles in the universe; “when he established the clouds above”—possibly the galaxies; “when he strengthened the fountains of the deep”—the laws of the universe and the properties of space; “... Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight”—apparently, “daily” referring to the day of creation—“rejoicing always before him” (Prov. 8:24–30).

Here the sacred author describes through Solomon the joy of the Creator and the mysteries of what was created, on which Moses is silent.

St. Job, supplementing the account of Genesis and glorifying God, exclaims: “He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing” (Job 26:7).

This mysterious verse has two possible meanings. Firstly, in recent times astronomers have indeed discovered in the northern part of the star-studded sky a place practically devoid of galaxies. The size of this “hole” in space of which St. Job speaks is about three million light years. It cannot be seen with the naked eye, however, so this passage refers to direct divine revelation. Secondly, the first part of this verse may be understood as an indication of how Earth was formed. Originally a certain line (the north) was traced in the void, around which the planet began to rotate, thereby creating the cycle of day and night. The second part of the verse clearly states that, by the power of Omnipotence, Earth hangs upon nothing in the cosmic abyss, upheld merely by the inexplicable force of gravity.⁴⁴

Finally, the last major description of the first day of the world is the Lord’s words addressed to St. Job: “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?” (Job 38:4–6).

⁴⁴ Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, p. 246.

God is declaring to St. Job that the primordial Earth was established according to a strict plan, like a temple having defined dimensions (measures) for the maximum convenience of the people, and possessing perfect harmony (the line). The arrangement of its depths are unfathomable, and its position in space is unique. These statements, written 3,500 years ago in the twentieth century BC, have been wholly confirmed by the discovery of the “anthropic principle” (see above). How great is the wisdom of God’s word compared to the feeble science of man!

The first day of creation drew to a close. Gradually the light grew dim, and the first evening in the history of the world arrived. Gradually all descended into a fruitful darkness, so as to shine forth with new creations the following morning. We too, contemplating all the tremendous wonders of the Lord, must remember that “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6).

Chapter 2

The Second Day

When the second night fell, God worked a new wonder: He definitively arranged our spacial structure by creating a new cosmic space. “And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water, and let it be a division between water and water, and it was so. And God made the firmament, and God divided between the water which was under the firmament and the water which was above the firmament, and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven, and God saw that it was good, and there was evening and there was morning, the second day” (cf. Gen. 1:6–8 LXX).

Thus a second heaven was created, for Scripture knows that up to three heavens exist, to which the apostle Paul was caught up (2 Cor. 12:2). The divine “word-idea,” having been implanted in the environment of the waters at the desire of the Father, Who spoke it through the Son, immediately “stretched out the heavens

as a curtain, and spread them out as a tent to dwell in” (Is. 40:22), for in them lay the habitation of the incorporeal spirits, and the whole universe was designed so that life might be possible upon the Earth.

The firmament is so called because it is the foundation of the cosmos (from the Greek *stereoma*, meaning “buttress” or “foundation”). And since all that lies above it (according to St. Basil) is by nature subtle and imperceptible for the senses (this refers to the angelic worlds), in comparison with this most subtle and sensorily imperceptible of things it is called the firmament.⁴⁵ It may also be termed thus because to this day it is not subject to decay. Though scientists have split the atom, they have not yet found a way to manipulate space (the Hebrew word *raqiya* in fact means “space” or “expanse”). This property of the firmament exists by divine approval—“it was very good”—which imposes limits upon the destructive tendencies of man.

St. Gregory of Nyssa says: “The firmament that is called heaven is the bound of sensual creation, and beyond that bound there follows a certain comprehensible creation in which there is neither image, nor magnitude, nor spacial limitation, nor measure of expanse, nor color, nor contour, nor quantity, nor anything else signified by heaven.” For this reason the angels are not subject to our spacial conditions (for example, they can pass through walls), although they too have a connection with the original space (the first heaven) which we share in common, for when Gabriel stood before the Virgin he was not present in heaven.

The waters beneath the firmament remain to this day beyond the bounds of outer space. According to the venerable Ephraim, they are fresh waters, for when they were sent down in the days of the Flood upon the perishing world, Noah was able to drink them. This is clear from the fact that God did not command him to take stores of water as well as food. This patristic opinion is supported by the fact that the bituminous coal that formed in the waters of the Flood contains no salt, which would have been unavoidable if the waters of the Flood had been salty.

The mountain waters are not constantly in motion, for they were not imbued with the property of flowing given to the earth-

⁴⁵ Basil the Great, *Works*, vol. 2 (Moscow), p. 48 (Rus. ed.).

ly waters on the third day. There they abide “as the dew of blessing and are kept for the outpouring of wrath.”⁴⁶ They were mysteriously poured out upon the Earth in the days of the Flood (“the windows of heaven were opened”—Gen. 7:11), and were that grace-filled dew that fell together with the manna (Ex. 16:14). Concerning these God asked Job: “Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?” (Job 38:22–23). From these “treasures” hail fell together with fire upon the land of Egypt (Ex. 9:17–26). From there also God “cast down great stones” upon the Canaanites at the battle of Gibeon (Josh. 10:11). The Lord will send the same hail upon the earth in the days of the antichrist (Is. 30:3) and the invasion of Gog and Magog (Ez. 38:22). Concerning this terrible future event awaiting the world, John the Theologian prophesied: “There fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent [36 kg –*Auth.*]: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great” (Rev. 16:21).

The holy prophets David and Daniel saw that waters “above the heavens” glorify the Creator in fulfilling all His commands (Ps. 148:4, Dan. 3:60). In that day, according to David, were established the upper chambers of the Lord, which certain of the saints beheld: “Thou ... coverest Thyself with light as with a garment, Who stretchest out the heaven as it were a curtain; Who supporteth His chambers in the waters” (Ps. 103:2–3).

It should be noted that, in speaking of the firmament of heaven, Scripture frequently uses the term “stretched” (see above, as well as Job 26:7; Is. 42:5, 44:24, 51:13; Jer. 10:12, 51:15; Zech. 12:1; etc.), which obviously signifies the expansion of space at the time of creation. Apparently this teaching of Scripture is confirmed by the discovery in the 1920s of the redshift of distant galaxies. This may possibly confirm the theory of the expanding universe, but it by no means attests to the mythical “Big Bang” needed by the evolutionists. Due to this “stretching” of heaven, we are able to observe numerous galaxies in the universe that resemble the whirlpools created by spreading one’s hands in water.

⁴⁶ St. Ephraim the Syrian. –*Trans.*

In the profound interpretation of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, this word means that the firmament is like a curtain concealing from us the unbearable light of the Divinity.

To the Orthodox mind it is apparent that although the universe is uncircumscribable for human reason, it is nevertheless finite. But these limits are insurmountable for our three-dimensional bodies, just as two-dimensional beings living inside an orb cannot escape its confines.

The waters beneath the firmament we can always behold, for they fill up our world. Some wish to understand the water above it allegorically, but even St. Basil rejected the possibility of this interpretation: "Let us reject these theories as dreams and old women's tales. Let us understand that by water water is meant; for the dividing of the waters by the firmament let us accept the reason which has been given us."⁴⁷

Thus, at the time when the primordial world completed the second twenty hour-hour period of its existence, it was decisively separated from the angelic worlds, which had been conclusively arranged and are not mentioned again in the matter of creation. The primordial light, having completed its cycle, again went dark, and the third night fell.

Chapter 3

The Third Day

When the darkness came, God once again manifested His creative might.

"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" (Gen. 1:9–10).

In a moment the abyss of waters that covered the Earth filled the ocean cavities that had formed. It was at that moment, ac-

⁴⁷ Basil the Great, *The Hexameron* 3.9 (NPNF² 8:71).

cording to Basil the Great, that water acquired its property of flowing, which formerly it had not possessed. Remarkably, this insight of the great saint of the fourth century received confirmation in the twentieth. As has been stated above, water is indeed anomalous in the properties which it possesses. "Water is the hydride of oxygen. Oxygen is located in the main subgroup of the sixth group of the periodic table, along with sulfur, selenium, tellurium, and polonium. The hydrides of these elements are highly poisonous gasses, with an acrid smell and a low boiling point (about -50°C). From water the same might be expected, but due to hydrogen bonds water has the properties to which we are accustomed." Concerning the other unique properties of water we have already spoken, and all of them are given to this element by the command of the Creator: "Let the waters be gathered together." "It was ordered that it should be the natural property of water to flow," says the most wise Basil, "and in obedience to this order, the waters are never weary in their course."⁴⁸ It is these words of the Artificer that drive the fountains and springs from beneath the earth, and they likewise maintain the water cycle in nature.

The Lord described to Job how this wondrous process took place: "Who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?" (Job 38:8–11).

As St. Cyril of Jerusalem notes, the sea "also clearly shews the word of the command imposed upon it, since after it has run up, it leaves upon the beach a visible line made by the waves, shewing, as it were, to those who see it, that it has not passed its appointed bounds."⁴⁹

For the first time Earth made contact with the element of air, and the Lord appointed its irrigation, but not as it exists today: "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

⁴⁸ Basil the Great, *The Hexaemeron* 4.3 (NPNF² 8:73).

⁴⁹ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 9.11 (NPNF² 7:53).

the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground” (Gen. 2:5–6). This probably continued until the Flood, when men saw rain for the first time, followed by a rainbow.

In the literal meaning of Holy Scripture, originally a single continent was created. Tradition holds that the center of this continent was the future Holy Land and Jerusalem, which to this day contains the “navel of the Earth” (cf. Ezek. 5:5). Possibly this is what was discovered by modern geologists in studying the drift of the continents that once comprised a single mainland—Pangaea (Greek, “whole earth”) is the name given by Alfred Wegener to the hypothetical protocontinent. This land mass broke apart at a time lost to memory—either during the Flood or at the destruction of the Tower of Babel.

At that time the seas were far smaller than those of today, which currently contain the waters of the Flood. In the words of the non-canonical third book of Esdras,⁵⁰ “Upon the third day thou didst command that the waters should be gathered in the seventh part of the earth: six parts hast thou dried up, and kept them, to the intent that of these some being planted of God and tilled might serve thee.”

At the moment when the waters received the name of “waters,” immediately they changed from sweet to salty, so that they might not be spoiled by the vegetation that was to appear. Through this creative word, to this day they retain this property, maintained due to the river waters that carry salt into the ocean.

Incidentally, we know from revelation that the seas will cease after the end of time (Rev. 21:1), for God “saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers” (Is. 44:27). We know also that Earth’s climate is directly connected to the moral visage of its inhabitants, for the Lord “turned rivers into a wilderness, and the coursings of waters into a thirsting land, a fruitful land into saltiness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. He turned a wilderness into pools of waters, and a parched land into streams of water. And He made the hungry to dwell therein, and they established cities for habitation” (Ps. 106:33–36).

Wondrous are the mysteries of the seas that were created on the third day, of which the Bible knew 3,000 years ago,

⁵⁰ In KJV, 2 Esdras 6:42. —*Trans.*

and which only became known in the 1960s: the ocean bottom proved to be covered with amazingly high mountains and tremendous abysses, which were seen by Sts. Jonah (Jon. 2:6–7) and David (Ps. 17:16–17). The sea is covered with mysterious paths (Ps. 8:9)—currents caused by the winds. On the ocean floors there are numerous warm freshwater springs from the subterranean depths of the planet. It may be that some of these also emerge at the peaks of mainland mountains. Incredibly, the Bible knows of these as well: “Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?” (Job 38:16). These submarine geysers are inhabited by marvelous bacteria that have no fear of the boiling water and obtain their energy from chemical sources (chemosynthesis) rather than photonic. Indeed, in the 20th century were fulfilled the words of the psalm: “They that go down to the sea in ships, doing their work in many waters, these have seen the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep” (Ps. 106:23–24).

There is no need to speak of how essential the oceans are to the climate of our planet. And so we see that we are only just beginning to understand a part of the depth of God’s words: “And God saw that it was good.”

When the primordial light shown forth over the Earth for the third time and morning arrived, a new wonder occurred:

“And God said, Let the earth bring forth the herb of grass bearing seed according to its kind and according to its likeness, and the fruit-tree bearing fruit whose seed is in it, according to its kind on the earth, and it was so. And the earth brought forth the herb of grass bearing seed according to its kind and according to its likeness, and the fruit tree bearing fruit whose seed is in it, according to its kind on the earth, and God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day” (Gen. 1:11–13 LXX).

At this creative command the world became still further ordered. A new form of life appeared: vegetation. Those entities that possess it are able to grow and to multiply. This was a great manifestation of the Lord’s wisdom, and our feeble minds are astonished at this mystery. Scientists say that a single solitary living cell contains more information than all inanimate nature combined!

In that same instant when God imbued the Earth with His artistic word, it brought forth from itself the whole variety of the vegetable kingdom. “The green herbs, at the time of their creation,” says St. Ephraim, “were the product of a single instant, but in appearance they seemed the product of months. Likewise the trees, at the time of their creation, were the product of a single day, but in their perfection and their fruit-laden branches they seemed the product of years.”

It should be noted that revelation clearly teaches that, in its fundamental principles, animate and inanimate nature is one, for the first is taken from the last, yet it differs from it in its mode of life, which is a manifestation of the creative word. Thus, this fact, which is frequently interpreted as confirmation of the theory of evolution, is not news to us.

God infuses His creation with ideas arranged according to a hierarchy. It is this that makes possible the existence of classification as a science which acquires knowledge by “following in thought the thought of the Creator” (Carl Linnaeus).

In the creative command, the first place is given to “grass” (*deshe*)—apparently, the simplest seaweeds capable of photosynthesis. After this there follow the “herb” (*esev*)—ferns and grasses capable of sexual reproduction (“seed”), and finally *ets*—the trees, or highest plants. Such was the original hierarchy of the vegetable kingdom established by God! This same principle of creation, from the simplest to the most complex, is seen throughout the Six Days, and this creative ascent in the world’s complexity culminates in the creation of man, around whom all creation is centered, for in him God was to become incarnate. Like the focus of a magnifying lens, this last-created entity concentrates within him the properties of all the preceding creations, of which he is the representative and sanctifier.

All plants are created “after their kind”—that is, they do not evolve and do not change in essence, but are preserved just as God created them on the third day (though they can change within the limits of their “kind,” as occurs in selection). The very concept of “kind” used in the book of Genesis does not necessarily coincide with “species” in modern classification. Sometimes it is used to mean “family.” In Scripture, the chief trait of a “kind” is the ability to reproduce fertile offspring (“yielding seed”). Mo-

ses, however, also knew that bacteria (“grass”) reproduce asexually, for they are not said to possess seed. Science learned of this only in the 19th century.

One of the most remarkable properties of plants is the ability to transform inorganic matter into organic by means of photonic energy. Furthermore, by way of “waste” they produce the oxygen animals need in order to breathe. If only factories worked the same way, Earth would have no ecological problems whatsoever! To this day scientists do not fully understand how exactly this process called photosynthesis occurs. But without it no life would be possible, since through it the chaotic energy of the Sun is changed to a form that living beings are able to assimilate. Most remarkable of all, photosynthesis is one phenomenon in which chaos decreases rather than increasing, which presupposes the presence of Him Who is the source of order. Wondrous are Thy works, O Lord!

It is impossible to list all the wonders of the vegetable kingdom, which appeared in the blink of an eye on the third day. Who could describe the mathematical symmetry of a rose or a lily of the valley? Who could make for himself a robe surpassing the beauty of the lilies of the field, which Solomon with all his riches could not overcome? Who could explain how a seed sprouts or how a sundew catches insects? What perfumer could create aromas surpassing the smell of a forest or a field after a spring downpour (and this, after all, is but a feeble shadow of the fragrance of heaven)? All these are but tiny glimpses of the traces of the unoriginate Wisdom scattered throughout creation!

In concluding our description of the wonders of the third day of creation, together with the holy fathers let us say that the creative word which then thundered over Earth has not fallen silent to this day. Its action continues even now, and we see its results each spring in every meadow and garden. “This short command,” writes St. Basil, “was in a moment a vast nature, an elaborate system. Swifter than thought it produced the countless qualities of plants. It is this command which, still at this day, is imposed on the earth, and in the course of each year displays all the strength of its power to produce herbs, seeds and trees. Like tops, which after the first impulse, continue their evolutions, turning upon themselves when once fixed in their centre;

thus nature, receiving the impulse of this first command, follows without interruption the course of ages, until the consummation of all things.”⁵¹

Thus, to the joyous rustle of the newly created foliage and the fragrant incense burners of newborn flowers, the primordial light completed its final rotation around the Earth, and over the world there stole the evening, marking the beginning of a new, fourth day in the world’s existence.

Chapter 4

The Fourth Day

When the fragrant night of Wednesday had passed and the time of dawn arrived, “God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, to divide between day and night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and for years. And let them be for light in the firmament of the heaven, so as to shine upon the earth, and it was so. And God made the two great lights, the greater light for regulating the day and the lesser light for regulating the night, the stars also. And God placed them in the firmament of the heaven, so as to shine upon the earth, and to regulate day and night, and to divide between the light and the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day” (Gen. 1:14–19).

In a single instant God gathered the primordial light and placed it into wondrous luminaries, with which He immediately adorned the celestial expanses. Since that time the flowers of the stars and the nebulae have served as a magnificent icon of the Creator’s greatness. But most important of all for Earth were two great luminaries. Into the first of these, in mysterious fashion, the light of the first day was poured, while the second serves as a celestial mirror, illumining the nocturnal hemisphere with reflected light. The All-wise Creator, however, did not make this mirror

⁵¹ Basil the Great, *The Hexaemeron* 5.10 (NPNF² 8:81).

so clear as to entirely give back the brilliance it receives, for otherwise sleep would be impossible upon Earth.

As the Spirit-bearing Ephraim relates, "The Sun then stood in the east, while the Moon stood opposite it, in the west. The Sun was low, and partly submerged, because it was created at the place where it rises above the Earth, while the Moon was higher, because it was created where it stands on the fifteenth day. Hence, at the time when the Sun became visible upon the Earth, both luminaries beheld each other, and then the Moon seemed to submerge. The place where the Moon was when it was created, its size, and its luminescence show that it was created in the form in which we see it on the fifteenth day. Just as the trees, the flowers, the animals, the birds, and man were at once both old and young, being old in the appearance of their members, and young in the time of their creation; so also the Moon was at once both old and young: it was young in that it was only just created, and old in that it was full, as on the fifteenth day."

In explanation of the words of St. Ephraim we will say that the entire picture which he describes was visible for an observer standing in the Holy Land, for there, according to the Bible (Ezek. 5:5), lies the center of the Earth. From other places on our planet the picture would have appeared otherwise.

According to the book of Job, in the instant when the stars were created "all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). These splendid hymns are proclaimed to this day by the incorporeal choirs. We hear a pale reflection of this celestial doxology upon our Earth in the sounds of the canonical Znamenny chant, which the Church created as a reproduction in three-dimensional sound of the celestial melody of the angelic spheres. The exultation of these spirits specifically at the creation of the stars is no accident, for these immortal beings mystically govern the celestial luminaries. With good reason Holy Scripture calls both stars and angels "the host of heaven" (2 Kgs 23:5 and 2 Chron. 18:18). The Revelation of St. John the Theologian knows of "an angel standing in the sun" (Rev. 19:17), and of another spirit possessing power over fire (Rev. 14:18). At the command of God these immortal personalities are able to alter the paths of meteor showers and asteroids (Rev. 8:7–11), to change the luminescence of the Sun, the Moon, and

the stars (Rev. 8:12), and to govern the processes occurring in the bowels of the sun (Rev. 16:8–9). Archbishop Luke⁵² said that “the celestial bodies serve as the dwelling place of countless rational beings. ... And the flaming masses of enormous stars can be inhabited by fiery seraphim and cherubim.”

Despite the existence of this mystical foreordination of the celestial luminaries and other purposes appointed by the Lord and yet unknown to us, of which David said that “the Lord numbereth the multitude of the stars and calleth them all by name” (Ps. 146:4), their chief purpose is “to give light upon the earth.” There is no doubt that for the Bible’s Author, Earth is the center of the universe, and that the modern “scientific picture of the world” with its countless expanses that have neither meaning, nor purpose, nor reason, in which man is lost like a drop in the ocean, are completely foreign to Him. God knows no boundaries, and His word immediately becomes deed. All the countless stars, wherever they may be in the heavens (for the distances to them are only presumed), immediately became visible on Earth, for the illumination of which they were created. The Almighty has no need of countless years in order for the light from far-off stars to reach our eyes.

But let us return to the sacred words. The luminaries were created “to divide the day from the night.” Chrysostom says that God created the Sun on the fourth day so that no one would think it the cause and creator of day and of light (as the pagans believed). It was merely appointed to govern what had existed before its appearance (Ps. 135:7–8). For these same missionary purposes, the first chapter of Genesis simply calls the Sun and the Moon “lights.” The fact is that the words *sun* and *moon* in Hebrew are also the names of pagan gods. And so the Lord shows us that we are free of the influence of the luminaries and must not believe in astrology, which strips us of our free will.

For this purpose also the plants were created before the luminaries, so that the evolutionists might not think that the Sun is the creator of life. Unfortunately, many were not instructed by God’s word. For those animals that are able to see, a heaven filled with the primordial light would have been unbearably bright.

⁵² Holy Hierarch Luke (Voino-Yasinetsky) of Crimea. –*Trans.*

Hence, the All-merciful One gathered it into vessels, and only then created animate creatures.

Another task given to the luminaries was the command to serve “for signs.” This word (in Hebrew, *otot*) denotes unusual celestial phenomena foretelling the judgments of God. Most frequently this vocation of the luminaries is manifested in solar and lunar eclipses. Wondrous is the wisdom of the Creator, which made possible these heavenly signs! The Sun has a diameter 400 times greater than that of the Moon, and is located 400 times farther from Earth. Only this renders eclipses possible. Another example of signs is the comets, which frequently portend terrible punishments from God—wars, epidemics, and so on. The heavens attested to the greatness of Christ with particular clarity. The star of Bethlehem proclaimed His Nativity like a festive display of fireworks at the birth of a prince. And on Golgotha, like a faithful servant, the Sun robed itself in black garments and grew dim, like a funeral torch. But the luminaries will display the might of these words of God for the final time in the last days of the world when the Sun will go dark, the Moon will become like blood, the stars will fall from heaven, and the hosts of heaven will tremble (Mt. 24:29, Rev. 6:12–14).

In the interpretation of St. Basil, the word *sign* shows that the luminaries are entrusted with affecting the Earth’s climate. It is they that determine the weather, the planting season, and the harvest. By observing the stars people navigated the ocean and learned whether a storm were approaching.

“For seasons”—for the Orthodox this indicates one of the most important vocations of the luminaries. In the Hebrew text the word used here is *moadim*, which literally means “assemblies.” Thus, the Sun and the Moon move for the purpose of determining the days for worship—the feasts. In the Old Testament Church all the feasts were determined based on their position in the heavens. The chief indicator was the Moon, for that was still the time of the shadow of death, which disappeared at the advent of the Sun of Righteousness. Today, although the Moon has not lost its significance, the luminary of the days plays a far greater role. With good cause the great feasts of the immovable cycle are linked to the solstices and equinoxes. But this task of the luminaries is most majestically fulfilled in the great

cycle of Pascha. Through it the heavens also take part in the cosmic glorification of the Risen One, and so those who attempt to change the church calendar incur the great wrath of God. From the heights the Sun and the Moon accuse them of their offense, for these creations of the Lord are deprived of the opportunity to fulfill the will of the Almighty One, and hence their existence is stripped of meaning.

The next vocation of the luminaries indicated by the author of Genesis is the ordering of “days.” As has been said above, the luminaries are not the creators, but merely the governors of the daily cycle. Day and night were divided even in the first daily cycles of the world’s existence. This command of the Creator set the stage for the changing duration of day and night determined by the position of the Sun and the Moon and the stellar cycle, due to which in our world we have the changing seasons of the year. However, in the words of the great Byzantine canonist Matthew Vlastar, the luminaries began obeying this command the way they do today only after the completion of the week of creation. “When God brought the world from non-existence into existence, from the first day even unto the seventh there was a precise equality of days, neither day nor night exceeding the other for even a moment. For although on the fourth day the newly created luminaries already illumined the world, they were not commanded to act by moving forward, as it occurs today in the universe. ... In the beginning God did not wish to show us anything incomplete in all that He had created. ... On the sixth day by the hand of God man was created, at a time when the equinox remained in full force, and the Moon standing directly opposite the Sun was nearly equal to it in the abundance of its effulgence. And it would have been unsuitable either for the first man to have been created before the equinox, when all was as yet covered in darkness—a man who in his great kinship with light is not groundlessly called light ... or for the luminaries to diminish the beauty appropriate to them, at that time when they were to accompany him who was to be the king of creation. In addition, time itself, which had its beginning from this point, was to begin with equality the days and nights only just created, because equality is by nature superior to inequality, just as position is superior to negation, and existence to want. And God

thereby taught that we are to set the law of equality, upon which all the virtues are established, above all excess and inequality. When after the seventh day the luminaries, as though released from seclusion, began their course, then divergences promptly occurred due to the disparate speed of movement.”

The last of the divine commands addressed to the luminaries entrusted them with the governing of “years.” It is known that there now exist several types of years, dependent on various luminaries. These are the solar (tropical) year, in the course of which the Sun returns to the point of equinox (365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 46 seconds); the stellar year, when the Sun returns to the same star (365 days, 6 hours, 9 minutes, and 10 seconds); and finally the lunar year (354 days). It should however be noted that the Bible only knows a year as lasting 360 days, and a month as 30 days (Gen. 7:11 and 8:4; cf. both verses with Gen. 7:24 and 8:3, as well as Dan. 7:24–25 and Rev. 13:4–7, 12:6—1,260 days = 3.5 years). This year is sometimes called a prophetic year. Interestingly, ancient peoples such as the Hindus, Persians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Romans, and even the Mayans also held a year to last 360 days.⁵³ Most probably the year originally indeed lasted 360 days and consisted of exactly 12 months, with 30 days in each. But this ideal system was upset on the day of Joshua’s battle at Gibeon, when the Sun stood still in the sky (Josh. 10:12–13), and also in the time of the prophet Isaiah, at whose word the Lord turned back the shadow of the Sun 10 steps (2 Kgs 20:10–11). We therefore consider it useless to attempt to create an eternal calendar that does not take into account that the course of the luminaries depends on the will of the Creator, and which presumes that the current order of this will remain eternally unchanged.

In examining the divine words one notes that in describing the work of creation Moses thrice says of God the Creator: “And God said...,” “And God made...,” “And God set them...” To the mind of St. Basil, this indicates the participation of all three Persons of the Holy Trinity in the work of creation. And this is truly so: God the Father is the Original Cause of creation and its Inventor (“God said”); God the Son is the Creative Cause (“and God made”), and

⁵³ Immanuel Velikovsky, *Stolknovenie mirov* [A Collision of Worlds] (Rostov-na-Donu: 1996), pp. 370–383.

God the Holy Spirit is the Cause that brings to completion (“and God set them”). The Son carries out the will of the Father, and the Spirit completes creation in goodness and beauty. This truth is more clearly revealed by David: “By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established, and all the might of them by the Spirit of His mouth” (Ps. 32:6).

Truly, how can man, when gazing into the expanses of the celestial vaults, fail to see the wisdom of the Father Who invented them, to wonder at the might of the Son Who created them, and to glorify the wondrous beauty and elegance of the Beautifying Spirit Who painted them, Whose breath gives life to the countless stellar worlds?

The vault of heaven, aflame with stellar glory,
Mystically gazes out from within the depths,
And we sail, on all sides surrounded
By the fiery abyss.⁵⁴

We can delight in the beauties of heaven without risking a fall into subjectivism, for the Righteous Judge and Measure of all things Himself passed sentence concerning them: “And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.”

Chapter 5

The Fifth Day

Once again the celestial sphere, studded with the diamonds, rubies, and sapphires of the stars, and illumined by the light of the full Moon, completed its orbit above the rustling leaves and fragrant flowers of Earth, and the Sun rose, signifying the beginning of a new day of creation—Thursday by our reckoning. “And God said, Let the waters bring forth reptiles having life, and winged creatures flying above the earth in the firma-

⁵⁴ Fyodor Tyutchev, “*Kak okean obemlet shar zemnoi*” [“As the Ocean Embraces the Globe”].

ment of heaven, and it was so. And God made great whales, and every living reptile, which the waters brought forth according to their kinds, and every creature that flies with wings according to its kind, and God saw that they were good. And God blessed them saying, Increase and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let the creatures that fly be multiplied on the earth. And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day” (Gen. 1:20–23 LXX).

“For the first time an animate creature, endowed with sensitivity, is created,” says St. Basil. Thus God moves the world higher up the hierarchical ladder. Whereas only rudimentary life exists in plants, which can but grow and multiply, these new creatures are already endowed with a living soul,⁵⁵ concerning which the chronicler of Genesis uses the word *bara*—that is, created out of nothing. This soul is mortal, and revelation attests that it is contained in blood (Lev. 17:11), which in the Old Testament was intended for the cleansing of souls.

Thus, in a single moment at the command of the Almighty all the water bodies became alive with fishes, and in the depths of the sea there appeared whales and sea monsters (*tannin*—“monster,” Gen. 1:21), and from the waves flocks of birds and flying insects soared up to the heavens.

The birds and the fishes were created simultaneously because both swim—some in the water, others in the air. According to Vladimir Lossky, here we see manifested in outward form the “logoi of creation,” which are not now accessible to science, but which are attained by ascetics through the experience of contemplation.

In the thinking of St. Basil, creatures created out of water are further removed from man and less susceptible to taming. Note that at the Lord’s command water becomes a source of living beings. There is therefore nothing remarkable in the fact that the basis of any organism is water, and that in the bodies of living beings there are no elements not encountered in the inanimate world.

⁵⁵ In the Russian Synodal Version, “that hath life” is rendered literally “a living soul.” —*Trans.*

St. John of Damascus sees in this account a prefiguration of the sacrament of baptism, when the Holy Spirit Who in the beginning moved upon the face of the waters renews man within them⁵⁶ and makes his soul truly alive and exalted like a bird to the heavens.

Throughout the narrative it may be noted that St. Moses emphasizes that both the fishes and the birds were created “after their kind.” This shows that they were created complete and unchanging. Thus, a dove will always produce a dove, and a perch—a perch. The “kind” of the book of Genesis is a broader concept than the “species” of modern classification, but its chief characteristic is the ability to produce fertile offspring. For example, the “dog” kind also includes the wolf and the jackal. But with these words the Lord explicitly rejects all possibility of evolution, and one who wishes to reconcile it with Christianity opposes the Creator.

It should be emphasized that Holy Scripture is aware of the existence of the gigantic beings that are so popular today and symbolize the remote past of the Earth. We are speaking of the dinosaurs. The actual name *dinosaur* appeared in the 17th century, but such creatures were previously known as dragons or sea monsters. Today for some reason the latter are considered mythical beasts, though even now we occasionally hear news that a gigantic lizard has been discovered in some remote corner of the world. The Bible mentions dragons (in Hebrew, *tannin*) more than 25 times (Is. 27:1, Ezek. 29:3, Mal. 1:3, Ex. 7:10, and elsewhere). And the first text of Holy Scripture where this word is found is the description of the fifth day of creation. “And God made great dragons”—not great whales or fish. From other passages it is clear that dragons are of several kinds: “flying serpents” (Is. 14:29), “sea dragons” (Is. 27:1), and “dragons of the desert” (Ezek. 29:3). Another species of (or name for) dragon is the leviathan (Job 41:1), of which David sang: “[In the sea there is] this dragon, whom Thou hast made to play” (Ps. 103:26).

Revelation also describes several physiological traits of these creatures: they howl (Mic. 1:8), swallow air (Jer. 14:6), and

⁵⁶ John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, p. 42 (Rus. ed.)

can produce poison (Deut. 32:33). But apparently the most remarkable ability of dragons was the ability to breathe fire: “Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth” (Job 41:19–21).

This ability of dragons is known in the legends of a great many nations. Even in the modern animal kingdom we encounter something similar. The bombardier beetle shoots a boiling spray at its enemies, and the electric eel produces an electric charge. There is therefore nothing improbable about the existence of fire-breathing dragons, the more so considering that in the skulls of several dinosaurs strange respiratory passages have been discovered, leading to cavities of uncertain purpose. Possibly it was in these that gases were produced which ignited upon contact with air.⁵⁷

There is a body of paleontologic evidence that dinosaurs were contemporaries of man. It may therefore be considered an established fact that the events described in the 14th chapter of the book of the prophet Daniel and the miracle of St. George and the dragon actually occurred, and are not mere fables and fictions.

But let us return to the biblical narrative. “And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.” When the Almighty blessed the animals, He did not speak any words (for He is incorporeal), but rather introduced into the nature of created things His energies and ideas, by virtue of which biological laws have their effect. It is in them that instincts are rooted. To understand these expressions literally—that is, to think that God actually produced a vibration in the air—is impious anthropomorphism, unworthy of the pure spirituality of God’s Being.

“Be fruitful, and multiply.” Certain commentators say that the first command gave the ability to produce only a single offspring, while the second bestowed the ability to multiply limitlessly.

“And fill the waters in the seas.” Literally the text here reads, “Let the waters in the seas begin to seethe.” With these words God instilled in the fishes a herd instinct, and it is this that caus-

⁵⁷Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, pp. 358–359.

es mass migrations of fish, shellfish, and plankton. This same command instilled in them the ability to produce a tremendous quality of offspring (roe), which would later be of considerable benefit to man. In this same place limits are set to their multiplying: when these are reached this instinct must cease to exist. Unfortunately, however, due to the fall of man death prevents this command of God from being fully carried out. But even today scientists have learned to their amazement that when a school of fishes or a pod of dolphins reaches a certain number, they cease to multiply. Sometimes whales or dolphins will even beach themselves for this reason. Thus, even in this fallen world the effect of this divine word is partially manifested.

“And let fowl multiply in the earth.” To this day these offspring of the watery element never multiply in the water, though some, such as loons, spend the better part of their lives in it. According to St. John of Damascus, birds unite the air, the water, and the dry land.

“And God saw that it was good,” thereby showing that in the primordial world of fish, birds, reptiles, and insects there was no struggle for survival, nor death, nor did the strong eternally devour the weak. On the contrary, all was harmonious and beautiful. Even today on Earth it is hard to find a song more magnificent than the one by which the birds glorify God, and the beauty of the fish and the butterflies surpasses the imagination of any artist.

The new day drew to a close. Evening came, heralded by the trills of the newly created feathered creatures. In the waves of the sea the whales danced, the dragons played in the measureless expanses of the oceans, and the watery abysses were adorned with the living gemstones of the fishes. The Sun set, and this concluded Thursday, the miracles of which set David’s harp in motion: “So is this great and spacious sea, therein are things creeping innumerable, small living creatures with the great. ... There [goes] this dragon, whom Thou hast made to play therein. All things wait on Thee, to give them their food in due season” (Ps. 103:27–29).

“Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all ye abysses ... creeping things and winged birds” (Ps. 148:7, 10).

“And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.”

Chapter 6

The Sixth Day

The last day of creation arrived: Friday. The first work that God then performed was to complete the biosphere. The waters of seas and rivers were already teeming with sentient life, the birds and insects ruled the air, but the earth had brought forth only life in its lowest, vegetable form. It was fitting that this element also be blessed by being employed by the Lord to create sentient, animate nature.

Thus, with the coming of Friday God again created something new.

“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).

God imbued the Earth with His creative word, and it immediately acquired the capacity to produce animals that possessed senses and glimmers of reason. “Behold,” teaches the divine Basil, “the word of God pervading creation, beginning even then the efficacy which is seen displayed to-day, and will be displayed to the end of the world! As a ball, which one pushes, if it meet a declivity, descends, carried by its form and the nature of the ground and does not stop until it has reached a level surface; so nature, once put in motion by the Divine command, traverses creation with an equal step, through birth and death, and keeps up the succession of kinds through resemblance, to the last. Nature always makes a horse succeed to a horse, a lion to a lion, an eagle to an eagle, and preserving each animal by these uninterrupted successions she transmits it to the end of all things. Animals do not see their peculiarities destroyed or effaced by any length of time; their nature, as though it had been just constituted, follows

the course of ages, for ever young.”⁵⁸ In the fourth century the great father of the Church foresaw the mindlessness of the pseudo-theologians—the evolutionists of the 20th century! He rejects both the possibility of genetic alteration, which is considered the basis of evolution, and the modern chronology that relegates the creation (or appearance) of animals to a time millions of years ago. Thus, for the great Cappadocian the “day-age” theory is unacceptable.

The animal soul which the earth brought forth at the Lord’s command is mortal. Scripture states (Lev. 17:11) that it lives in the blood. By means of it the animals sense, move, demonstrate marvels of ingenuity, and communicate with each other. Due to having come forth from the earth, the cattle and beasts gaze upon their maternal bosom, and their heads are inclined toward the place of their rest. Man, however, even by his external configuration shows the immortal, celestial origin of his spirit.

The souls of the animals, like their bodies, return to the earth. In the words of Scripture, “With all manner of living things hath he covered the face thereof; and they shall return into it again” (Ecclus. 16:30). The idea that animals are immortal borders on the pagan concept of transmigration of souls. St. Basil says that the animals created on the sixth day are more perfect because in them the soul possesses all mastery over the flesh, while the creatures created in the water are more coarse, and their fleshly life governs the inclinations of their souls. Due to this, the animals of the earth are more easily tamable than those of the water, though there are exceptions, such as the dolphins.

It should not, however, be thought that since the earth brought forth the cattle, it is itself animate, as the occultists think who created the theory of the living Earth, or Gaia. This idea contradicts Holy Scripture, which ascribes creative potential to God Himself.

In the enumeration of the book of Genesis, the “beasts of the field” should be understood to mean animals that have no hooves, such as the wolf, the fox, and the bear. “Cattle” are hoofed animals, and the “creeping things that creep upon the earth” are the reptiles, both modern and extinct (the dinosaurs).

⁵⁸ Basil the Great, *The Hexaemeron* 9.2 (NPNF² 8:102).

The holy fathers expressly emphasize that the purpose of any creature's life is to serve man. Hence, for the Christian it is domesticated animals, and not wild (or rather feral) animals, that are the norm. Thus, for example, monkeys were created to amuse man, as well as parrots and magpies. Hence, Orthodox Christians cannot entirely agree with the ideas of modern ecologists, for whom man is merely an obstacle to the proper existence of nature.

It would be impossible to examine in the slightest detail the wisdom with which the beasts and creeping things of the earth are constructed, of which the Bible says these brief but profoundly meaningful words:

“And God saw that it was good.”

The study of these words is the chief focus of biology, which learned men of today have sadly rejected, wandering blindly in the maze of falsely termed knowledge. How sad it is that even Orthodox biologists have forgotten their vocation in their work! Revelation says, “But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee” (Job 12:7–8). In fulfilling this command, in the middle ages in Byzantium and in Rus' there were special books entitled *Physiologus*, where based on examples from the animal and vegetable kingdoms people would learn the secrets of their own souls and the Lord's world. It would be highly beneficial to resume the writing of these compositions, taking modern natural science for their basis, to the greater glory of the All-good Lord!

Chapter 7

The Creation of Man

St. John Chrysostom writes: “When [God] had created everything and endowed all with fitting order and beauty, when He had prepared a sumptuous meal, replete with various foods and showing abundance and richness in everything; when, so to speak, He had magnificently adorned the royal bridal chamber

from top to bottom; then, at last, He creates him who is to enjoy all this, gives him authority over all visible things, and shows how many times over this animal that is to be created surpasses all created things, when He commands all creatures to be subject to his authority and governance.”

And truly, though paradise did not yet exist, all the Earth comprised something akin to paradise, albeit material and perceptible by the senses (45th Homily of St. Symeon the New Theologian).

We will speak in more detail a little later about the first world, before it was distorted by sin. For now let us return to the narrative from sacred history. As we know, moved by the Holy Spirit, Moses left us two mutually complementary accounts of the creation of man. The first (Gen. 1:26–31) shows the sublime position of man in the world’s hierarchy, while the second begins the sacred history extending from now to the end of the universe. Consequently, in the first instance the Creator is called God (*Elohim*—“Powers”), as Ruler of the universe, and in the second—*Yahweh* (“He Who Is”), as God who appeared in history, God the Savior and Judge.

The first account exalts us to supercelestial heights and initiates us into the mysteries of the Preëternal Council of the Live-creating Trinity. As St. Isaac the Syrian observes, the angels are created in silence, the animals and all creatures by a single command, and only man is deemed worthy that the Trinity might take particular council concerning him, and is created by the most pure hands of the Father.

“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” (Gen. 1:26).

These words clearly indicate the mystery of Triunity: God the Father deliberates with God the Son (Whom Isaiah calls the “Wonderful Counselor”) and God the Spirit. Unless the Trinity is recognized to be three Persons, the plural (“Let us make ... after our image”) would be completely absurd. To think that this refers to angel-creators, as do the Jews and the false “Jehovah’s Witnesses,” is foolish. For the angels do not have the same image and likeness as God.

The word *man*—in Hebrew, *adam* (not in the sense of the first man, but the name of his nature)—means, on the one hand, “one who becomes like” God, in a single word indicating the purpose of human life; and, on the other, “bloody earth, clay”—the end result which one may become who renounces this supreme purpose. Unfortunately, the majority of our contemporaries are men in the sense of “bloody clay,” because they have forgotten God the Creator and Redeemer and their own immortality.

It should be said that in the account of the origin of man Moses uses the word *bara*—made from nothing. That is, Adam had no ancestors, and his creation was something fundamentally new to the universe. This, unfortunately, is something the evolutionist theologians have no wish to understand.

The mysterious expression “in our image, after our likeness” contains a bottomless abyss of meanings. Let us consider only a few of them.

Regarding the life of the Persons of the Holy Trinity, the Image of the Father is the name given to God the Son (2 Cor. 4:4), and His Likeness is the Holy Spirit, through Whom rational beings become like unto God.

In man the primary manifestation of the image of God is the personhood of man, through which he is able to see God “face to face” (1 Cor. 13:12). Its individual manifestations are innumerable. To list them we will take advantage of the excellent composition of Archimandrite Cyprian (Kern), *The Anthropology of St. Gregory Palamas* (Moscow, 1996). The majority of the holy fathers see the image of God in the rationality and spirituality of man. Some perceive it in his free will, while others see it in the immortality of the human soul. Many understand it in man’s ruling position in the universe, while some hold that the image of God lies in the capacity to acquire sanctity or in man’s ability to create. Finally, some of the fathers teach that man reflects the inner life of the Divine Trinity in himself and in his spiritual structure.

It is essential to note that although the image of God abides primarily in a person’s soul, the body also is not deprived of it, as taught St. Irenaeus of Lyons, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. Gregory Palamas, among others. Just as God enlivens and sustains the existence of the universe, so also the soul enlivens the body and by its energy works and acts through it. St. Gregory Palamas saw

in this a greater dignity of man than that of the angels. In the context of disputes with Protestants, it should be noted that this passage of the Bible reveals God to us as the first Iconographer (the Seventy having translated “image” as *ikona*, or icon). Hence, heretics who deny icons blaspheme God and disfigure themselves. But we digress from our topic of study.

In the teaching of many of the holy fathers, the image and likeness of God differ in that the image is indestructible and inherent even in those condemned to eternal torments, while the likeness is attained by the power of the Spirit through the doing of the virtues. St. John of Damascus says, “The expression ‘in the image’ indicates a capacity of the mind and freedom, whereas the expression ‘in the likeness’ means becoming like God in virtue, insofar as this is possible for man.”

Revelation confirms this patristic teaching, for after relating the Lord’s command: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,” it goes on to say: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Gen. 1:27).

Thus, the Lord is silent regarding creation after His “likeness,” thereby indicating that the creation of man is not yet finished: he has not yet attained the fullness of perfection, and by the power of God he is able to complete what is not yet completed.

What, then, comprises God-likeness? The apostle Paul replies: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal. 5:22–23). The final frontier of becoming like God is adoption by Him to sonship. A person must become by grace what God is by nature.

To the attentive reader of Scripture, however, the question occurs: if man is created solely in God’s image, and is able to achieve His likeness on his own, how are we to understand the words of the apostle James, who stated that with the tongue “curse we men, which are made after the similitude⁵⁹ of God” (Jas. 3:9).

To the Protestant and Monophysite mindset, which does not acknowledge the self-propulsion of human nature toward good,

⁵⁹ In the Russian Synodal Version, *similitude* and *likeness* are rendered using the same word—*podobie*. —*Trans.*

this is an irreconcilable contradiction. The Orthodox fathers, however, have always known that the virtues are natural for us. As St. John of the Ladder writes, "Vice or passion is not originally planted in nature, for God is not the Creator of passions. But there are in us many natural virtues from Him, among which are certainly the following: mercy, for even the pagans are compassionate; love, for even dumb animals often weep at the loss of one another; faith, for we all give birth to it of ourselves; hope, for we lend, and sail, and sow, looking to the gain. So if, as has been shown, love is a natural virtue in us, and is the bond (cf. Eph. 4:3, Col. 3:14) and fulfillment of the law (Rom 13:10), then it follows that the virtues are not far from nature. And those who plead their inability to practice them ought to be ashamed."⁶⁰

It is through these natural virtues that man partially partakes of the likeness of God even now, and this is what the apostle James is saying.

"In the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27). The holy fathers, especially St. Gregory of Nyssa, emphasized that the division into male and female is not a property of the image of God. The sacred text confirms this opinion. The words "male and female" in the literal translation from the Hebrew (*zakar e neqeba*) and the Greek (*arsen kai thely*) are the same words used to denote males and females of animal species, thereby showing that in the division into sexes we resemble not God, but the animal kingdom. This teaching is highly important for us, as it protects us from deification of the sexes (the Moonies see God Himself as having male and female principles) and the related cults of Astarte, on the one hand, while on the other it calls down God's blessing upon marital intimacy, for He created nothing that is impure.

Moses describes the creation of the first man and his wife in greater detail in the second chapter of Genesis. "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." A careful examination of the words of revelation reveals that whereas regarding the creation of the whole man the word *created* (from

⁶⁰ John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Step 26:67 (Boston, MA: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1978), p. 171.

nothing) was used, here we find the word *formed*, indicating that the chief distinction of our nature is the union of a rational spirit (created out of nonexistence) and a body taken from the preëxisting dust of the ground.

Modern theologians attempt to interpret the words “of the dust of the ground” allegorically, in order to fit Holy Scripture to the evolutionary “doctrine” which derives man from the apes. For example, Fr. Gleb Kaleda writes: “There is nothing anti-religious in the hypotheses of man’s descent from a simian creature: for the Christian the confirmation of these hypotheses merely elucidates how man was created in the biological process of his formation. In the Bible what matters most is not this, but that God ‘breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul’—in other words, man, who up until then had been ‘the dust of the ground,’ an animal, albeit the most perfect and rational of all animals, acquired the Holy Spirit and, through this, the capacity for real communion with the Divinity and the possibility of immortality.” Similar gems are found in nearly all of modern pseudo-theological literature devoted to the book of Genesis.

The origins of this idea stem from a negligent attitude toward the human body, which is considered a thing of no importance. In this we may see a thinly veiled Manichaeism or Gnosticism, which also rejected the flesh in favor of the spirit. Bearing in mind however that no Scripture must be understood on one’s own, let us turn to the holy fathers: did they permit this verse to be interpreted allegorically?

To this we receive a very wise answer from St. Irenaeus of Lyons, who also fought against the Valentinian gnostics with their symbolic understanding of these words. In explaining the miraculous healing of the man who was born blind, this great saint writes: “The followers of Valentinus likewise err, who say that man was created not of this earth, but of flowing fluid matter. For the earth from which the Lord formed sight is clearly that from which He formed man in the beginning. It would be inconsonant for the eyes to have been created of one thing, and the rest of the body of another, as it would be inconsonant for one to have created the body, and another—the eyes.”

This profound argument is based on the words of Scripture: “When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made

clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay" (John 9:6), and it reduces to rubble the attempts at a figurative understanding of "the dust of the ground."

This "theological" theory also presumes that the body existed prior to the soul—something akin to the currently popular theory of reincarnation. But Solomon spoke truly when he said that "there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us" (Eccl. 1:9–10). This heresy appeared in the fourth century, at which time it was exposed and rejected by the works of St. Gregory of Nyssa. "They prove that the flesh is more noble than the soul; that which was previously formed than that which was afterwards infused into it: for they say that the soul was made for the body, that the thing formed might not be without breath and motion; and that everything that is made for something else is surely less precious than that for which it is made. ... I think that we ought to direct our own doctrine in the way of truth between these theories: and this doctrine is that we are not to suppose, according to the error of the heathen that the souls that revolve with the motion of the universe weighed down by some wickedness, fall to earth. ... Nor again are we in our doctrine to begin by making up man like a clay figure, and to say that the soul came into being for the sake of this; for surely in that case the intellectual nature would be shown to be less precious than the clay figure. ... If the one came first and the other supervened, the power of Him that made us will be shown to be in some way imperfect, as not being completely sufficient for the whole task at once, but dividing the work, and busying itself with each of the halves in turn."⁶¹

It should be noted that this false teaching is not an innocent attempt to adapt the Bible to the theory of evolution. Like any other heresy, it influences the ethics of its adherents. For if the human body is of simian origin and existed before the soul appeared, abortions may be justified (as we remember, "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny"). For it is not a person being killed in the womb, but an ape. The body can be treated as meat. By continuing to develop this idea, every kind of debauchery may be

⁶¹ Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man* 28:1–29:2 (NPNF² 5:419–421).

justified. Consequently, a single Bible verse improperly interpreted can overturn all of Christian morality.

Thus, in a single moment the hands of God—the Word and the Holy Spirit—formed the human body from the dust of the ground and brought forth the human soul out of nonexistence. “And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

By the power of the Comforter an entire rainbow of life shown forth in the newly-created being. Mineral life, through participation in the existence and bodily composition of the elements common to the whole universe. Vegetable life, through the power to grow and the capacity to reproduce. Animal life, through movement and the ability to experience the world through the senses. Angelic life, through reason and free will. And, finally, the greatest of all gifts—participation in the uncreated glory of the divine life, by submitting to which man is to become a god by grace.

The venerable John of Damascus extols the state of the first-created man with these sublime words: “God then made man without evil, upright, virtuous, free from pain and care, glorified with every virtue, adorned with all that is good, like a sort of second microcosm within the great world, another angel capable of worship, compound, surveying the visible creation and initiated into the mysteries of the realm of thought, king over the things of earth, but subject to a higher king, of the earth and of the heaven, temporal and eternal, belonging to the realm of sight and to the realm of thought, midway between greatness and lowliness, spirit and flesh: for he is spirit by grace, but flesh by overweening pride: spirit that he may abide and glorify his Benefactor, and flesh that he may suffer, and suffering may be admonished and disciplined when he prides himself in his greatness: here, that is, in the present life, his life is ordered as an animal’s, but elsewhere, that is, in the age to come, he is changed and—to complete the mystery—becomes deified by merely inclining himself towards God; becoming deified, in the way of participating in the divine glory and not in that of a change into the divine being.”⁶²

According to the venerable Seraphim, in contemplating the glory of Adam the first-created in paradise, by the power of the

⁶² John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 2.12 (NPNF² 9:31b).

Holy Spirit he “was immune to the action of the elements to such a degree that water could not drown him, fire could not burn him, the earth could not swallow him in its abysses, and the air could not harm him by any kind of action whatever. Everything was subject to him as the beloved of God, as the king and lord of creation, and everything looked up to him, as the perfect crown of God’s creatures, surpassing all of God’s creation upon earth, in the water, and in the air. Adam was made so wise ... that there never has been a man on earth wiser or more intelligent than he, and it is hardly likely that there ever will be. ... Adam could see and understand the Lord walking in paradise, and comprehend His words, and the conversation of the holy angels, and the language of all beasts, birds and reptiles and all that is now hidden from us fallen and sinful creatures, but was so clear to Adam before his fall.”⁶³

Compared to this glory of Adam the first-created, which the God-bearing fathers beheld, the thing which modern theologians and scholars present to us and speak of as a “transfigured beast” is no more than a monstrous satanic caricature. Orthodox Christians, however, must remember that all that the first Adam had is accessible to us likewise through the gift of the second Adam. For “the first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Cor. 15:47–49).

Chapter 8

The Incorrupt World

“**G**od made not death: neither hath he pleasure in the destruction of the living. For he created all things, that they might have their being” (Wisdom 1:13–14). This is the witness of divine

⁶³ St. Seraphim of Sarov, *A Wonderful Revelation to the World* (St. Nectarios Press, 1993). Revised by current translator.

revelation concerning the world in which Adam was appointed king and high priest. But how can we, rent by the claws of death and beholding only a cosmos poisoned by sin, learn about the universe in that state in which it emerged from the hands of the eternal and pure Creator? Where are we to find an eagle that would rise high above the river of time and carry us to the incorruptible kingdom of the first man? And yet this path exists! Through the incarnation of God the Word, “by Whom all things were made,” we are vouchsafed by the power of grace to attain even unto this blessed world.

One of the great mystics of the Orthodox Church, St. Gregory of Sinai, writes: “The principal forms of contemplation are eight in number. The first is contemplation of the formless, unengendered and uncreated God, source of all things—that is, contemplation of the one Triadic Deity that transcends all being. The second is contemplation of the hierarchy and order of the spiritual powers. The third is contemplation of the structure of created beings. The fourth is contemplation of God’s descent through the incarnation of the Logos. The fifth is contemplation of the universal resurrection. The sixth is contemplation of the dread second coming of Christ. The seventh is contemplation of age-long punishment. The eighth is contemplation of the kingdom of heaven. The first four pertain to what has already been manifested and realized. The second four pertain to what is in store and has not yet been manifested; but they are clearly contemplated by and disclosed to those who through grace have attained great purity of intellect. Whoever without such grace attempts to descry them should realize that far from attaining spiritual vision he will merely become the prey of fantasies, deceived by and forming illusions in obedience to the spirit of delusion.”⁶⁴ Alas, these latter words of the venerable one show the true source of the evolutionary theology of our time. And in truth, only “the ape of the Lord God,” the devil (as the blessed Augustine called him), could have suggested to men that they descended specifically from apes, and that they do

⁶⁴ St. Gregory of Sinai, “On Commandments and Doctrines, Warnings and Promises; On Thoughts, Passions and Virtues, and Also on Stillness and Prayer: One Hundred and Thirty-Seven Texts,” in *The Philokalia: The Complete Text*, G.E.H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware, trans. (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), vol. 4, p. 248.

not bear in themselves the image of God. What ominous, diabolical irony!

Let us listen to the words of the venerable Symeon the New Theologian, who spoke concerning what was revealed to him concerning the primordial world: "In the beginning, before He planted paradise and gave it to the first-created people, in five days God established the earth and all that was in it, and the heavens and all that was in them; and on the sixth day He created Adam and appointed him lord and king of all visible creation. Paradise did not yet then exist. But that world was from God, as a sort of paradise, albeit material and sensory. This God gave to Adam and to all his descendants to rule over." Thus, this venerable saint from the eleventh century repudiates the heretical teaching of the twentieth, which claims that that it was only in paradise that death did not exist (as Archpriest Stephan Lyashevsky holds). Moses, the initiate of the mysteries of the incorruptible world, reveals to us the Lord's commands: "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" (Gen. 1:30).

Thus, according to divine revelation, before the fall of Adam all living creatures that had blood, and that had within themselves a living soul, fed solely on plants, which have no senses and hence are not subject to suffering. Furthermore, the Lord commanded not that the trunks and roots be eaten, nor the seeds, but only the fruits, the greens, and the stalks, of which plants have no need. This process was just as harmless for them as trimming hair and nails is for us. Even in our world, plants benefit when animals eat their fruits, for by this means their seeds are distributed across a wide territory, and by this means each plant is able to achieve its maximum development.

People often say that many animals today feed primarily on meat, and they ask how they survived in the primordial world. This may be answered as follows: in that world there was no death and corruption, and hence there was no need for the extraordinary expenditure of energy required to overcome these de-

structive forces. Both animals and man required food that was far lower in calories than that of today, and this the vegetable world was amply able to supply. But even in our fallen world many ascetics, with God's help, are able to live on a solely vegetarian diet. All the more so was this possible in a world permeated with the Lord's energies.

Another question often asked by people who do not believe in the power of God is this: "Where did animals come by those organs that are clearly intended for hunting or defense?" This may be answered thus: God, foreseeing the fall of Adam, gave animals and plants those properties that would serve for their survival after the world's distortion. On the other hand, we do not know the original intent or structure of these organs, for we know that certain beings were altered as a result of the fall. For example, the rose acquired thorns, while the serpent lost its legs. And we cannot say for certain that other creatures did not undergo change.

According to divine revelation, the primordial world was far more conducive to human life than our own. "Before the transgression," St. John of Damascus teaches us, "all things were under [man's] power. For God set him as ruler over all things on the earth and in the waters. Even the serpent was accustomed to man, and approached him more readily than it did other living creatures, and held intercourse with him with delightful motions. And hence it was through it that the devil, the prince of evil, made his most wicked suggestion to our first parents. Moreover, the earth of its own accord used to yield fruits, for the benefit of the animals that were obedient to man, and there was neither rain nor tempest on the earth."⁶⁵ With these words St. John elucidates the mysterious saying of Scripture: "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).

⁶⁵ John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 10 (NPNF² 9:29b).

Here Moses reveals to us the power of the Creator, the fulfillment of Whose commands requires no other powers (the struggle for survival, mutations, or natural selection). He commanded, and the earth brought forth plants without rain, and without the aid of man. It was from this unprocessed, virgin earth that the first Adam was created, mystically depicting the virgin birth of the second Adam.

Of importance here is the description of the primordial climate upon our Earth. "The Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth. ... But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground." Based on these words of Genesis, creationist scientists developed the theory of a vapor canopy that surrounded the earth prior to the Flood. This layer of water, invisible to the eye, created a greenhouse effect, due to which the whole planet enjoyed a homogenous subtropical climate: there were no rains or strong winds caused by drops in temperature. The vapor screen likewise protected all living things from the effects of hazardous cosmic radiation, and consequently animals and man lived longer, as they were not subjected to the destructive effect of mutations. The absence of strong winds and high atmospheric pressure, which stimulated metabolic activity, could not help but cause gigantism among plants and animals (Gen. 6:4). And the large quantity of vapor (Gen. 2:4) occasioned the development of spore-bearing plants and gymnosperms.

The realities predicted by this theory have also been discovered by scientists researching the fossilized remains of the antediluvian world. Around the world, Antarctica not excluded, deposits of bituminous coal have been found, which attests to a planet-wide subtropical climate. Everyone has heard tell of the gigantic animals of old (the dinosaurs). Many also know of gigantic ferns (sporophytes), which had to have flourished in global greenhouse conditions.

The Bible also offers a series of indirect confirmations of this theory. It becomes clear why Noah's contemporaries did not believe him: they had never seen either rain or flooding. The words of the Lord after the flood become clear: "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). This

is not the restoration of a thing suspended, but the establishment of a new order: God created a new world with a new climate. This was why God established the rainbow as “the token of the covenant,” for prior to the Flood no such phenomenon existed (Gen. 9:12–17).

But the Bible makes no mention of a vapor canopy as such. We cannot equate it with “the waters which were above the firmament” (Gen. 1:6–8), for if these had come crashing down upon a sinful world the prophet David could not have exclaimed, “Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and thou water that art above the heavens” (Ps. 148:4). Nor would the three youths in the furnace have sung: “O all ye waters that be above the heaven, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever” (Prayer of Azariah 1:37).

Thus, despite the attractiveness of this scientific theory, it is nothing but a human invention, and not a divine truth, although this certainly does not mean it is false. Gazing at the perfect beauty of the primordial world, of which to this day faint gleams delight and soothe the human heart wounded by sin, we understand the patristic thinking that equated it with a temple, having the Garden of Eden for its altar. The flowers were incense burners not made by the hand of man, offering up their fragrance to God; the birds and the angels comprised the choir of this splendid house of the Creator. And serving there as high priest and prophet was Adam—the type of the great High Priest, the Son of God.

But this splendid world was not petrified perfection. Whether it would achieve an angelic state or tumble into the abyss of nonexistence depended upon its master, man. To our tremendous sadness, the latter occurred. According to that great mystic of Orthodoxy, St. Gregory of Sinai, “When the world was first created it was not subject to flux and corruption. According to Scripture it was only later corrupted and ‘made subject to vanity’—that is, to man—not by its own choice but by the will of Him to whom it is subject, the expectation being that Adam, who had fallen into corruption, would be restored to his original state (cf. Rom. 8:20–21). For by renewing man and sanctifying him ... God also renewed creation, although creation is not yet freed from the process of corruption. This deliverance from corruption is said by some

to be a translation to a better state, by others to require a complete transmutation of everything sensory.”⁶⁶

But let us return to the majestic revelations of the book of Genesis. “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).

“So when the Lord, the one bringing things from non-being to being, declares creatures to be good and completely good,” teaches St. John Chrysostom, “who would dare, even if bursting with arrogant folly, to open his mouth and gainsay the words uttered by God?” (Alas, to this day there are impious people who say that certain kinds of food and marital relations are by nature evil or defiled! Rightly are they condemned!) “When we see people of good reputation giving their opinion of things that happen, we don’t contradict them, but rather fall in with their opinion and often prefer their opinion to our own. So much the more in the case of the God of all things, the Creator of everything we can see, should we do likewise: we should learn his judgment on things, subdue our own reasonings, and instead of presuming further we should be content with the knowledge that everything has been produced by a word coming from him and by his loving kindness, and that nothing has been created idly or to no purpose. Even if, through the limitations of our own reasoning, we should be in ignorance of created things, [we must believe that God] himself in his own wisdom and thoughtful love produced all things.”⁶⁷ How wonderful it would be if these divinely wise words of the golden-mouthed teacher were heeded by those theologians who attempt to mingle the truth of the Lord’s words with the inventions of human science! For the doctrine of evolution clearly contradicts this judgment of the Creator, since this false teaching holds that this world was never “very good,” and that death and savagery have always reigned in it.

So ended the last day of creation.

⁶⁶ St. Gregory of Sinai, “On Commandments and Doctrines,” in *The Philokalia: The Complete Text*, vol. 4, p. 248.

⁶⁷ Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis* 10.12–13, in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 74, Robert C. Hill, trans. (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1986), pp. 136–137.

Chapter 9

The Seventh Day: The Sabbath

“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 God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made” (Gen. 2:1–3).

The fullness of the creatures conceived in the eternal mind of the Creator came into being during the six days, but it was fitting that they should have union with God as the goal of their existence. To remind them of this, the Maker blessed and sanctified the seventh day. “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. ... For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief. ... For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief” (Heb. 4:1, 4–6, 10–11).

Thus, on the seventh day God rested—that is, He established a kingdom of eternal rest, concerning which Christ would say to the righteous: “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Mt. 25:34).

For this reason God sanctified and blessed this day as the time when He says concerning the hearts of the righteous who have attained perfection: “This is My rest for ever and ever; here will I dwell, for I have chosen her” (Ps. 131:15). The saints, however, who in this land of wandering and struggle celebrate the sabbath as a figure of that to come, cry out: “I will dwell in Thy tabernacle unto the ages, I shall be sheltered in the shelter of Thy wings” (Ps. 60:4).

It should be noted that according to Genesis the angels were created not prior to the six days, but during them. “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them” (Gen. 2:1). Whereas the host of the earth must be understood to mean man, divine revelation ordinarily understands the host of the heavens to mean the stars and the hierarchy of the angels (Nehem. 9:6).

The question often arises: how are we to reconcile the statement in Genesis, that God rested from all His works, with Christ’s words: “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (Jn. 5:17)? A brilliant response to this difficulty is offered by the venerable Maximus the Confessor: “God, as He alone knew how, brought to completion the primary principles and the universal essences of the things that were brought into being. He nonetheless continues to work, not only to preserve the existence of these beings and essences, but also for the actual creation, growth, and sustenance of the individual parts that exist potentially within them. At the same time, He works providentially to bring about the assimilation of particulars to universals, until such time as He—having united the voluntary impulse of the particulars with the naturally more general principle of rational being through the movement of the particulars toward well-being—will unite them reciprocally to each other and to the whole universe in an identity of movement. And He will do this in such a way that the particulars will not differ in inclination from the universal, but that one and the same principle will be seen in all things, admitting of no division because of the modes predicated of each. In this way, the grace that divinizes all things will manifestly appear to have been realized.”⁶⁸

This fairly hard-to-grasp text expounds the chief effects of Providence in the world. God rests in that He no longer creates anything out of nonexistence, but He works, firstly, in preserving what was created; secondly, in unfolding its underlying primary principle (logos); and, lastly, in inclining all essences of the world toward union with Himself by grace to the measure in which

⁶⁸ St. Maximos the Confessor, “On Difficulties in Sacred Scripture: The Responses to Thalassios,” in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 136, Fr. Maximos Constas, trans. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2018), pp. 97–98.

each of them is able to contain the divine energy, that “God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28).

The God-bearing fathers, however, did not limit themselves to such lofty explanations of these words. They also saw in them the establishment of a holiday essential for fallen man, who through vanity and the pursuit of wealth is prepared to work both himself and his servant (or employees) to death, giving them no chance to catch their breath, and amid this busyness forgetting God entirely. And so, that man might not drive himself to distraction, God established an obligatory day of rest, punishing those who failed to keep this commandment with death (Ex. 31:14), “that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed” (Ex. 23:12), and “that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you” (Ex. 31:13). When the Jews began keeping the sabbath incorrectly, limiting their observance to formalistic idleness, the Lord instructed them through the prophet on how the Lord’s day was to be observed: “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it” (Is. 58:13–14). A marvelous explanation for the Christian of how to observe the Lord’s days—Saturday, Sunday, and the feasts!

When the Lord of the sabbath came to earth, He said explicitly that “it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days” (Mt. 12:12), and thereby in His Resurrection enacted a new holiday—the Lord’s Day, Sunday, the beginning of a new creation, and in the light of this day the solemnities in honor of the Old Testament grew dim. But the holiday itself did not disappear. To this day the Orthodox Church prohibits fasting on Saturday, the number of prostrations is reduced, and (according to the Typicon) the divine liturgy is always served, which for the Christian is a tremendous joy.

The seventh day of creation ended, but it is not said concerning it, “and the evening and the morning were...,” for since that day the whole world has existed in a ceaseless cycle of weeks, which will continue until the end of the world and the dawn-

ing of the eighth day of the age to come, when time will cease to exist. Concerning this Solomon mysteriously proclaimed: “Give a portion to seven, and also to eight” (Eccl. 11:2). To this day the Lord’s blessing abides even in this fallen world, whereby it is not destroyed, and to this day men and angels who enter into His rest are sanctified, and to this day God rests and does not bring forth new creations out of nonexistence, until the day when He Who sits upon the throne of the heavens shall proclaim, “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev. 21:5), and “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” shall appear (2 Pet. 3:13).

Chapter 10

Paradise

There is a deep sadness instilled within our hearts from birth. It is a sadness that cannot be allayed from corruptible sources of earthly joy, for it thirsts for waters from the purists springs that flow from the altar of incorruptible peace—the paradise of sweetness.

“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 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. 2:8–17).

When reading these sweetest of words, the first question that arises is this: was this paradise that was planted in the East purely a spiritual symbol, or was there in it something perceptible to the senses? Some adhere to the former opinion to this day (for example, Bishop Vasily [Rodzyanko] and Archpriest Alexander Men), but this interpretation had already been rejected by the Church along with the other heresies of Origen, as attested by the venerable John of Damascus. This same great father of the Church teaches us: "Just as man is a creature, in whom we find both sense and mind blended together, in like manner also man's most holy temple combines the properties of sense and mind, and has this twofold expression: for, as we said, the life in the body is spent in the most divine and lovely region, while the life in the soul is passed in a place far more sublime and of more surpassing beauty, where God makes His home, and where He wraps man about as with a glorious garment, and robes him in His grace, and delights and sustains him like an angel with the sweetest of all fruits, the contemplation of Himself."⁶⁹

Where is this place of beauty for which our soul longs? Archpriest Stefan Lyashevsky held that in our time paradise is located beneath the waters of a lake near the Persian Gulf. Some seek it in Armenia or even in Israel. But this is not what the holy fathers taught. Moses the God-seer indicates that it is located in the East. And wherever a Christian may be, paradise will always be to the east of him, because our churches are pointed toward this corner of the world. This most beautiful place is located "above all the earth."⁷⁰ Saint Ephraim the Syrian writes:

With the eye of my mind
I gazed upon Paradise; the summit of every mountain
is lower than its summit, the crest of the Flood
reached only its foothills;
these it kissed with reverence
before turning back
to rise above and subdue the peak
of every hill and mountain.

⁶⁹ John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 10 (NPNF² 9:29b).

⁷⁰ Ps. 56:7.

But because the sight of Paradise
 is far removed,
 and the eye's range
 cannot attain to it,
 I have described it over simply,
 making bold a little. Resembling that halo
 which surrounds the moon
 we should look upon Paradise
 as being circular too, having both sea and dry land
 encompassed within it.
 And because my tongue overflows
 as one who has sucked
 the sweetness of Paradise,
 I will portray it in diverse forms. Moses made a crown
 for that resplendent altar;
 with a wreath entirely of gold
 did he crown
 the altar in its beauty. Thus gloriously entwined
 is the wreath of Paradise
 that encircles the whole of creation.⁷¹

Thus, paradise rises above us in the vault of the heavens, and yet it is earthly. The apostle Paul distinguishes it from the heaven where the angels and God Himself dwell. "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12:2–3). From these words it is apparent that, firstly, heaven and paradise are different from one another (as is also clear from the vision of St. Andrew the Fool for Christ), and that this paradise is located in high places which today man can only reach if he is caught up to them by God. It is therefore pointless to search for it by earthly means. For us it is now invisible, and there is nothing remarkable in this for people of the twentieth century, from whom we hear nothing but talk of other dimensions. It could be noted that par-

⁷¹ Saint Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on Paradise* 1.4, 9–10, Sebastian Brock, trans. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990), pp. 78–81.

adise is invisible not because it is an apparition, but because it is so oversaturated with reality that our own world appears a pale shadow or a mist in comparison.

This most wondrous place is watered by a splendid river, the waters of which are perfumed by the grace of the Creator. They continue to flow to this day, and by their sanctity they preserve our fallen world. This wondrous river was described by St. Andrew the Fool for Christ (commemorated October 2), who beheld it in a vision: "As I walked among the gardens with heartfelt joy, I saw a great river flowing through the middle of paradise, which watered those splendid gardens. Along both shores of the river grapes grew, extending vines adorned with leaves and bunches that appeared to be of gold." Then the river divided into four rivers. "The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates."

In the opinion of St. Ephraim, the Pison is the Danube, while in the opinion of St. John of Damascus it is the Ganges. The latter is more probable, for in India there is indeed much gold and many precious stones, and that river has long been considered sacred. "Bdellium" is either carbuncle (as the seventy interpreters thought) or pearl (as the Jews believed). But this stone resembled manna (Num. 11:7), which is why it is mentioned in the description of paradise, in which lie the sources of manna, the "angelic bread."

Another precious stone mentioned in connection with the description of paradise is onyx. "And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel" (Ex. 28:12). Thus, these two stones signified the sanctity of Eden and the fact that this place was ever illumined by the eyes of the Lord, which "are ten thousand times brighter than the sun, beholding all the ways of men, and considering the most secret parts" (Ecclus. 23:19).

By its appearance, which resembles a hot coal, "bdellium" shows that paradise is permeated with the divine energies, which

do not however destroy it, but establish it in a state of incorruption. Onyx, a green stone, indicates those life sources that are poured out from Eden into our fallen world and save it from complete destruction. The “gold that is good” shows that this garden served as a royal chamber for the first-created man. For this reason to this day the halos around the heads of the saints who have attained unto life in paradise are made of pure gold.

Another river that has its source in the streams from paradise, in the unanimous opinion of the holy fathers, is the Nile, or Gihon, which compasses the whole land of Kush, or Ethiopia (Ezek. 29:10, Ps. 68:32).

No commentators have any doubts regarding the identity of the remaining two rivers. To this day under the same names they carry their sacred waters to the Persian Gulf. It should be noted that even the pagans considered the waters of these rivers to be sacred, apparently preserving distorted remembrances of their source.

The last of these rivers, the Euphrates, has a special place in sacred history. There lay the homeland of Abraham, and along it ran the longest borders of the kingdom of Israel under David and Solomon. The Euphrates is linked to the four angels “which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men” (Rev. 9:14–15). These will be loosed at the sound of the sixth trumpet of the avenging angel just before the final catastrophe: “The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared” (Rev. 16:12). And so the link will wither between Eden and the perishing world, which had already been sundered in the hearts of men. This is what will make possible the last rebellion against God of those deceived by the demons. It will end in the final battle at Armageddon, where evil will be forever crushed (Rev. 16:12–16).

For many the question arises: why do we not find paradise at the sources of these rivers? To this the venerable Ephraim responds: “Even though the regions from which these flow are known, this does not apply to the head of the source; for Paradise is situated on a great height, and the rivers are swallowed up under the surrounding sea, descending as it were down a tall water pipe; having passed through the ground beneath the sea

and reached this earth, the earth then spouts forth with one of them.”⁷² It may be added that we do not know how the space in our fallen world communicates with the space set apart by the flaming sword that turns in all directions. We can only learn this mystery when, having crossed the river of death, we draw near to the tree of life and drink from the source of the waters of paradise.

“And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food.” These wondrous plants comprise the same species that we know on Earth, but freed of the effect of the curse and particularly honored by God’s grace and sanctification. This is what the words “God planted” mean, for this signifies the Lord’s special care, and not that the Almighty turned the soil of paradise with a spade, planted seeds, and watered them with a watering can. This latter idea contradicts the Orthodox understanding of Scripture and is guilty of impious anthropomorphism.

The great Christian mystic St. Gregory of Sinai writes from his own experience: “Paradise is twofold—sensible and spiritual: there is the paradise of Eden and the paradise of grace. The paradise of Eden ... has been planted by God with every kind of sweet-scented plant. It is neither entirely free from corruption nor altogether subject to it. Created between corruption and incorruption, it is always rich in fruits, ripe and unripe, and continually full of flowers. When trees and ripe fruit rot and fall to the ground they turn into sweet-scented soil, free from the smell of decay exuded by the vegetable-matter of this world. That is because of the great richness and holiness of the grace ever abounding there.”⁷³

In the martyric acts of the holy martyr Perpetua there is a description of the paradise to which she was caught up. Amid the beautiful things there she beheld roses as tall as a cypress, bestrewn with flowers and exuding a most delicate fragrance. From these trees of paradise an angel brought two crowns plaited of red roses and white lilies, with which he crowned the holy martyrs

⁷² St. Ephraim the Syrian, *Hymns on Paradise* 2.6, p. 201.

⁷³ St. Gregory of Sinai, “On Commandments and Doctrines,” in *The Philokalia: The Complete Text*, vol. 4, p. 213.

Cecilia and Valerian. These had the marvelous property of never wilting, and no one but those who loved purity was able to see them, and they gave off a wondrous fragrance.

The aforementioned St. Andrew the Fool for Christ described the paradise revealed to him in a vision as follows: "There were numerous gardens filled with tall trees, which delighted my eyes as their tops swayed, and their branches exuded a great fragrance. Some of these trees bloomed continuously, others were adorned with leaves of golden appearance, while still others bore fruit of ineffable beauty. These trees cannot be likened to any earthly tree, for they were planted by the hand not of man, but of God. In those gardens there were innumerable birds with gold, snow-white, and varicolored wings. They sat in the branches of the trees of paradise and sang so exquisitely that I was beside myself at the sweetness of their song, so delighted was my heart, and I thought that their singing must be audible to the very pinnacle of heaven. Those marvelous gardens stood in rows, as one regiment stands opposite another. ... There from all four sides quiet, fragrant breezes wafted, at whose breath the gardens swayed, rustling their leaves enchantingly."

At the very heart of this magnificent chamber lay a mysterious sanctuary: "the tree of life ... in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." All the peoples of the world retain the memory of these plants, affixed in countless traditions concerning the world tree through which the world's axis runs.

The venerable Ephraim attests to these secret treasures:

Perhaps that blessed tree,
the Tree of Life,
is, by its rays,
the sun of Paradise;
its leaves glisten,
and on them are impressed
the spiritual graces of that Garden.
In the breezes the other trees
bow down as if in worship
before that sovereign
and leader of the trees.
In the very midst He planted
the Tree of Knowledge,

endowing it with awe,
 hedging it in with dread,
 so that it might straightway serve
 as a boundary to the inner region of Paradise.
 Two things did Adam hear
 in that single decree:
 that they should not eat of it
 and that, by shrinking from it,
 they should perceive that it was not lawful
 to penetrate further, beyond that Tree.

...

God established the Tree as judge,
 so that if Adam should eat from it,
 it might show him that rank
 which he had lost through his pride,
 and show him, as well, that low estate
 he had acquired, to his torment.
 Whereas, if he should overcome and conquer,
 it would robe him in glory
 and reveal to him also
 the nature of shame,
 so that he might acquire, in his good health,
 an understanding of sickness.

...

In the midst of Paradise God had planted
 the Tree of Knowledge
 to separate off, above and below,
 sanctuary from Holy of Holies.
 Adam made bold to touch,
 and was smitten like Uzziah:
 the king became leprous,
 Adam was stripped.
 Being struck like Uzziah,
 he hastened to leave:
 both kings fled and hid,
 in shame of their bodies.

...

God did not permit
 Adam to enter
 that innermost Tabernacle;
 this was withheld,

so that first he might prove pleasing
 in his service of that outer Tabernacle;
 like a priest
 with fragrant incense,
 Adam's keeping of the commandment
 was to be his censer (Ex. 30:1–8);
 that he might enter before the Hidden One
 into that hidden Tabernacle.

...
 Adam in all his filth
 sought to enter
 that Holy of Holies
 which loves only those who resemble it;
 and because he made bold to enter
 that inner tabernacle,
 God did not allow him to enter
 the outer one either.⁷⁴

Thus, according to the most-wise Ephraim, the essence of the fall into sin was communing unworthily—an attempt to become god without God. As in the new paradise, the Church, “he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body,” and “for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep” (1 Cor. 11:29–30), so also in the first garden communing unworthily caused our souls to succumb to the sickness of sin, and we became subject to death.

This explanation is grounded in Scripture itself: “[Wisdom] is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her” (Prov. 3:18). The true Wisdom of God is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (1 Cor. 1:24). He is the fruit of the righteous man (Prov. 11:30), for He gives Himself to him for a reward. He is the fulfilled desire of all who hunger and thirst after righteousness (Prov. 13:12). He is the source of meekness,⁷⁵ for He Himself is meek and lowly in heart (Prov. 15:4). All these sayings of Solomon which reference the tree of life refer to Christ, the Author of life.

⁷⁴ St. Ephraim the Syrian, *Hymns on Paradise* 3.2–16, 4.2, pp. 91–98.

⁷⁵ In the Russian Synodal Version the verse referenced literally reads, “A meek tongue is a tree of life.” –*Trans.*

The sacred tree growing in the garden of paradise bestowed eternal life not in and of itself, but because it was yoked with the uncreated power of Jesus, which drives out corruption. As today, in the sacraments of the Orthodox Church, by visible means man receives the grace which deifies him, so also it was in paradise. Let each hear in his heart the words of divine revelation: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7).

Chapter 11

The Creation of Woman

When leading Adam the first-created into the royal chambers of the garden of Eden, and having given him the law through the observance of which his mastery would have become unending, the All-merciful Lord immediately gives him the promised authority over the animals.

"And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone, let us make for him a help suitable to him. And God formed yet farther out of the earth all the wild beasts of the field, and all the birds of the sky, and he brought them to Adam, to see what he would call them, and whatever Adam called any living creature, that was the name of it. And Adam gave names to all the cattle and to all the birds of the sky, and to all the wild beasts of the field, but for Adam there was not found a help like to himself" (Gen. 2:18–20 LXX).

Showing His particular care for the race of man, God decides to create woman as a helper for Adam. As this event was of great importance for the fate of the world, as at the creation of man the Persons of the Holy Trinity take counsel beforehand.

"It is not good that man should be alone," said the Creator; and ever since that time it has been natural for man to seek union with his brethren, for the very command of God is instilled in our nature. For this reason those proud ones who separate themselves from humanity are acting contrary to their own essence.

Although it can happen that man's aspiration to keep pace with his companions separates him from God, when he departs from them he does not become lonely, for all the redeemed children of the Church are with him. Even hermits deep in the wilderness, moved by this first command of the Creator, remain in the communion of love with the Church and the whole world. It is by their prayers that the universe has not yet perished in the fire of a global conflagration.

"Let us make for him a help suitable to him." Here the plural, as in other passages of Scripture, serves as a mystical indication of the Triunity. Wishing to show Adam and his descendants their distinction from the animals (for many pagans both ancient and modern consider them related), God first showed His purpose—to create for him a helper of one essence with him. Then the Lord acts as though unaware of his essence, and through this comparison He manifests the fundamental distinction between man and the other creatures of the earth. For if Eve, the helper, is incomparably more perfect than all animals living, so much the more is Adam no kin to apes and swine. Thus the Omniscient One rejected at the outset the madness of Darwin and his followers!

This sacred text asserts that the beasts and the birds were formed of earth. But the question arises: how are we to reconcile these words with the account in the first chapter of Genesis, which states that the birds emerged from the water? This seeming contradiction is easily resolved, however: both beasts and birds have an earthly figure of their existence. Here the sacred author does not undertake to describe the creation of the animals (this was done in the first chapter), but wishes to show their qualitative distinction from the race of man. These creatures have earth (matter) as their source, whereas man is a duality: he is both of the dust of the earth and a partaker of the breath of the Divinity (Gen. 2:7). In this context it becomes clear why it is said that the birds were *formed* of earth—that is, they received an earthly *form* distinct from that of man, who was created in the *image* of God.

"And [God] brought them to Adam." Immediately the formerly uninhabited expanse of the garden of Eden was filled with the singing of birds (who since that time continue to praise the Creator there to this day) and the noise of beasts. "They came to him," writes St. Ephraim, "as though to a loving shepherd, pass-

ing in front of him without any fear, flock after flock according to their species and varieties. They had no fear of him, nor were they in trepidation of one another; a herd of predators passed by, followed fearlessly by a group of the animals upon which they preyed. So Adam took care of the earth and became master of everything on this day, in accordance with the blessing he had received—for the word of the Creator had taken effect and his blessing had been fulfilled in actual fact.”⁷⁶

In Eastern law, one who gives a name thereby asserts his authority over the one named. For example, King Nebuchadnezzar renamed Daniel and his three youths, showing that they had become his servants (Dan. 1:7). In the Orthodox Church likewise, one who is baptized or tonsured a monastic receives a new name as a sign of the new relationship between him and God. And in the age to come, to him who overcomes the Spirit will give “a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it” (Rev. 2:17).

Thus, through naming the animals Adam acquired power over them, and for the animals themselves was revealed the design and purpose toward which Adam was to lead each of them. At the same time, this action likewise traced the bounds of man’s authority: God Himself gave names to the day and to the night (Gen. 1:5), to the heavens (Gen. 1:8), to the earth and the sea (Gen. 1:10), and to the stars (Ps. 146:4). All these creations are not subject to man (still less could God Himself, Who has none who is above Him, be named by any one proper name that would precisely describe His nature). These names were not given by chance. But Adam, being permeated by the power of the Spirit, delved into God’s very design for each creature and expressed it by the medium of sound.

The sacred writer says that names were given to all the higher animals. Apparently this means that at that time not one species had yet become extinct. Otherwise Adam could not have carried out God’s will. He gave names to the dragons (or dinosaurs) and to other creatures which, according to modern science, disappeared long before his appearance. But among all these roaring,

⁷⁶ St. Ephraim the Syrian, *Hymns on Paradise*, “The Commentary on Genesis,” 3.9–10, 203.

chirping, and hissing creatures, not one was found like unto man: no rational, self-aware animal was found that was able together with Adam to sanctify the whole world by prayer and labor. By all this God Himself showed to the generations of men to follow and to all the angelic worlds the majesty of man, to which not one being called forth from nonexistence can compare. The depths which this creation conceals are so measureless that the infinite Lord was able to be united to them!

“And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (Gen. 2:21–25).

Adam, who had never known sleep, suddenly fell into that mysterious state sent by God. The Greek Septuagint translation uses the word *extas*, or “trance,” which is used to describe a particular state when the soul passes over to another plane of being. It is insensible of its body and beholds secrets inaccessible to ordinary vision. This was the trance of Adam, and he did not experience any discomfort at the removal of his rib, yet at the same time he knew what had happened to him and he prophesied concerning the future.

The Lord took a rib because this bone is closest of all to the heart, and the woman was created in order to know the desires of the man’s heart and to be his counselor and most intimate friend. Often it is asked: why was Eve not created, like Adam, from the dust of the ground? The answer is simple: then she would have been of another nature than Adam. Chrysostom emphasizes that with regard to God the word “took” must be understood in a manner befitting God, and not as though the Supreme Nature had physical hands, or had any need to take physical action in order to effect the miracle of creation. This word is used for the sake of our limited intelligence, which cannot comprehend the mysterious actions of the Creator’s omnipotence. As the most holy

John Chrysostom says, "What words can express the full sense of this? What kind of mind can grasp it? He took one rib, the text says—and how from this single rib did he fashion the complete being? ... Tell me, how did the removal happen? How was it he felt nothing of the removal? You can tell me none of these things; only the one who did the creating knows. ... See the precision of Scripture. I mean, it no longer said, He formed, but 'He fashioned,' since he took part of what was already formed and, so to say, made up for what was lacking. Hence it says, 'He fashioned': he didn't perform further shaping, but took some small part of the shaping already done, fashioned this part and made a complete being. How great the power of God, the master craftsman, making a likeness of those limbs from that tiny part, creating such wonderful senses, and preparing a creature complete, entire and perfect, capable both of speaking and of providing much comfort to man by a sharing of her being."⁷⁷

Modern evolutionist theologians naturally cannot fit this biblical narrative into their system. For if we believe their deity, the "spirit of the age," the first true man appeared through evolution in the womb of a woman. Still less can this spirit acknowledge that the creation of Eve occurred miraculously, for then the same must be said of Adam and of God's other creatures. For if God considered it possible to create woman by extraordinary and miraculous means, what grounds have we to believe that everything else evolved by means of chance mutations occasionally guided by an incompetent Demiurg? But here too our "theologians" run into a problem: what is to be done with Revelation? One cannot simply ignore this account! And so they immediately began to invent a symbolic understanding of this text, intended to supplant its literal meaning. The rib, in their interpretation, signifies not only a particular bone, but also a particular dimension of man's essence (the emotionality particularly inherent in women). They have noted the similarity between this account and the Sumerian legends (in Sumerian the word *ninti* means "woman from a rib" and "she who bestows life"). But the biblical story cannot be re-

⁷⁷ John Chrysostom, "Homilies on Genesis" 15.11, Robert C. Hill, trans., in *Homilies on Genesis*, The Fathers of the Church series (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1985), vol. 74, p. 200.

duced to its literal meaning: it also has spiritual significance. And this tradition was not invented by Moses, but was also known to the earliest patriarchs, which is why it was also known in Sumeria. But it by no means follows from all this that the actual creation of woman occurred somewhere in “metahistory,” and not as it is here described. The existence of a symbolic explanation does not presuppose a denial of the literal meaning, just as the fact that Israel’s crossing of the Red Sea prefigured baptism, for example, does not mean that the event never took place, and that the Hebrews merely walked across upon overgrown bulrushes (1 Cor. 10:1–2).

The Bible, taken as a whole, confirms the literal authenticity of the account of Eve’s creation from Adam’s rib. The apostle Paul teaches the Corinthians: “For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man. ... For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels” (1 Cor. 11:8–10). In any Orthodox church one may see this sign upon the head of pious Christian women, attesting to the reality of the event that occurred 7,500 years ago. We can only wonder therefore at how certain young ladies, while showing one set of beliefs by their deeds, teach something else altogether by their words. These persons should recall the words of the apostle James: “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (Jas. 1:8). And in another place the chief of the apostles, in forbidding women to teach in church and to have authority over her husband, writes: “Adam was first formed, then Eve” (1 Tim. 2:13).

Finally, when preaching in the Areopagus in Athens, he says: “God ... hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth” (Acts 17:24–26). This expression cannot be properly understood without believing in the biblical account of Eve’s creation from Adam (otherwise the apostle would have said “of two bloods”). Thus, all attempts to disregard the literal meaning of the account of the book of Genesis lead to a rejection of the whole of both Old Testament and New Testament revelation.

In the modernist understanding of the sacred texts, the concept of Christ as the new Adam is lost, and the profound symbolism of the Passion becomes incomprehensible. Adam fell asleep, and from his rib emerged Eve, the mother of all living. Christ

died, His side pierced—and from it there poured forth Blood and water, renewing the Church, in which flow the sources of life eternal. The Blood nourishes us in the Eucharist, while the water washes us in baptism. This explanation itself is firmly grounded in Holy Scripture. The apostle Paul, in comparing the family to the union between Christ and the Church, quotes Adam's prophecy and applies it to this mystery: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:31–32).

From these mysterious heights concealed in this text, let us now return to the letter of it.

"This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Here Eve is not called by her proper name, but by the name of her kind, as the animals were named according to their kind. As then, Adam's naming of his wife signified that the husband has God-given authority over her. The modern aspiration to be delivered from this authority (emancipation) has its source in Satan's wish to destroy the family and give over to eternal death all "liberated women." It should also be noted that the principle of submission in the family appeared even before the fall into sin, and hence it is not the result of the latter.

The meaning of this verse becomes more clear if we turn to the Hebrew version: "She shall be called woman (*isha*), because she was taken out of man (*ish*)." Here man and woman are two mutually complementary parts of a single whole.

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." In the words of the Lord Jesus, Adam said this not on his own behalf, but rather God was speaking through him (Mt. 19:4–6). They established the indissoluble sacrament of marriage: "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." In the New Testament this union is transfigured in the sacred rite of matrimony. We should note that since marriage was established by the Creator Himself in paradise before the fall, let all those who consider it a thing defiled or impure stop their mouths. According to the sacred canons of the Council of Gangra (around AD 340–376), they are to be anathematized!

We must remember, however, that this command of the Lord, instilled in our nature, also applies to illicit carnal intercourse, when fornicators become one flesh with each other. The apostle Paul teaches us: “Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body” (1 Cor. 6:15–18). Hence, everyone who commits this terrible sin falls away from the Church of God and into the anti-church of fornication, from which may God deliver us!

“And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed”—just as to this day little children in whom sin has not yet developed have no shame; just as the beasts and angels who know no sin have no shame. In them there is no breach between the life of the soul and the bodily life that engenders shame. Adam was clothed in the incorruptible glory of his Creator, and so he did not see his nakedness, which he beheld after the fall. Before man sinned he did not look at himself at all, as a thing of little significance, and so he was not ashamed. As St. Macarius writes, “The enemy, having deceived Adam through the woman as through something akin to him, stripped him of the glory with which he was clothed. And thus man appeared naked, and learned of his disfigurement, which he had not seen before because his thoughts had been delighting in the beauties of heaven; for after his disobedience his thoughts became earthly and crawled about below, while his simple and good reasoning became mixed with reasoning that was carnal and corrupt.”⁷⁸

But this glorious clothing of grace which our first parents lost is restored to us in the baptismal font, when having “been baptized into Christ” we “put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). And so, developing in themselves this gift of their life in the Church, hosts of fools for Christ and ascetic warriors have arisen, who like Adam have no

⁷⁸ St. Macarius the Great, *Dukhovnye besedy* [Spiritual Talks], vol. 5 (Moscow: 1995), p. 385 (Rus. ed.).

need of clothing, but are clothed in the eternal radiance of the light on Tabor.

Together we have mentally walked the wondrous and mysterious paths of an incorruptible world that had not yet fallen. The time has now come to descend into the murky depths of a distorted and occupied universe, permeated with sin, the curse, and death. For it is from the sludge of this lowest point that we are to begin our ascent to the Homeland on high.

Part IV

THE WORLD AFTER THE FALL



“We were indeed the survivors of a wreck, the crew of a golden ship that had gone down before the beginning of the world.”

—G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*

Chapter 1

The Consequences of the First Sin on Earth

As every Christian knows, the luminous temple of the primordial world collapsed soon after it was built. And the keystone of its arch was dislodged by the sin of the first people, Adam and Eve. Many excellent books on this dread event have been written by those who have penetrated incomparably more deeply than we into the secrets of God. Consequently, without plumbing the depths of the significance of the biblical narrative, we shall only comment on the sacred words where this is most essential.

“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods,

knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (Gen. 3:1–7).

Thus occurred the greatest tragedy in the history of the universe. This crime encompassed all the future sins of the world, and for this reason the prophet Hosea says of the impious Israelites: "But they, like Adam, have transgressed the covenant, there have they dealt treacherously against me" (Hos. 6:7 DRA).

Although the serpent was of course an ordinary dumb animal (which still had legs at the time), yet through it Satan spoke as through an instrument. In Revelation he is referred to as "the great dragon ... that old serpent" (Rev. 12:9). And the Lord says that the devil "was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth" (Jn. 8:44). The serpent "approached crawling on its belly, its eyes downcast; for it was not able to gaze upon the brilliant visage of her whom it wished to tempt." And despite the contemptible appearance of the tempter, who by his very appearance showed the baseness of what he offered, Eve succumbed to his seduction! This apparently happened because in her heart there had appeared the germ of the passion of self-love, from which all transgressions sprout forth.

In Eve's temptation we may trace all the stages of a sin's development. When the serpent addressed her with an outwardly innocent question, this was the first stage on the path to sin: suggestion. Without entering into conversation with this creation, she should first have consulted the Creator, rather than entering into a verbal contest at her own risk. By deciding to act without communing with God, Eve already created a certain gap between herself and Life, which later widened into a transgression and brought forth hades—a place where God as Savior is not present. But the woman began to consider this suggestion of the enemy, became interested in it—and coupling occurred. How many sins have taken place since then because man finds it interesting to try something forbidden! This is the beginning of apostasy from the Truth, and this is why Eve on her own added to God's command-

ment that which was not there: “Neither shall ye touch it.” For it is said: “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Prov. 30:6). Sin had already begun to eat away at the mind of Eve!

Seeing that his plan was succeeding, the enemy grew bolder and spoke blasphemy against the Creator, accusing Him of envy. Rightly does the proverb say that “everyone judges others based on himself”: having fallen through envy, the devil wished to believe everyone else to be just as envious. At this time a struggle was taking place in the soul of Eve, the forces of sin and of good being equally matched. But she acquiesced to the blasphemy, and thereby the sin was accomplished in her soul.

The prophet Moses’ description of the progression of the fall into sin wholly coincides with the words of St. John the Theologian: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh”—the tree that was good for food—“and the lust of the eyes”—it was pleasant to the eye—“and the pride of life”—and to be desired, because it gives knowledge—“is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn. 2:16). Thus, like a seed, this one sin of the first people contained all transgressions to come.

Instead of exercising the authority given him and staying his wife’s fall, Adam fell along with her. The Bible does not say that Eve persuaded him. Here a demonic solidarity was more likely at work, a perversion of the inherent sense of community typical of the “social animal,” which would subsequently spawn numerous spine-chilling transgressions—from gang killings by teenagers to the horrors of the revolution. Adam did not chose not to follow the Lord’s commandment, preferring his love for his wife over love for the Creator. The result was that he lost both. Without God it is impossible to truly love anyone at all, for He Himself is Love, and outside Him there is only hatred.

Immediately after this attempt at godless “deification,” human nature became distorted. The uncreated light deserted it, the eyes of the first people were opened, and they saw their lamentable state, for they looked upon themselves for the first time. Their souls immediately died, for they ceased to see God. The world became hostile to men, and in order to protect themselves somewhat from it they sewed themselves clothes with the leaves of the fig—which tree, it is said, was the tree of knowledge. For

this reason Christ dried up that tree, it being a symbol of sin, which is beautiful outwardly but empty and barren within. From this passage of Scripture it becomes clear that Adam had lost his authority over the world, and that the seducer had stolen it from him. "The enemy, having seduced Adam, thereby gained the mastery over him," writes the venerable Macarius. "He stripped him of his power, and proclaimed himself the prince of this world. But in the beginning the Lord set man as the prince of this age and the master of things visible. ... But after he yielded to seduction, he likewise surrendered his authority to the seducer. For this reason sorcerers and enchanters, through the action of adverse power, by God's permissive providence are seen to work wonders, have power over poisonous beasts, go bravely into fire and water, like Jannes and Jambres who opposed Moses (2 Tim. 3:8), and like Simon when he held contest with Peter the chief of the apostles, doing what Adam was able to do before the fall."

The world has been seized by evil spirits. Water spirits have come to dwell in the rivers and lakes, and wood spirits in the forests. Outposts of the princes of wickedness appeared beneath the sky, which did not allow any to pass who desired to ascend to heaven, to the throne of God. For this reason Isaiah cried out with hope for liberation: "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down" (Is. 64:1). Only the Lord's crucifixion upon the wood of the cross (amid the element of air) cleared the way into heaven and unseated the very roots of the occupying regime in our universe, which will ultimately be liberated on the Day of Judgment.

But let us return our thoughts to the garden of Eden, where the full destructive action of sin was growing ever stronger in man. He had forgotten that God fills heaven and earth. His mind, stripped of its link with the Eternal Mind, grew extraordinarily weak. So it always occurs when man does what is lawless, and ultimately madness awaits him (as it did Nietzsche).

"And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden" (Gen. 3:8). Is it not this mindless act of the first-created people that the misbehaving child repeats when, instead of asking forgiveness, he hides under the bed? Truly, what occurred in the gar-

den of Eden left its mark upon our entire nature! This hereditary injury from which all people suffer, transmitted through conception (Ps. 50:7), is the root of all other sins. In order to heal human nature of this evil contagion, Christ was crucified on the tree of the Cross on the same day (Friday) and at the same hour (the sixth) when Adam sinned.

It should be noted that the word “walked” with regard to God must not be understood literally, for He is an incorporeal being. In the explanation of the fathers, the Lord’s walking should be understood to mean “both His arrival and His appearance to aid those in need or to take vengeance upon His enemies, or for any other work, since our coming is accomplished by means of the use of our legs.” Adam did not wish to have God as his helper and physician, and so he made himself an enemy to him and a child of His wrath by nature (Eph. 2:3).

“And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself” (Gen. 3:9–10). Where art thou? Into what state hast thou fallen? By his transgression Adam cast himself out, into a realm where there is no God, into a land of sin and outer darkness. And God’s question exhorted him to repentance, to a return to the fullness of Life Eternal. But this is precisely what distinguishes sin from ordinary illness: the one afflicted often does not wish to be healed. And so every sin incurs punishment, from which man can escape only by fleeing to the protection of the Crucified Lord.

Adam decided to justify himself on his own, by his own efforts, and wished to hide in the prison he had just built within his heart. If he had immediately repented, he would have been forgiven, and the history of the world would have been different, but that is not what happened.

“And [God] said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat” (Gen. 3:11–12).

As the sin developed, it destroyed that for which Adam was created. It severed the united flesh of the man and the woman, and they felt themselves to be enemies and competitors. But the terrible course of this illness did not stop here. Adam cast his own

blame upon the Creator Himself, and since that time the progression of any unrepented sin inevitably leads to atheism. This is how all false religions and heresies arose, and this is the source of evolutionism. One of the greatest propagandists of this teaching, Huxley, admitted that he was compelled to accept Darwin's theory not by the accuracy of the facts (which did not exist then and do not now), but by the fact that he could thereby freely give himself over to foul fornication and adultery.

"And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:13).

The Almighty attempted to heal the man through the woman, but she too showed that her illness was incurable. Only five and a half millennia later "the Lord would create a new thing in the earth, A woman would compass a man" (cf. Jer. 31:22).

At this point, seeing that lenient, quick measures were of no avail, God proceeded to a laborious, prolonged course of treatment. This entire wonderful world He gave over to serve as a hospital. And a hospital ward lives by other laws than those of a royal palace. In the words of the venerable Symeon the New Theologian, "All creatures, when they saw that Adam had been banished from Paradise, no longer wished to submit to him, the criminal: the sun did not wish to shine for him, nor did the moon and the other stars wish to show themselves to him; the springs did not wish to gush forth water, and the rivers to continue their course; the air thought no longer to blow so as not to allow Adam, the sinner, to breathe; the beasts and all the other animals of the earth, when they saw that he had been stripped of his first glory, began to despise him, and all immediately were ready to fall upon him. Heaven, after a fashion, was about to strive to fall upon him, and the earth did not wish to bear him any longer. But God, Who created everything and made man—what did He do? Knowing before the creation of the world that Adam would transgress His commandment, and having foreordained for him a new life and a re-creation, which things he was to receive in rebirth in Holy Baptism by virtue of the economy of the Incarnation of His only-begotten Son and our God, He restrained all these creatures by His power, and in His compassion and goodness did not allow them immediately to strive against man, and commanded that creation

should remain in submission to him, and having become corrupt, should serve corrupt man for whom it had been created, with the aim that when man again should be renewed and become spiritual, incorrupt and immortal, then also the whole creation, which had been subjected by God to man to serve him, might be delivered from this servitude, might be renewed together with him, and become incorrupt and as it were spiritual.”⁷⁹

And immediately God commenced passing His righteous and merciful Judgment upon the our ancestors who had sinned. But first retribution befell the one who had perverted man in the guise of a serpent. His punishment was given him through the very form in which he had committed his sin. In the opinion of Saint Basil the Great, from the moment of this curse Satan lost forever the ability to repent.

“And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:14–15).

The first half of the curse changed the nature of Satan’s instrument. The serpent lost the legs it had formerly possessed. To this day its skeleton bears the remnants of the legs of which it was deprived. Interestingly, in Babylon on the Ishtar Gate there are surviving depictions of four-legged snakes. Apparently Satan, whom the pagans serve, informed them of the guise in which he succeeded in seizing the earth.

The devil himself was doomed by this divine command to crawl upon the earth and eat dust—that is, to do works far removed from all that is God-like. He who had desired to become a god was transformed into a dust-eater, incapable of any creativity, and instead ceaselessly going from decay to decay, from one death to the next!

The second half of the serpent’s curse served for the consolation of fallen man. This was a prophecy of how the reign of the

⁷⁹ Symeon the New Theologian, “Adam and the First-Created World,” Homily 45.66–67, in *The Orthodox Word*, 1977, vol. 13, No. 5 (76), p. 213. Slightly revised by current translator.

foe would not be complete and decisive. From the very beginning man would struggle with sin and with Satan, its father, and this battle would end upon the coming of the Liberator. He would be the Seed of the Woman (that is, born of the Virgin, immaculately, and therefore sinless) and would destroy the chief power of the enemy: sin. But this victory would not be an easy one for him. The part of Him that is closest to this earth, His body, would be stung by the serpent—that is, He would die (for not for nothing is Satan said to possess the dominion of death). Thus was given the first revelation of the coming of Christ, which is often called the proto-evangelium, or first gospel. Mankind carried the remembrance of it throughout its history, albeit in distorted form due to paganism. Folklorists know that the most widespread fairy tale theme is the hero who slays a dragon or serpent. This legend is found in practically every nation, and the reason for this is apparently its universal roots. Thus the descendants of Adam have preserved an echo of the divine revelation regarding paradise. In addition to this testimony of folklore, material proof has been discovered that the first generations after the flood preserved the tradition concerning the fall into sin. In Mesopotamia two ancient seals have been found, the first bearing an image of the serpent tempting Eve and Adam, and the second depicting them being driven away from the tree of life.

“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Gen. 3:16).

Since that time men have been born amid sufferings that exceed the pangs of any animal. Godless biology, wishing to explain this phenomenon, asserts that human evolution occurred too swiftly, and that the mechanics of childbirth failed to keep pace with it. The absurdity of this opinion is obvious. For if the spine (bipedalism) somehow managed to keep pace with the development of the brain, why should those mechanisms that allegedly make evolution possible have failed to keep pace (since hereditary mutations pertain either to sex cells or to the embryo)?

Since the time of God’s punishment, woman is by nature subject to her husband: for since she failed to properly employ her equal status with him, but wished to rule over him, she was right-

ly stripped even of her former state. Hence, any attempt at emancipation or false liberation of woman is unnatural and inspired by Satan. By His coming Christ delivered woman from slavery, and deification is accessible to her just as it is to man. But until the world is changed, the word of God instilled in her nature abides in her, and woman is saved by her cross of humbly obeying it. The apostle Paul likewise confirms the divine institution of the hierarchy of human relations. "The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3). This is why those families where the woman attempts to become the head of her husband disintegrate, for this is contrary to nature.

We should note that the Lord imposes these punishments by degrees. First the curse is pronounced upon the serpent, but Eve did not come to her senses. Next she herself is punished. Perhaps Adam will realize his sin and repent? But this too does not occur. Next it is his own turn. But not wishing to annul His blessing, God curses the earth over which Adam was appointed to rule, and through the earth sorrows likewise befall Adam, their cause.

"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:17-19).

At these terrible words, death, which the physicists call entropy, entered the world. The stars began to explode, nuclear disintegration became irreversible, and in the future, if the universe does not alter, all atoms will turn into iron and elements of similar atomic mass. Interestingly, the more distant any given thing is from man in the hierarchy, the less it is affected by decay and death, although nothing in this world is completely free from them. Even protons, according to some modern hypotheses, "vaporize" over time, and their light grows dim. Under the laws now at work, a heat death awaits the entire universe.

The curse afflicted the living world far more severely. Plants began to mutate, roses acquired thorns, and certain bacteria be-

came pathogenic. Weeds have choked the meadows and fields, and the grasses can no longer cope with them, for the ecological balance has been upset. The earth has largely lost its fertility, and in order to exist man is obliged to labor to the point of exhaustion.

The animal kingdom suffered even more greatly. Animals have become mortal and have ceased to see man as their master. A struggle for existence has begun among them, and they have separated into hunters and the hunted (to the mind of St. Theophilus of Antioch). Monstrous mutants began to be born (according to Blessed Augustine), whom certain mindless persons today consider material for the self-improvement of creation.

The greatest change, however, was suffered by human nature. The soul ceased to see God, which is true life for it, and so it died that same day that it sinned. When the soul died, it consequently began to decay. Its desires escaped the control of the mind and spawned the passions; the mind became darkened and was stripped of true wisdom. To acquire knowledge it now had to destroy that which it wished to understand (the origin of the analytical method upon which modern science is based). The will grew weak, and it is difficult for us to do that for which our being longs. The body ceased to submit to the soul, and this gave rise to illnesses and death, which completely severed the already weakened union. The sexual aspect of the human personality was also extraordinarily damaged, giving rise to a feeling of shame and producing the desire to dress, so as to protect one's rebellious nature from a world that had become hostile. Man sees the whole world as an enemy to be conquered and remade as he sees fit.

But the chief punishment for man was nevertheless death, which doomed his person to decay. The body disintegrates into dust, and the immortal soul descends into the depths of the earth, to await the coming of the Deliverer. For it would be impossible and incongruous with the nature of the immutable God for His words not to come to pass, and for him not to die to whom it was said, "If you eat of the fruit, you will die."

All these terrible commands of God, which have become the laws of our world, were nevertheless given for man's benefit. For if Adam and the world subject to him had not become mortal, evil

would thereby have achieved immortality: men would have become demons in the flesh, with no possibility of correction, and the world would have become a hell. So that this might not happen, into the nature of what He had created God instilled the possibility of regeneration, both of the whole world and of its master, man.

The laws established that Friday, by which the world lives to this day, were changed on another Friday, upon a different tree, by Him Who cursed the world. A limit is imposed upon the effect of these laws, and the First-born now lives by the laws of the transfigured world. Already the might of the age to come shines through the gloom of decay, and those who partake of them in the bosom of the Church already have a foretaste of that state which the whole world will achieve on the day of the Last Judgment.

“And Adam called his wife’s name Eve [Life]; because she was the mother of all living” (Gen. 3:20). After the curse God did not completely take away man’s authority. A sign of this is the fact that it was then that Adam gave his wife her name. Another manifestation of the remnants of this authority is the existence of domestic (not domesticated) animals, which remained in subjection to man.

This sacred narrative indisputably testifies that all men originated from a single root, whatever their outward distinguishing characteristics. Racism and nazism are utterly foreign to the Orthodox Church. In the same way, it will never accept the blasphemous teaching of contemporary modernists who assert that the story of the fall into sin is a myth or a “metahistory.” Any attempt to reject the literal accuracy of the biblical account necessitates a revision of the whole of divine revelation. The apostle Paul did not acknowledge any allegorical explanation of Genesis. “Adam was not deceived,” he writes, “but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (1 Tim. 2:14), thereby substantiating the divine institution of the husband as head of the family. In another epistle St. Paul, wary of the wiles of the heretics, the co-laborers of the ancient serpent (which naturally include “Christian” evolutionists), says: “I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3). Note how precisely the

apostle describes the modern heretics, who are proud of their demonic learnedness and over-complicated loquaciousness which conceal their blasphemy!

The event of the fall itself is inseparably connected with the Redemption. According to the teaching which the Spirit revealed to the apostle to the gentiles, "since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:21–22). If the first Adam was a myth and a metahistory, the second is also a fairy tale and a legend! If original sin is not alive in men, death is pointless violence on the part of a malicious demiurg, and Golgotha and the Tomb were in vain (Rom. 5).

Modernists do not believe even Christ Himself, who called the devil "a murderer from the beginning" (Jn. 8.44), for in their opinion Satan actually killed no one, and all that is recounted in the third chapter of Genesis is no more than an edifying legend or metahistory that played out in astral worlds of some kind. Furthermore, they hold that the murderer was not the devil, but the Creator Himself Who permitted the law of death to exist in the world from very the beginning. These heretics are wholly subject to the anathema of the Council of Carthage: "If any man say that Adam, the first-created man, was created mortal, and would have died in the body though he had not sinned, that is, would have left his body not in punishment for sin but by natural necessity, let him be anathema" (Canon 123).

"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Gen. 3:21). This event occurred in reality: actual skins were placed upon the bodies of men. "It seems likely that when [the first parents'] hands were laid upon their leaves they found themselves clothed with garments made of skin. Or were, perhaps some animals killed before them, so that they could nourish themselves with their flesh, cover up their nakedness with their skins, and in their deaths see the death of their own bodies?" writes St. Ephraim.⁸⁰ It is clear that this Syrian father of the Church did not believe that animals died before the fall.

⁸⁰ St. Ephrem the Syrian, "Commentary on Genesis" 2.33, in *Hymns on Paradise*, p. 222.

In vesting them with ordinary coats of skins, however, the Lord God also changed the nature of our first parents. Regarding this mystical action St. Gregory the Theologian teaches as follows: "Man prematurely partook of the sweet fruit, and was clothed in coats of skin—heavy flesh—and became a corpse-bearer, since by death Christ had imposed boundaries on sin." This coarseness of the flesh which man acquired along with the coats of skins does not permit him to freely contemplate the spiritual world, and thereby safeguards him from being directly terrorized by the impure spirits. There are ways of rendering this boundary less palpable, by which means people are able to enter the invisible world, but if this takes place without the will of God (which has no need of any stimulants) the result can be lamentable. An example of the latter would be the consequences of yoga, Eastern and Western meditation, drug and alcohol addiction (note that "hallucinations" cannot be considered the meaningless fruit of the imagination: on the contrary, it is the actual experience of seeing demons), which lead to the destruction of the soul and the fragmentation of the psyche.

"And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever" (Gen. 3:22). In this way with sorrowful irony God shows the first-created man the deception of the serpent, which had promised a godless God-likeness and delivered only shame, nakedness, and death. Adam had desired to become like one of the Trinity ("one of us"), and became like Him only in one aspect: he himself established his own system of values, just as God has no law outside Himself to which He is subject, but is Himself a law unto Himself, for He is essential Good. But the first-created man, as a creature that is not existent by nature, could not create autonomous good for himself, for this requires having a source of existence in one's own self; whereas man invented simulated good and simulated evil, substituting a fantasy for the reality. Thus Adam and Eve became the first actors after Satan, having desired to play the role of the Almighty.

The Lord imposed a ban upon eternal life in the fallen world. But in their pridefulness many mortals do not wish to ask God for mercy, and instead attempt to find the fruit of the sacred tree

of life by means of magic and its lawful daughter, science. Paths to this fruit have included vampirism, cannibalism (now called fetal tissue therapy), genetic engineering, pre-mortem freezing of the body, etc. But alas, God's merciful ban remains in effect to this day, and it cannot (yet?) be circumvented. If this attempt ever proves successful, and people become demons in the flesh, possessing apparent immortality and rejecting procreation by the divinely established means (a tendency which all perverts share), then the Lord Himself will halt history and renew the universe in a global conflagration (for the holy fathers have foretold that Christ will come when a predetermined number of people have been born). To keep this from happening at the dawn of world history, God drove his rebellious vassal out of his palace.

"Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:23–24). Contemplating this dread event, the Church chants: "Adam sat before Paradise and, lamenting his nakedness, he wept: 'Woe is me! By evil deceit was I persuaded and led astray, and now I am an exile from glory. Woe is me! In my simplicity I was stripped naked, and now I am in want. O Paradise, no more shall I take pleasure in thy joy; no more shall I look upon the Lord my God and Maker, for I shall return to the earth whence I was taken. O merciful and compassionate Lord, to Thee I cry aloud: I am fallen, have mercy upon me.'"⁸¹

Adam descended from the heights of Eden and, sitting at the shut gates of the garden, repented of his sin. But so that in their godless pridefulness his descendants might not undertake to seize by force the immortality forbidden them, God appointed one of the highest of the angels, a cherub, to guard the path to the tree of life, and a flaming sword began circling paradise, like a wall of fire (perhaps it is the memory of this wall that is preserved in tales recounting journeys to distant lands to retrieve enchanted fruits).

⁸¹ Doxasticon at "Lord I have Cried" on the Sunday of the Casting Out of Adam from Paradise, in *The Lenten Triodion*, Mother Mary and Bishop Kallistos (Ware), trans. (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1984), p. 169.

The word *cherub* in Hebrew means either “fullness of knowledge” or “mighty.” Both meanings of the word indicate the threatening aspect and profound wisdom of the celestial guard, whom it is impossible to deceive. In order to picture the dread spectacle which the first people beheld, let us recall the mystical visions of the prophet Ezekiel at the river Chebar (chapter 1): terrible fiery living beings with four faces (of a lion, an eagle, a bull, and a man), winged, among which flames leaped and lightning flashed. Wheels filled with eyes moved about them. The speed of the cherubim was as lightning, the noise of their wings as the noise of many waters, as the voice of the Almighty. One of these mighty beings took his place for all ages at the gates of Eden. “The barrier,” writes St. Ephraim, “was thus a living one, which of its own accord went around guarding the way to the Tree of Life from anyone who audaciously wanted to pluck its fruit; for it would kill with its sharp sword any mortal who came to steal for himself immortal life.”⁸²

Chapter 2

The Division at the Gates of Paradise

“**T**he sun hid its rays, the moon and stars were turned to blood, the mountains were afraid, the hills trembled, when Paradise was shut. Adam departed, beating his hands upon his face and saying: ‘I am fallen: merciful Lord, have mercy on me.’”⁸³ Such was the terrible shock that befell the world at the casting out of the first-created man, and at the entrance to the sanctuary a dread cherub took up his post, whose visage has been recorded in the memories of many nations (in the form of kerubs, sphinxes, and gryphons). Among the descendants of Seth, the Babylonians and the Syrians, depictions of sphinx-cherubs are encoun-

⁸² St. Ephrem the Syrian, “Commentary on Genesis” 2.36, in *Hymns on Paradise*, p. 224.

⁸³ Doxasticon at the Lity on the Sunday of the Casting Out of Adam from Paradise, in *The Lenten Triodion*, p. 169.

tered with the body of a lion, the wings of an eagle, and the face of man, standing by a tree of life, depicted in the form of a date palm. Obviously they remembered the tradition concerning the dread spectacle that met the eyes of the first people. As a continual reminder of the bliss that had been lost, in the temple Solomon “carved all the walls ... round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without” (1 Kg. 6:29).

But despite the dread sentinel and the flaming sword that turns in all directions, man is able not only to repent, but also to proudly rebel against God. This is what occurred only a short time after the banishment from paradise.

We do not know how long Adam and Eve enjoyed the delights of paradise, for those who abide in the love of the Eternal One lose all sense of time, especially considering that prior to the fall time lacked the traits that today render it synonymous with death. But however long they lived there, when they were cast out they were virgins. Then, fulfilling the commandment given in paradise, “Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord” (Gen. 4:1).

The name of Adam’s first son means “acquisition,” because Eve expected that the newborn was himself the Seed which was promised. Her words may be rendered in two ways: “either as ‘I have gotten a man Jehovah’—in a word, the God-man—or: ‘I have gotten a man from Jehovah.’ Both forms of this saying comprise a single thought on the part of our first mother” (so says Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow). But soon life showed the hopes of Eve to be unfounded. Cain, conceived in sin by his parents just after their banishment, before they had washed their hearts with tears of repentance, manifested in himself the full progression of the original defilement.

“And she again bare his brother Abel” (Gen. 4:2). Our forefathers saw the mark of sin upon their eldest son, and in their sorrow they named the second “vanity” or “breath,” in his name reflecting the affliction which they had come to know in a fallen world. But glimmers of the light of Eden still shone in the minds of the first-created people, who had begun to wash away their sin with tears. The names given to their sons prophetically defined their spiritual disposition: Cain was attached by his whole being to this

earth, and was indeed an acquirer. But Abel, the child of repentance, aspired toward the heavens like the wind: all things earthly were vanity to him, and his whole heart was permeated with the divine breathing.

In accordance with their disposition of soul, the brothers chose their occupations. "And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground" (Gen. 4:2). In the biblical worldview, the life of a shepherd is more conducive to pleasing God than tilling the soil. The former feels himself a stranger and a sojourner upon the earth (Heb. 11:9), while the latter is wholly bound to it. The former relies more on the will of God, and has more time for contemplating the Creator, while the latter, like Martha in the Gospel, has many cares. For tilling the soil is impossible without planning for the future and relying on one's own abilities, making it easy to forget that the goal of our life lies in God. In Israel there was a particular sort of ascetics—the Rechabites, who dwelt in tents and did not till the soil, so as to live as strangers whose homeland was in the heavens (Jer. 35). And according to the Lord's command, the whole nation of Israel was to live in tents eight days out of the year, so as not to forget where its true home lay.

It must be noted that the Bible rejects the popular theories of mankind's continual progress from savagery to civilization, from hunting and gathering to agriculture and animal husbandry. These speculations are based solely on the tremendous enthusiasm (in the literal sense of the word, which means demonic possession) of their adherents, and on highly dubious dating of the prehistoric period based on speculation—a vicious circle. The earliest written sources of Sumeria and Egypt indicate the ancient existence of both agriculture and animal husbandry. Equally inaccurate is the concept that ancient people deliberately domesticated animals such as the dog, the sheep, the ox, the horse, or the camel. The holy fathers state that God Himself left these creatures submissive to man after his fall.

"And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof" (Gen. 4:3–4). The scriptural expression "in process of time" means that this sacrificial offering was made on New Year's Day, which then fell on the first day of spring. Here we see the first sign that

the luminaries had begun to perform their task of indicating the sacred seasons.

The question arises: who taught the sons of Adam to offer sacrifices? Many commentators assert that their teacher was God Himself, who clothed Adam in coats of skins. Evidence supporting this supposition includes the law by which the skin of a wholeburnt offering belongs to the priest (Lev. 7:8). These bloody sacrifices were established by the Creator as a symbol and prototype of that One Sacrifice which He Himself intended to offer.

But let us return to the sacred words and examine how the two brothers observed this commandment of God. The first, exposing the hidden malady of his heart (as ordinarily occurs when an impious person encounters God), decided to discharge his debt by sacrificing that of which he himself had no need: "of the fruit of the ground." Abel, however, being permeated with the breath of God, offered the very best that he had: "the firstlings ... and of the fat thereof," because he knew in his heart that all he had was from God. Conversely, Cain held that all he had to be the fruit of his own efforts.

"And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect" (Gen. 4:4-5). Tradition has it that this respect (or favor) of God was expressed in that fire descended from heaven upon the sacrifice of Abel and consumed it, without touching the sacrifice of Cain. So teach Saints Ephraim and Chrysostom.

"And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell" (Gen. 4:5). Great wrath filled the soul of him who thought he had achieved everything by his own effort, for he had thought himself worthy of a miracle, and here what he had considered rightfully his own was withheld. At the same time, Cain's pridefulness roused him to fear the mockery of his parents, brothers, and sisters (Adam had other children, as well). In the end he turned his face toward the powers of hell, and though created with his gaze turned upward (which is the meaning of *anthropos*), became like the first envier—that is, like Satan.

"And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him" (Gen. 4:6-7).

By this means the Almighty warned the son of Adam against submissiveness to sin. The fathers call this state a “suggestion,” when man has power to accept or to reject the transgression. God’s words spoken to Cain show that even after the fall Satan has no power to compel man to sin: he can only incline his free will toward this, seducing it through false promises of gain.

“Then Cain said to his brother Abel, ‘Let us go out to the field.’ And while they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him” (Gen. 4:8 LXX). Concerning this terrible manifestation of death upon the earth, St. John the Theologian writes: “Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous” (1 Jn. 3:12). According to tradition, the murder occurred after Cain began arguing with Abel about the coming Savior. He was slain like a lamb with the sword on the day of the first vernal full moon, in the year 229 from the creation of the world (5279 BC), on the very day on which the Jews would later celebrate the Passover and on which the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom Abel was a prefiguration, was given over to death. According to the blessed Augustine, “After Adam’s transgression, Abel became the first to bear the image of our Savior. He was a virgin, a priest, and a martyr: a virgin in that he died before marriage, a priest in that he offered pleasing sacrifices to God, and a martyr in that he was killed for the true worship of God.”

“And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother?” (Gen. 4:9). Even for so great an evildoer God did not leave the door of repentance shut; but he refused to enter it, thinking, as his father had done, that he could hide his sin from the Omniscient One. “And he said, I know not: Am I my brother’s keeper? And [the Lord] said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth” (Gen. 4:9–12).

Blood is a special kind of liquid. It bears within it the life of the body, and through it the soul governs the whole organism. Spilled on the ground, it cries out with a voice that carries to the

ends of the spiritual world: as divine revelation testifies, the earth is outraged at the crimes perpetrated upon it. This occurs not because our planet is a deity or a living person (as the occultists claim), but because on the third day in it were instilled the divine *logoi*-ideas, the uncreated energies that endow it with fertility and govern the laws of its existence. These proceed from the inscrutable Essence of God itself, and hence every transgression inevitably leaves its mark upon our planet. The Lord “turned rivers into a wilderness, and the coursings of waters into a thirsting land, a fruitful land into saltiness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein” (Ps. 106:33–34).

According to the teaching of the Church, based upon Holy Scripture (Deut. 29:23–28), there are three types of transgressions for which the earth casts off nations from itself: legalized murders (abortions, killing of kinsmen or monarchs), normalized sexual perversions, and communion with unclean spirits (sorcery, psychic practices, spiritism, etc.). This is precisely what happened to the first murderer: the earth cast him off from itself. But his heart had hardened to such an extent that even after punishment he showed no trace of remorse. He was merely seized by an animal fear for his own safety, and he dared to accuse God of injustice. “And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me” (Gen. 4:13–14).

This lack of remorse plunged Cain into hell while still on earth, for by his own testimony he hid from the light-bearing face of God and left the earth’s surface, that is, went down into the nether world, into outer darkness. Looking out from his own inner hell, the murderer sees all others as potentially the same criminals as himself (“every one” means the other children of the first-made man, who according to tradition had 33 sons and 27 daughters).

“And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him. And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden” (Gen. 4:15–16). According to the transla-

tion of the Seventy, this mark was that groans continually broke forth from Cain's breast, while he himself had constant tremors in his head and the right hand with which he had killed his brother. "Because of this tremor in his right hand Cain was unable to lift it to his mouth with food, or to do anything at all."⁸⁴

Tradition relates that the fratricide was continually dogged by nightmares: at some times he would hear Abel's voice asking, "Why did you kill me?" and at others he would see terrible angels ready to slay him. Thunder and lightning frequently crashed above him, and the earth shook beneath his feet, not wishing to bear him. Such was the terrible curse that lay upon Cain.

Let us return to Abel, lying dead upon the field near Damascus, which for this reason was called "blood" (from the Hebrew). Adam and Eve saw him lifeless, and did not know what had happened to him. And they sobbed over the body of their son, seeing in him a type of their own death. Thus several days passed, for they did not know what to do with the corpse. Only when it began to decay did the first people perform the rite of committing the body to the earth. Thus was buried the first martyr, concerning which source of righteousness the apostle Paul testifies as follows: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh" (Heb. 11:4).

After these clear testimonies of divine revelation to the real existence of Abel and Cain, one is simply astounded by the position of the modernists who assert that this narrative is a mere myth, like everything else set forth in the first eleven chapters of the Bible. For example, the prominent renovationist Archpriest Alexander Men sees Cain as the ethnonym ancestor of the Kenites (this despite the fact that, according to the Bible, the descendants of Cain perished in the waters of the Flood!), and Abel as "a collective image of the pastoral nomadic nations."

"The eating from the Tree of Knowledge, the fratricide of Cain, the debauchery before the Flood, and the building of the tower," writes Men "—all these are merely different ways of describing a single metaphysical event or instance of man's rebellion

⁸⁴ Demetrius of Rostov, *Keleiny letopisets* [A Cell Chronicler].

against the Creator, for which strange legends are employed.” If we adopt this exegesis, which is rather akin to vivisection, we will be obliged to discard or similarly rework a great many words in both Old and New Testaments. We have already cited the words of the apostles John and Paul, who were convinced of the literal historic reality of the first murder. The apostle Jude taught likewise (Jude 11), but who are these apostles to “Archpriest” Alexander Men, who knows better how to interpret the Bible than the biblical authors themselves? For him, even the explicit testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is of no significance, spoken by Him to Men’s fellow modernists: “Upon you may [there] come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar” (cf. Mt. 23:35).

For those who have eyes it is obvious that Christ’s words cannot be understood to mean that Abel was a myth or a metahistorical chimera. For as far as we know, myths are incapable of shedding blood, nor likewise can they be righteous! But then, the reason for Men’s position is perfectly clear: he wishes to show that there is no innocent blood upon the Hebrew people who rejected their Messiah. But from the standpoint of one who believes in the divinity of Christ, the modernists’ interpretation is the foulest of blasphemy, for it accuses the Omniscient One of deliberate falsehood. It is these “theologians” to whom the Lord addressed His wrathful rebukes: “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Mt. 23:33).

Chapter 3

The Terrestrial City

According to the blessed Augustine, there are two cities that differ in their inner sense of self. The first city is the celestial, whose citizens love God to the point of hating themselves. The second city is terrestrial, whose inhabitants love themselves to the point of hating God. Whereas Abel was one of the first ter-

restrial inhabitants, the founder and builder of the second upon earth was Cain.

“And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden” (Gen. 4:16). Many commentators hold that this land where the accursed one dwelt corresponded to the future territories of northern India and Tibet. This explanation is supported by the fact that even the enemies of God speak of these places as the most ancient center of satanism. At the same time, one of the most ancient Sumerian cities, Eridu, bears the same name as Cain’s grandson Irad, and its founders, according to the Sumerians, came from the east. They held this city to have been founded in antediluvian times. Interestingly, St. Ephraim renders the word *nod* (wandering) as “trembling,” since the earth also trembled and groaned together with Cain; and it is known that these territories (Tibet and the Himalayas) appeared recently due to tectonic activity.

“And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch” (Gen. 4:17). As has been stated above, Adam had other sons and daughters besides Cain and Abel. In the early days of the world’s existence, marriages were made between brothers and sisters, and this did not yet constitute the sin of incest. It is claimed that the circumcision given to Abraham was a sign that in his time these marriages were no longer lawful, but it was in Moses’ time that they were explicitly prohibited. In the pagan world, however, they persisted up until the coming of Christ. In those days such marriages did not yet carry the risk of genetic defects in newborn infants, since the genes of the recently created people were as yet almost untouched by mutations. In our time, however, such marriages greatly increase the probability of birth defects.

On the other hand, God later prohibited these unions because it was not pleasing to Him that men should isolate themselves into little self-sufficient groups, with several forms of kinship combined in each individual. The prohibition itself, naturally, lead to an increase in the natural bonds of love between people, so that the husband had a separate wife, mother-in-law, sister, and mother, and these degrees of kinship ceased to be intermingled.

And so it was that when Cain departed from Eden together with his wife (whose name, according to tradition, was Calm-

ana), he begot a son and named him “the sanctifier” of Cain’s way of life—that is, one who had given it an ideological basis.

“And he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch” (Gen. 4:17).

This marked the beginning of urban civilization: for the first time a city was built in which a man who had lost his connection with God and with the world, which had become hostile to him, desired to conceal himself behind walls made by the hand of man. And it was founded by the first murderer, who feared retribution. Such is the biblical attitude toward progress! It is the product of the fear of a criminal.

In addition to this, however, Cain harbored the proud desire to immortalize the name of his son. “Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings” (Ps. 48:11–13 KJV). Thus David prophetically proclaimed concerning the Cainites of his own time also, who exulted in their progress and imagined that their memory would outlast the ages!

According to Flavius Josephus, Cain drove other people into his city by force. “He increased his domain by theft and violence and, inviting his compatriots to commit shameless acts and robbery, he became their guide and mentor in various vile practices. By inventing scales and measures he altered the simple morals by which people had previously lived together, since through their ignorance of these things their lives had been guileless, and in place of the former sincerity he introduced craftiness and cunning. He was the first to place border posts upon the earth: he built a city, and having fortified it with walls he compelled his relations to live in one specific place.” Thus, Cain may be considered the progenitor of the passport system, trade, and private landownership.

According to tradition, his disgraceful life was lived out in the sight of seven generations (so St. Ephraim understands the words “shall be avenged sevenfold”), and he was killed a year after the death of Adam (in the year 931 from the creation of the world, or 4577 BC). This occurred as follows: the great-grandson of Cain,

Lamech, was nearsighted, but he had a great affinity for hunting. When he hunted there was a young man who would help him. On one occasion he saw some leafy branches moving in a wooded area, and he pointed out the place to Lamech, who immediately shot in that direction. It so happened that Cain was there resting, and the arrow pierced his heart. When he realized whom he had killed, Lamech was horrified, and in a fury he killed the young man as well. It was this which he described in his song: "I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt" (Gen. 4:23). Such is the account of this tradition given by St. Demetrius of Rostov.

"And unto Enoch was born Irad" (Gen. 4:18). The name of the newborn means either "city," indicating him as the first true city-dweller; or, translated differently, "one who keeps vigil in condescension." Apparently, it was Irad who began colonizing the shores of the Persian Gulf and founded the city of Eridu, named after himself, which was considered the most ancient in Sumeria. Possibly it was he who was revered in this city as Ea, god of water and the deep, for he began the settlement of the marshlands. But all this is mere conjecture.

"Irad begat Mehujael" (Gen. 4:18). This name translates as "smitten or blotted out by God," and it was given to him either in remembrance of some terrible visitation from God that befell the Cainites for their sins and compelled them to humble themselves for a time; or else to show that in this accursed tribe God had begun to be forgotten. But these explanations complement each other, for when people forget the Lord He reminds them of Himself with chastisements.

"Mehujael begat Methusael" (Gen. 4:18). His name likewise has profound meaning, signifying "one who asks God for death." This disposition on the part of Cain's descendants shows that they had fallen into despair and had no hope of salvation. And this state of man's soul is just a stone's throw away from association with unclean spirits.

"Methusael begat Lamech" (Gen. 4:18), whose name means "destroyer," as an outward manifestation of the destruction of his soul that soon manifested itself through the institution of a new sin. "And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah" (Gen. 4:19). Thus the

initial monogamy was violated, and polygamy was invented. The very names of his wives are indicative of Lamech's dissoluteness and concupiscence. "Adah" means "adornment, attraction," and "Zillah" means "shadow"—that is, they differed in their outward attractiveness. According to tradition, Zillah was the first to invent cosmetics, while Adah adorned herself with gold earrings and other ornaments. All this was taught them by the demons, who by then were already intimately associated with the Cainites.

"And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle" (Gen. 4:20). He invented nomadic pastoralism (as opposed to the shepherd Abel, who settled in one place). Thus, says divine revelation, the settled life is more ancient than the nomadic (contrary to the pseudo-scientific opinion that man gradually progressed, going from a nomadic lifestyle to a settled one). The word *cattle* here mentioned literally translates to "purchased cattle." Apparently he was the first to refine the trade system introduced by Cain, and he created the livestock market.

Like other inventors of trades, Jabal was later elevated to the status of a god and venerated by the Greeks under the name of Pan. In general, the holy fathers hold that many pagan gods were men who were believed to possess certain supernatural powers and came to be venerated as gods. They were indeed aided by these powers, but these powers were unnatural rather than supernatural. For us, people of the 20th century, this patristic opinion does not seem improbable, for we have seen a political leader deified while still living,⁸⁵ and after his death we have bowed down to his corpse and his statues.

"And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ" (Gen. 4:21). His very name comes from the word *yovel*—the drawn-out sound of a horn proclaiming the beginning of the new year. He became the progenitor of music, which was intended as a substitute for the angelic singing which man had enjoyed in paradise. As renowned church singing researcher Vladimir I. Martynov writes, "Whereas the cause of angelic singing is an abundance of grace, the cause

⁸⁵ Vladimir Ilych Lenin. —*Trans.*

of the origin of music is rooted in the loss of grace. ... Musical sounds, which in a special way arouse the human soul, are capable of moving it to a certain exalted and pleasant disposition, one which resembles the blessed state of paradise and to a degree compensates for its absence, allowing the soul for a brief time to forget the weighty cares of the world. Thus, music, being a sort of substitute or stand-in for the incorruptible food of paradise, could only have arisen and become necessary as a result of man's loss of the bliss of paradise in general and the ability to hear the angels in particular."

In Martynov's opinion, the music invented by Jubal was of a magical nature. Like narcotics, it brought a person to the point of ecstasy: he would feel himself endowed with superhuman powers to control the elements of the universe and the ability to achieve bodily immortality without God. Yet another attempt to eat of the tree of life! Through music man stretched thin the coats of skins laid upon him by the Creator and entered into fellowship with the invisible world of fallen spirits. This type of music exists to this day in pagan cults, especially shamanism, and certain genres of rock music associated with them. "This magical-ecstatic power combined with physical power became one of the defining traits of the antediluvian people, whom Holy Scripture calls 'mighty men which were of old, men of renown,' adding that 'every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.' Thus, it may be presumed that the magical nature of the music was one of the reasons for the dissolution of antediluvian man."

The harp mentioned here is the ten-stringed harp, and the organ is most likely an instrument resembling the bagpipes. Thus, Jubal is distinguished as the inventor of both stringed and wind instruments. According to tradition, it was he who established ritual group orgies in honor of the demons, and who was later deified by the Greeks as well, who revered him under the name Apollo. It is worth noting that recent archaeological discoveries have likewise confirmed this biblical narrative. The media has reported that in Slovakia a bone flute was found that belonged to a Neanderthal. These were most likely people who lived immediately after the flood, and the fact that they had flutes apparently indicates that this instrument was invented prior to the catastrophe.

“And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain [Thobel, meaning “hammer striker” –*Auth.*], an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron” (Gen. 4:22). Thus the Bible imparts to us the name of the inventor of metallurgy. He probably began by working with bronze, and only then with iron (hence, apparently, the theories regarding the Bronze and Iron Ages). He developed techniques for obtaining metals from ore, and he also invented embossing and blacksmithery. The term “hammer striker,” which the Septuagint translation ascribes to Tubalcain, means a master craftsman who strikes with a small hammer to indicate to an apprentice blacksmith the spot to be struck with a heavy hammer. He invented swords, tools, agricultural implements, and much more. After him the Cainites began arming themselves, and wars began to rage upon the earth. These became especially terrible with the advent of the giants.

This invention may have taken place in the second half of the first millennium from the creation of the world, for according to the Sumerian records of antediluvian kings, the third of these (corresponding to Enos, who was born in 435) ruled in the city of Badgurgurru, the name of which means “city of bronzework.”

Modern science would like to date the origins of metallurgy to a considerably later period, and believes that the first people were uncouth savages who used tools of stone or wood. But there is a considerable body of archaeological evidence that here too the biblical account concerning Tubalcain is more accurate than scientific prejudices. In addition to the Sumerian tables already mentioned, which indicate that metallurgy existed prior to the Flood, in various strata of the earth metal objects produced in antediluvian metalworking shops are often found. For example, in one coal bed there were found “a 25-centimeter 8-carat gold chain, an iron pot, and a human skull, testifying that human civilization perished at the time when bituminous coal was formed.” In Ordovician sandstone (some 400–500 million years old on the evolutionary scale) a piece of petrified wood was found (one that had partially transformed into coal). Studies showed that it was spruce (which supposedly evolved millions of years later), and that it was a remnant of the handle of an iron hammer. Apparently, this tool was lost during the Flood by some student of Tubalcain.

It is possible that the students of Tubalcain perfected his technology and began using electricity. At any rate, the electroplater was used in Egypt in the Old Kingdom period. "A thin layer of gold was layed upon a metallic base by means of electrolysis." In Babylon in the time of Sargon of Akkad (traditionally dated to 2316–2261 BC) an electric battery was produced. It consisted of "a ceramic vessel in which, exactly at the center, a copper cylinder was suspended. Within the cylinder, along its entire length, there passed a metal rod. When ordinary grape juice was poured into the vessel containing the cylinder and spindle, an electric charge of one and a half watts was produced!" If people were using this kind of technology even after the Flood, which had destroyed all initial civilization, we have every grounds to suppose that it was invented in the first world.

Tubalcain, like his brothers, was deified and venerated, under the names Hephaestus and Vulcan.

"And the sister of Tubalcain was Noema" (Gen. 4:22). Her name contains the name of her "invention." "Noema" means "pretty" or "lovely." She is the instituter of prostitution, and according to tradition it was through her that the seduction of the sons of God—the Sethites—began. She was revered as the goddess of debauchery under the names Aphrodites, Venera, and Ishtar (the Phoenicians even preserved her true name, Naama).

She was also the creator of a system of tones and singing, as well as the technique of spinning flax and the art of weaving, and was an inventor of various other womanly handicrafts. Noema likewise invented a means of making butter and cheese from the milk of animals. All these inventions served her primary occupation: prostitution, which the Cainites apparently held sacred. At any rate, in Babylon the temple prostitutes, handmaids of the goddess of debauchery (Ishtar/Noema), practiced both handiwork and "sacred" prostitution, through which a person entered into association with the demon gods.

"And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold" (Gen. 4:23–24).

This was the first poetry in human history, containing both rhyme and rhythm. This song was occasioned by Lamech's inadvertent slaying of Cain, which occurred in the time of the seventh generation. To the mind of St. Andrew of Crete, the song of Lamech resulted from his repentance for the killing. In connection with this interpretation of the ancient song, Dmitry Shchedrovitsky offers a most interesting explanation of its final phrase: "The Old Hebrew expression *shiv'im veshiva'a* literally means 'seventy seven.' Consequently, if Cain's guilt was being avenged in the seventh generation, the guilt of Lamech would be avenged in the 77th generation."

The Gospel of Luke contains the genealogy of Christ all the way back to Adam, and it lists exactly 77 names (Lk. 3:23–38). This means that, according to Lamech's remarkable insight, the sin of the inadvertent murderer would be redeemed in the 77th generation from Adam. It was Jesus Christ who upon Golgotha offered the sacrifice that redeemed the sins of every man who repents of them before God (Mt. 1:21, 26, 28).

In the opinion of Saint Ephraim the Syrian, Lamech was the first to conceive the idea of mingling two branches of humanity—the Cainites and the Sethites—so that the former might not die out due to a lack of males. But to this terrible event, which ultimately brought about the Great Flood, we will devote a separate chapter.

In conclusion we wish to note a peculiarity of modern historical studies: their tendency toward depersonalization. Whenever possible (and often when not), the scholar strives to replace a specific person with a tribe, a myth, and ethnonym, a totem, or some other "person-substitute." Nations or tribes in turn are then replaced with archaeological cultures (in which the person becomes an appendage of the object possessed) and economic systems. It is not by chance that the majority of our textbooks are devoted to describing the lifestyles and economic struggles of faceless masses. If anyone suggests that a particular person was the inventor of a trade or art, the historian immediately experiences an allergic desire to deem him a totem, a "mythical deity." For modern man, a world in which the past is veiled in a thick mist of obscurity, ennobled by the empty varnish of scientific doublespeak, appears far more scientific. This phenomenon is appar-

ently linked to the fact that the pridefulness worshiped by modern “progressive humanity” actually erodes the consciousness and strips a person of his personhood. For the prideful man it is more convenient to see another person not as a unique, inimitable image of God, but as mere material or, as people explicitly say today, as a “mass” upon which to exercise one’s own will. And this approach is taken not only with regard to the present, but also to the past, which is twisted according to the whims of the new self-idol. It is not by chance that modern “scientific” ideology served as the basis for totalitarian cults, which make our entire past into mere preparation for a “wonderful new world.” Far wiser and more humble were the men of the Middle Ages, who believed in the reality of man and saw history as a rational, organic process, comprised of the rational actions of free persons, governed by the sovereign action of a Providence that did not deny their freedom. This is why they knew the specific inventors of various trades, founders of cities, great military commanders, kings, and priests who embodied their nations!

Chapter 4

The Ways of the Celestial City

“**A**nd Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew” (Gen. 4:25). Thus the city of God was reestablished upon the earth. The name Seth means “appointed,” “recompense,” since he replaced Abel in the work of establishing the Church upon earth. According to the explanation of the Seventy, this name also means “resurrection,” since he served as an image of Christ Who rose from the dead and established the New Testament Church, just as Abel was an image of Christ crucified.

Before expounding on the paths wending from the celestial city to the Great Flood, we must provide a chronology of all the

events of this period. We shall do so in accordance with the Septuagint translation, because it is this text which the Church accepts as canonical, and its dates serve as the basis of Orthodox chronology. Another proof that this particular translation should be relied upon for our calculations is the fact that the vast majority of quotes from the Old Testament are cited in the New Testament more closely to the Septuagint text than to that of the modern Hebrew version of the Bible. The genealogy which the evangelist Luke cites specifically matches the Greek, rather than the Hebrew version of the genealogy (the son of Arphaxad was Cainan, and not Salah as in the Masoretic text (Luke 3:36, Gen. 10:24).

A portion of the data cited below is taken from Tradition rather than Scripture.

Pre-flood Chronology

Event	Date from the creation of the world	Date before the birth of Christ
Creation of the world	0	5508
Murder of Abel	229	5279
Birth of Seth	230	5278
Seth taken up into heaven	270	5238
Birth of Enos	435	5073
Revelation to Adam	600	4908
Birth of Cainan	625	4883
Birth of Mahalaleel	795	4713
Death of Adam	930	4578
Slaying of Cain	931	4577
Death of Eve	940	4568
Birth of Jared	960	4548
Birth of Enoch	1122	4386
Death of Seth	1142	4366
Birth of Methuselah	1287	4221

Event	Date from the creation of the world	Date before the birth of Christ
Death of Enos	1340	4168
Birth of Lamech	1474	4034
Enoch taken up into heaven	1487	4021
Death of Cainan	1535	3973
Birth of Noah	1685	3823
Death of Mahalaleel	1922	3586
God forewarns of the Flood	2142	3366
Birth of Shem, Ham, and Japheth Construction of the ark begins	2162	3346
Death of Lamech	2227	3281
Death of Methuselah	2256	3252
The Great Flood	2262	3246

The opening of the fifth chapter marks the beginning of a new section in the book of Genesis: the genealogy of Adam and the other pre-flood patriarchs. “This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, and after his image; and called his name Seth: and the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters: and all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died” (Gen. 5:1–5).

Holy Scripture clearly shows the difference in the states of Adam, produced by the hands of God, and Seth, who was born after the fall into sin. Whereas Adam was created as a pure mirror that reflected the radiance of the Creator’s glory, his son was

the image and likeness not of God Himself, but of His distorted and dirtied mirror: "As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven" (1 Cor. 15:48 RSV).

The first-created man bore in himself the image of the Immortal, Heavenly God, and was himself immortal, and his face shone with the life of heaven. But when he fell from the heavens and cleaved to the earth, like the dust itself he became changeable, corruptible, and mortal, and it was this image and likeness which Adam transmitted to Seth, and through him to us all. "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven" (1 Cor. 15:49 RSV).

And the first of Adam's descendants who together with his descendants aspired toward this heavenly life which the first man had lost was Seth. This is why Joshua ben Sirach says that Seth was "in great honour among men" (Ecclus. 49:18). "In great honour" here means that he was permeated with the glory or energy of God. According to tradition, "when Seth was 40 years of age (5238 BC) he was taken up to the heights by an angel and taught the knowledge of many mysteries of God. He learned of the coming dissolution and impiety of the future generation which his tribe was to produce; he learned also that God wished to execute the lawless sinners with water and with fire, and also that the Messiah would come for the deliverance of the human race.

"While caught up to the heights by the angel, Seth beheld the situation of creation on high; the beauty of the heavens and their movements; the path of the sun, the moon, and the stars; the arrangement of the celestial signs, called planets; and he perceived their actions. He saw then much that was invisible and perceived things unknown, being instructed by the angel over the course of forty days.

"And his face grew bright from the vision of celestial creation and from conversation with the angel, as did later the face of Moses. After forty days he again found himself upon the earth and made his parents to rejoice, who had been in great sorrow, not knowing to where he had disappeared; and he told them all that he himself had learned, being taught by the angel.

"The face of Seth shone with beauty and glory like the face of an angel, and he possessed this glory of his face all the days of his

life”—so writes St. Demetrius of Rostov. Desiring to convey to his descendants the knowledge that had been revealed to him in the heavens, Seth became the first to invent the art of writing. One archaeological discovery has confirmed this tradition. “In 1830 in a pit at a depth of 18–20 meters, 12 miles from Philadelphia, something resembling letters was discovered upon a piece of marble. Before the workers of the stone quarry reached the layer in which they cut out the piece bearing the figures of letters, they removed a layer of gneiss (a banded granite shale and a raw material for gravel), mica shale, amphibole, soapstone, and primitive slate. Upon the surface of the marble the workers noticed a square-cut indentation 4 by 1.6 centimeters, in which two raised shapes were visible. It would be difficult to explain their formation by any natural physical process. Consequently, this suggests that they were made by people in the distant past.” In appearance this image resembled the letters Π and I. It is said that Seth invented the Proto-Hebrew alphabet, and for this reason a number of Protestant theologians have promoted the theory that the book of Genesis was not so much recorded as it was compiled by Moses. As proof of their version they cite the fact that although the New Testament includes over 60 quotes from this book, it is never stated that it was written by Moses. They surmise that the 10 divisions (genealogies) of which the book of Genesis consists were written by the patriarchs, and that Moses the God-seer revised and compiled them into a single book.

In their opinion, the book of Genesis was written as follows:

1. The Six Days (1:1–2:3) and the genealogy (*toledoth*) of heaven and earth (2:4–4:26), recorded by Adam according to direct revelation from God.
2. The genealogy (*toledoth*) of Adam (5–6:8) recorded by Noah.
3. The life (*toledoth*) of Noah (6:9–9), recorded by Shem.
4. The genealogy (*toledoth*) of the sons of Noah (10–11:9), recorded by Eber.
5. The genealogy (*toledoth*) of Shem (11:10–11:26), recorded by Terah or Abraham.
6. The genealogy (*toledoth*) of Terah (11:27–25:11), recorded by Abraham or Isaac.
7. The genealogy (*toledoth*) of Ishmael (25:12–25:18), recorded by Jacob.

8. The genealogy (*toledoth*) of Isaac (25:12–25:18), recorded by Jacob.
9. The genealogy (*toledoth*) of Esau (36), compiled either by Job or by Moses himself.
10. The life (*toledoth*) of Jacob (37:1–50:26), recorded by Joseph.

This hypothesis concerning the origin of the book of Genesis is, of course, merely an interesting supposition and is of no great value to us. Orthodox tradition does not presume that Holy Scripture (except perhaps the book of Job) existed prior to Moses. In the words of the blessed Theophylact, “The divine men who lived before the law learned not from scriptures and books, but having a clear mind they were enlightened by the illumination of the All-holy Spirit, and thereby learned the will of God through God Himself conversing with them face to face. Such were Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, and Moses. But when men became spoiled and made themselves unworthy to be enlightened and taught by the Holy Spirit, then the man-loving God gave them writing, that by this means at least they might remember the will of God.” Nevertheless, the enlightenment of the Spirit would not of course have prevented the holy forefathers from creating records that Moses could have used when writing the book of Genesis.

In addition to writing, St. Seth also founded astronomy, and the closely related field of mathematics, which not without reason is called the divine science or the queen of the sciences. For Seth indeed brought this art from heaven, from the angelic world, which is linked to the world of divine ideas that underlies the laws of mathematics. The Egyptians revered Seth under the name of the god Thoth, and mathematicians should pray to St. Seth as their heavenly patron. Even beyond the boundaries of the Hebrew nation his very name has not been forgotten. He is considered an ancestor of the Amorites and the Suteans, and his name stands at the head of their genealogy, which each of them knew by heart.

His marriage to his sister Azura produced a son, Enos, in whose time public worship began, and through whom there appeared a community of people who served God.

“And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord” (Gen. 4:26). It is interesting to note the differences be-

tween the Masoretic and Septuagint texts. According to the Hebrew text, this “calling upon the name of the Lord” comes from men, while the Septuagint states: “This one [Enos] hoped to call upon the name of the Lord.” That is, he did not merely rely upon his own abilities in order to be heard, but hoped in the assistance of the Creator, who said through the prophet Zephaniah, “At that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord” (Zeph. 3:9 RSV).

And so it was that public worship of the Creator first began on earth. Prior to this, Adam, Abel, and Seth had all prayed and offered sacrifices in isolation. Then, beginning with Enos, who felt himself to be a weak person (as his name in fact signifies) before the refulgent Countenance, the true worshipers of the Lord began to unite so as to offer up prayers and sacrifices together in the sight of the Omnipotent One. It is important that the first priests appeared among the race of men at a time when they became conscious of their own weakness in the fight against sin. Thus, the first worship grew out of a soil fertilized by that greatest of virtues: humble-mindedness.

The people who participated in joint prayer and sacrifices naturally became a particular community, a Protochurch, and received the name Yahweists, or “sons of God.” They could also have received this title due to the glory that shone in the face of their forefather Seth. While they were separated from the descendants of the accursed one by both their name and their life, God condescended to the sinners’ iniquities. For it is the Orthodox conviction that to this day the existence of the world is sustained by the prayers of the saints. But then, when a sort of “ecumenistic” intermingling caused the wall between the Church and the world to collapse, the entire first world crumbled along with it. The same awaits our universe when the salt of Orthodoxy becomes the stale chaff of humanism.

According to tradition, in the 600th year of the life of Adam, who by then had been cleansed by tears of repentance, at the Lord’s command the archangel Uriel, guardian of the penitent, appeared to the first-created man. To him he revealed the mystery of the incarnation of God the Word, but only insofar as this was revealed to the archangel himself. The archangel consoled

Adam, who was to spend nearly five thousand years in the confines of hades, by saying that to him would come the Liberator, Who would conquer the one to whom the first-created man had foolishly relinquished his crown.

Soon after this, Enos begat a son, Cainan, whose name means “blacksmith”—either because he introduced metallurgy among the Yahweists (who may have initially feared it as a diabolical invention of the Cainites), or because he was distinguished by particular asceticism, and by his spiritual labors he forged his own soul.

A son of a worthy father was Mahalaleel, “he who praises God,” in whose life repentance bore its fruit: eternal joy, which death cannot take away.

At a time appointed by God Adam tasted of death, without having lived out a thousand years. According to St. Irenaeus of Lyons, he died on a Friday—the same day on which he had sinned. And on the same day and at the same hour Christ redeemed him upon another Tree. Before his death, having learned beforehand the time of his repose, Adam “summoned Eve his helper, his sons and daughters, and likewise, having assembled his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, he instructed them to live virtuously, fulfilling the will of the Lord and making every effort to please Him.” Then, having bestowed blessing and peace upon all, he departed the world of which he had been created the master.

All mankind mourned him, and his body was buried not far from Hebron, in the place where the Oak of Mamre grew after the Flood. When entering the ark, Noah took with him the relics of Adam and his wife (as St. Jacob of Edessa, teacher of St. Ephraim, relates). After the Flood he divided them among his three sons. The skull went to Shem, who in obedience to a revelation buried it on the site of the future Jerusalem and piled a large hill over it, which he called “the Place of the Skull” or, in the Hebrew, Golgotha. Several millennia later God was crucified upon that hill. During the earthquake the rocks split, and the blood of Christ washed the skull of the first man, whose soul was led once again into paradise.

Ten years after her husband, Eve also died. Her relics, together with the bones of Adam’s body, lie today in the double cave at Hebron which Abraham later purchased.

Many find dubious the age which the Bible ascribes to the antediluvian patriarchs. There is a considerable body of mutually complementary explanations of the reasons for this remarkable longevity, traditions of which are preserved not only in the Bible, but also in the writings of Manetho (Egypt), Berossus (Babylon), Mochus (Phoenicia), and many cuneiform lists of antediluvian kings, both those of Babylon and those of Sumeria.

The most developed of these is an explanation according to which this unusual span of life was due to a specific measure which God employed in order to preserve Tradition unscathed among the people up until the time when He had predetermined that it be recorded in writing in the Pentateuch. Indeed, Noah spoke with Methuselah, who had personally known Enos, who in his turn had grown up at the feet of Adam and Seth and had beheld the ascension of Enoch. Furthermore, Noah could have known Mahalaleel for a span of 237 years, and the latter was a direct contemporary of Adam (they lived together for 135 years). The three sons of Noah learned both from Methusaleh and from Lamech. Shem in his turn lived to the days of Eber. The latter then interacted with Serug, who lived together with Abraham for 51 years. If we recall that the nomads and many ancient peoples in general have a custom of committing the injunctions of their teachers to memory, there is nothing remarkable about the Tradition having reached Abraham unscathed, for this chain has but seven links: Adam – Mahalaleel – Noah – Shem – Eber – Serug – Abraham. All this was made possible only by the longevity of the patriarchs.

Another explanation discloses the ontological nature of this phenomenon. Adam emerged from the hands of God predestined for immortality, and although after the fall into sin the leaven of death found its way into him, for a long time it was unable to overcome his first-created nature. It took a long time for Adam to learn to die!

Creationist scientists offer an attempt at discovering the secret of this mechanism. They claim that prior to the Flood the whole world was enveloped in a vapor canopy that blocked harmful radiation. This was facilitated by a magnetic field far more powerful than that which exists today. Because there were no mutations caused by cosmic radiation, the genetic apparatus of man and an-

imals did not disintegrate, and aging began far later than it does today.

Other reasons for this longevity were, firstly, the fact that the descendants of Seth lived on vegetables, fruits, and dairy products, without eating meat (the consumption of which God permitted only after the Flood). The foodstuffs themselves were produced by a young earth that had not yet been depleted by the iniquities of men, and hence it was easily assimilated and did not cause illness. Secondly, the life of the first people was lengthened because they (the Sethites) lived chastely. For an unbridled sexual instinct is highly detrimental to the body and accelerates the aging process.

Due to all these factors, man's days were extended over a considerable duration, and he was able to do far more than we. But such is the terrible power of sin, that all the gigantic achievements of the first civilization have disappeared into oblivion, and we can only speculate on the heights which human thought and culture may have achieved.

Soon after the death of Adam and Eve, their great-grandson Mahalaleel begat a son, Irad. His name means "he who descends," for during his life the Yahweists who had formerly lived upon a great mountain at the foot of paradise descended for the purpose of mingling with the Cainites. This descent was not only spacial but also, and more importantly, spiritual. In order to stop this process among His chosen, the all-merciful Lord sent His prophet: Enoch, the preacher of repentance. His very name signified "sanctification," but not the kind performed by Cain's son of the same name, who made crime legal. To an apostatizing world Enoch showed an image of true sanctification of human nature by the power of God. In the person of Enoch the world received one of the greatest righteous ones, and perhaps many of us may yet meet him on this planet.

The birth of this saint was a consolation at the end of his days for Seth, the "raised-up seed," who died 20 years after the former first saw the light of day. Seth and his father, knowing of the two floods (of fire and of water) that awaited the world, erected two pillars upon which they wrote their knowledge. One pillar was of brick, the other of stone. "The latter," relates Flavius Josephus, "was made with the intent that if the brick pillar

should perish during the flood, the stone pillar would remain unharmed and enable people to acquaint themselves with the inscription, and also indicated that they had likewise erected a brick column. The stone pillar remains to this day in the land of Siriad."

Concerning Enoch, Scripture says these remarkable words: "Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: and Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: and Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Gen. 5:21–24).

Called "sanctified" at his birth, Enoch truly lived up to his name, and being in the Holy Spirit he acquired the gift of prophecy. To his son he gave a name that meant "after death it shall be sent"—that is, when Methusaleh died, the Great Flood would come. Indeed, his death took place only six years before this visitation occurred, and according to the Hebrew reckoning he died the very year of the flood.

The chief virtue of Enoch was his constant vivid awareness of the omnipresence of God. And he could say together with David: "I beheld the Lord ever before me, for He is at my right hand, that I might not be shaken" (Ps. 15:8). Enoch sensed that God knew when he sat down and when he arose, that He discerned his thoughts from afar (Ps. 138:2), and he conformed his every undertaking to the will of the Lord. Most remarkably, he labored thus amid a refined, cultured society, whose chief thought was for self-pleasure, to the point of disdaining the Creator. Divine revelation calls this remarkable blossoming of the virtues "walking before God," and this is said of only one other person—of Noah (Gen. 6:9)—whereas to the greatest of the post-Flood righteous ones, Abraham, God commanded that he keep this commandment. This virtue unites faith, repentance, humility, courage, and chastity, the embodiment of which was Enoch. Sirach calls him one who pleased the Lord and an example of repentance to all generations (Ecclus. 44:15), saying that "upon the earth was no man created like Enoch" (Ecclus. 49:16).

This righteous one was a fearless denouncer of apostates—men who had joined together what God had put asunder. He preached repentance and prophesied concerning the dread Judge-

ment of God that awaits all men at the end of time. A short excerpt of his prophetic preaching is preserved in the writings of the apostle Jude: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these [false teachers], saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 14–15).

According to the apostle Paul, this great saint even "before his translation ... had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Heb. 11:5). What exactly comprised this we will learn only when Enoch returns to earth.

This great righteous one was removed from the usual order and bypassed the stream of death through which all living creatures pass. "He was taken from the earth ... and was translated" (Ecclus. 49:14, 44:16). "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him" (Heb. 11:5).

This mystical event occurred, according to tradition, when the saint was preaching repentance to crowds of assembled apostates. If we believe the apocryphal book of Enoch, his translation to heaven occurred on the 15th day of the month of Nisan (March), in the year 1487 from the creation of the world (4021 BC). The miracle itself served as the Lord's warning to a perishing world. Enoch, as St. Ephraim says, entered paradise, and there he remains to this day, burning with the fire of the Spirit, before the face of the Almighty. In addition to Enoch, the prophet Elijah was likewise vouchsafed the same fate. Zechariah beheld them in the image of two olive branches, which were pouring forth gold out of themselves through two golden pipes, of which it was said to him: "These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (Zech. 4).

But the mission of Enoch and Elijah upon earth is not yet complete. At the command of the Lord, at the end of time they will return and will prophecy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth. "And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have pow-

er to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified" (Rev. 11:3–8). Thus Enoch and Elijah will pay Adam's debt and taste of death themselves. "And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them" (Rev. 11:11–12).

13 years before the dread translation of Enoch, Methuselah begat Lamech, whose name shows that in those days it was possible to remain pious only by waging war on and destroying all surrounding temptations. All his life he was obliged to fend off the magical civilization that surrounded him, and he probably had the reputation of a militant fanatic or orthodox fundamentalist.

Gradually the righteous departed from the life of the world. Cainan died soon after the translation of Enoch, followed by Mahalaleel after the birth of Noah. Only three saints sustained the world by their prayers.

"Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son: and he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed" (Gen. 5:28–29). The consolation which Lamech prophesied was indeed given through Noah. He founded a new world after the flood, and from him was born the Messiah, who comforted the inconsolable sorrow of Lamech.

According to tradition, Noah invented the plow, thereby facilitating the labor of men, and also wine, which his Descendant transformed into a source of great consolation: the Blood of Jesus.

Chapter 5

The Giants

As has already been said, after the death of Adam the Yahweists began to mingle with the descendants of Cain. The first step in this direction was the Sethites' descent from the mountain of paradise to the settlements of the sons of the murderer, which descent took place at the time of Jared's birth (the year 960 from the creation of the world, 4548 BC). This destructive process itself only became irreversible after the death of Seth, whose authority had served as a dam that preserved the boundaries of the first Church from erosion.

"And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose" (Gen. 6:1-2).

As the venerable Ephraim the Syrian explains this text, only daughters were being born among the Cainites, and they began to fear that they would die out entirely. To avoid this, the daughters of the Cainites began to seduce the sons of Seth using the "art of seduction" taught them by the demons. "When the Sethites took wives for themselves, they were proud before them, and made their selection from among them: the poor man was arrogant before the rich woman, the old man put on airs before the young man, and the most hideous man puffed himself up before the most beautiful woman. The descendants of Cain paid no heed either to riches or to outward appearance: they desired only to have husbandmen to work their lands, which were being left unsowed. This was begun by the incontinent and the poor: the incontinent were enamored of the beauty of the daughters of men, while the poor lusted after their riches. But then the whole tribe of Seth followed in the footsteps of such as these. And since the sons of Seth took the daughters of Cain to wife and neglected their former wives, the latter became careless with regard to maintaining the purity and modesty which they had preserved up until

then for the sake of the husbands and together with them. And as this incontinence spread among men and women, Scripture says that ‘all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.’” Thus there came about the first “sexual revolution,” due to which the first world perished. Traces of it survive to this day. For example, in the state of Idaho at a depth of 90 meters (a stratum 2 million years old according to evolutionist geology), clay figures have been found depicting naked men and women. Numerous depictions of “primitive Venuses” have been discovered, which may have appeared after the Flood (though this is not indisputable). These are amulets that allegedly improved a person’s sexual abilities, and they depict a deified Noema, inventor of prostitution, who began the seduction of the descendants of Seth. These amulets were most likely invented prior to the Flood, and thus idolatry first appeared. The practice of making these idols was resumed in the days of the construction of the Tower of Babel by the impious King Nimrod. Thus, fornication engendered idolatry and the demon worship connected with it.

There is another explanation of these verses from Holy Scripture to which certain fathers of the Church adhere (Sts. Justin the Philosopher, Irenaeus of Lyons, Ambrose of Milan, and also Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian). According to it, this refers to a marriage between angels and the daughters of men. Naturally, this opinion cannot be considered correct, if we understand it to mean an actual physical union between different natures, for this would contradict the explicit statement of Christ that angels do not marry (Mt. 22:30). But this explanation does contain a correct concept. The monstrous fornication that spread up until the Flood was not mere dissoluteness, but a form of communing with unclean spirits. The pagans believed that those who participated in ritual orgies in honor of the goddess of fertility (Noema) entered into communion with the gods, and apparently such was the case. The demons are especially pleased by debauchery, for these destroy a man and leave no place in him for the grace of the Holy Spirit.

The evil spirits, according to St. Irenaeus, “taught the women the power of roots and herbs, as well as the art of makeup and rouge and the making of expensive fabrics, magic methods of arousing hatred, love, ardent passion, and erotic seductions,

magic armbands, every kind of trick and idolatry that is hateful to God, through the practice of which the work of the evil one swelled and expanded into the world, and the work of righteousness lessened and weakened.” Upon the earth there arose a civilization based upon magical power over the elements, coupled with unbridled fornication that destroyed all the abilities of man. Never since that time has militant atheism reached such heights as then. Only the era preceding a new, fiery Flood will recreate and surpass the vileness of Noah’s contemporaries. Perhaps that time has already begun. Our contemporaries have once again discovered the mysteries of roots and herbs (narcotics), which people use to enter into contact with the spirit world. They have given themselves over to the same unbridled debauchery and sorcery, and modern science itself increasingly resembles magic. Thus, life itself helps us to understand these words of divine revelation better than even before.

The all-merciful Lord, Who does not desire the destruction of sinners, sent to these antediluvian people prophets who denounced their impiety and called upon them to repent. He gave them a tremendous lesson through the ascension of Enoch, the messenger of repentance, but they did not wish to hear. And so it was that in the year 2142 God issued a dreadful warning to men:

“And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years” (Gen. 6:3).

In this way men arrived at the dread state of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, Who could no longer endure their lawlessness. Their hearts and minds were occupied by anything and everything but love for their Creator. They fully achieved that pluralism of opinion dreamed of by our contemporaries, and for this reason God pronounced sentence upon them: “He also is flesh”—that is, all their aspirations ended this side of heaven. “To be flesh” does not mean to not be spiritual (in our sense of the word). Rather, the antediluvian people were excessively “spiritual”: they caroused with all the spirits and served all the gods, forgetting only the Father of spirits. He however, in His mercy, gave them a final span for repentance of 120 years, but they paid no heed.

“There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown” (Gen. 6:4).

Due to the monstrous transgressions, nature itself also began to alter, and men began to beget deformed giants. Their very name in Hebrew means “attacker.” They possessed tremendous strength, both physical and magical, and they used it to oppress others. As Solomon attests, the giants were distinguished by extreme pridefulness (Wisdom 14:6), and as Sirach relates, they “fell away in the strength of their foolishness”⁸⁶ (Ecclus. 16:7). Of them the prophet Baruch said these words: “There were the giants famous from the beginning, that were of so great stature, and so expert in war. Those did not the Lord choose, neither gave he the way of knowledge unto them: but they were destroyed, because they had no wisdom, and perished through their own foolishness” (Bar. 3:26–28).

These lawless people said to God: “Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them? Yet he filled their houses with good things” (Job 22:17–18). But they did not understand the goodness of God, and thought that all things were permitted them. Legends of these terrible giants survive in nearly every nation. Many relate that in their fiendishness the giants even turned to cannibalism, which at that time, as in our own, no doubt existed in certain “appropriate” forms, but in all the legends and stories of the post-Flood people they remained monsters who devoured people and warred against their Creator (trolls, man-eating giants, and the like). These legends are by no means mere fantasy, but poeticized memories of the demonic civilization which God destroyed, and which began to be revived in the 19th–20th centuries.

Irrational creation likewise reflected the debauchery of man in itself, and began swarming with various monsters of gigantic size, which paleontologists find in abundance to this day. Dragonflies reached the size of birds, moss could be a meter high, and reeds could grow to a height of dozens of meters.

⁸⁶ In the Russian Synodal Version, literally “in their trust to their own strength they became apostates.” –*Trans.*

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5).

People did not stop at repeating their transgressions: instead, with each year they invented new atrocities. “And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them” (Gen. 6:6–7).

Naturally, the Uncreated Nature cannot repent and grieve. Here we have an anthropomorphic expression concerning God, the meaning of which is that the whole world is entirely different from what the Creator intended it to be. Consequently, in this world there is no place to which He could apply His mercy, and so the earth experiences firsthand the wrath and justice of the Judge. But even in this doomed universe one man is found who received the streams of mercy into his heart: “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Gen. 6:8).

Before proceeding to an account of the last days of the first world and its demise, we must dispel a certain myth authored by Archpriest Stephen Lyashevsky. This author, so popular in our time, wishing to adapt the Bible to modern scientific fables, equated the antediluvian world with the paleolithic, and the Neanderthals with the Cainites. “The descendants of Cain,” he writes, “ceased to till the earth and became like the beasts and were wanderers upon the earth, having traversed the entire northern part of the Eurasian continent. In wandering the earth, sustaining themselves through hunting by primitive means, without proper weapons, they grew feral: they developed bestial strength, and naturally from our point of view they appear to be people of a lower order of development.”

Although the esteemed archpriest says that this explanation is in keeping with divine revelation, in actuality nothing could be further from it than this theory. We have already examined in detail the text of Genesis which tells of the descendants of Cain, but we shall briefly recap.

What comprised the civilization of the Cainites? Was it in any way wild or underdeveloped? The Bible says that it was not.

Cain himself built the first city (Gen. 4:17), and his descendants by no means invented hunting, but rather nomadic pastoralism (Gen. 4:20), music (Gen. 4:21), metallurgy (Gen. 4:22), and prostitution. They were the first poets (Gen. 4:23–24) and organizers of the military arts (Gen. 6:4). Clearly, these people can by no means be called savages and wanderers. In this lies the lesson of divine revelation—that extreme evil in fact arises amid sophisticated urban civilization, and is largely connected with the progress of material culture. Fr. Stephen’s description offers no reason for the demise of the first world. After all, in our own time savages are often more more pure in heart than the “developed” inhabitants of urban areas. And the great desert dwellers, with their minimal material culture, have manifested tremendous fruits of sanctity, and by their prayers our world exists to this day. It is clear that in the words of Fr. Stephen one may discern the influence of the modern theory of moral progress, which allegedly follows in the wake of material progress. But this teaching is contrary both to divine revelation and to real life.

If we examine the attempt of Fr. Stephen and other authors to equate antediluvian civilization with the Paleolithic, it does not withstand the slightest criticism. For not only stone tools survive from this period, but also burial sites with traces of funereal wreathes, and wall paintings in caves, and rubbish piles, all of which would have been destroyed by the waters of the Flood as described in the book of Genesis. The most rational approach is to consider the Paleolithic the brief period of the first centuries of mankind’s resettlement after the Flood. During this catastrophe the entire topography of the earth was changed, all the deposits of metals were lost beneath a layer of sediment rock, and many technologies were forgotten. Consequently, people were obliged to revert to stone tools and eke out an existence by hunting and gathering. This same phenomenon is repeated today when people find themselves in similar situations (for example, on an uninhabited island). The dates ascribed to the Paleolithic are based merely on evolutionary biases and the unreliable findings of radiocarbon dating. In actuality there are no reliable data proving that the people of the Paleolithic—the Neanderthals and Cro-Magnons—were not contemporaries of the great civilizations of Babylon and Egypt.

Chapter 6

The Antediluvian Church

While the giants were growing increasingly sophisticated in the work of subjugating the world to the powers of evil, and the descendants of Seth under the influence of rabid fornication were growing increasingly distant from the paths of the Creator, God continued to preserve on earth him from whom the human race was to be restored. “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth” (Gen. 6:8–10).

Out of all the innumerable multitudes of the sons of men (if we accept the statistical calculations of scientists, prior to the Flood the population of the earth numbered around 3 billion persons), only one proved capable of assimilating grace. The omniscient eyes of the Lord found him and thereby condemned all others, showing that what matters to Him is not quantity, but the state of men’s hearts.

“A just man”: the word *just* used here (in the Hebrew, *tzadik*) means “one who justifies.” That is, Noah’s precise adherence to the path of God’s commandments made him an instrument of justifying others. He is called “perfect” as one who achieved complete inner integrity, despite the fact that he lived in an extremely debauched generation. From these words of Scripture we also see that prior to the Flood there were no governments in the world, and men lived by the clan system. For this reason after the world’s renewal God established a government in order to curb the madness of sinners.

“Noah walked with God”—that is, like his great-grandfather Enoch, he lived with a sense of the omnipresence of God, and through this his every action was conformed to the will of the Lord. In this way he achieved perfection in God-likeness.

For 500 years Noah preserved his virginity amid universal debauchery. And only at the command of God did he enter into honorable marriage and beget three sons. In giving them names,

Noah manifested the gift of prophecy, since his mind's eye was purified by the Holy Spirit. Shem means "name," "glory," and his descendants received divine revelation and proclaimed to the nations the name and the glory of God. It was from him that Christ came, Who said, "I have manifested thy name unto the men."

Ham means "heat," "passion," "vehemence," and indeed, all his descendants are distinguished by particular passion (for example, Negro dances, gyrations, and rituals). Japheth means "beauty," "expansion," and his descendants on the one hand established an ideal of beauty and harmony. On the other hand, the entire globe is now inhabited by Japhethites, whose civilization came to serve as an example for other nations. "Remembrances of these ancestors of mankind have survived in the memory of many nations. For example, in the tradition of the ancient Greeks, Japheth (Japetus) is the father of the Titan Prometheus. The peoples of the Near East preserve legends of 'Shem and Ham,' the ancestors of the light-skinned and dark-skinned inhabitants of their region."

"The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Gen. 6:11-12). The warning given to mankind did not achieve its purpose, and the earth came more and more to resemble a hell. Apparently the animals themselves underwent changes due to the sins of men, or perhaps people then knew something like genetic engineering and, instructed by the demons, perverted all of nature. This supposition is not mere fantasy. The Maya peoples, who resembled the giants in their demon-worship, succeeded in doubling the number of chromosomes in cotton. If even they could know such secrets, those secrets were certainly known to the giants, whom the pagans considered gods for their possession of demonic knowledge.

"And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark. ... And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark,

thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee" (Gen. 6:13–14, 17–18).

And Noah began building an ark in the sight of all the people, who were rather surprised: why would this elderly man build such an enormous ship? This "preacher of righteousness" (2 Pet 2:5) answered and told them of the coming wrath of God, and the destruction by water that awaited the world. He exhorted the ungodly ones to repent and to cease their lawlessness, but they merely laughed and said, "What nonsense this senile old man talks! Who has ever seen water pour down from the heavens? Everyone knows that the views of Noah and his Yahweist fanatic friends have been disproven by the research of renowned magicians and our friends from the world of cosmic spirits. Small wonder that even the majority of those arrogant 'sons of God' who follow this foolish teaching consider the preaching of Noah and Enoch a mere moral parable. And even if something like that were to happen, we possess sufficient might to handle any raging element."

Other, less impious people believed his words, were horrified, and seemingly began to convert. But when a year had passed, then two years, and no flood was forthcoming, they again returned to their former lawlessness, deciding that Noah's preaching had been a tremendous lie, and his work became a subject of mockery. As the Chaldean historian Berosus relates, besides Noah there were other righteous men who preached repentance: Noah's father, Lamech, and his grandfather, Methuselah, whose days were prolonged more greatly than those of any other man. But public opinion as a whole was quite skeptical toward their preaching. Although the building of the ark was the talk of the whole world, everyone saw it as a mere oddity. As Christ said of the pre-Flood world, "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away" (Mt. 24:37–39).

In the meantime, the number of righteous men on earth, whose prayers held back the righteous wrath of God, continued to decrease. Lamech died 35 years before the Flood, fol-

lowed 6 years before (by the Hebrew reckoning, the same year) by Methusaleh, whose very name ought to have warned the ungodly, for it means “after death it will be sent”—that is, his end signified the demise of the earth. But this too men failed to understand. The time that the Lord had allotted for men to repent drew to an end, and “thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he” (Gen. 6:22).

“And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth. And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him. And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth” (Gen. 7:1–6).

And so it was that, before the eyes of thousands and millions of incredulous people, in the year 2262 from the creation of the world “from the east there came elephants,” as Ephraim the God-seer relates, “and monkeys and peacocks from the south; other animals assembled from the west, while still others hastened from the north. The lions left their forests, savage beasts came out of their dens, deer and wild asses came forth from their deserts, and animals that inhabit the mountains assembled therefrom. The contemporaries of Noah ran to see this new spectacle—not to repent, but to enjoy the sight of lions entering the ark before their very eyes, then oxen who fearlessly hastened to follow, seeking refuge with them; wolves and sheep, falcon and sparrow, hawks and doves entering together. (But) even this hurried assembling of the beasts into the ark, and the peace that had suddenly arisen among them, did not move the contemporaries of Noah to repentance. ... Even when Noah and all the animals had entered the ark, God waited another seven days, leaving the door of the ark open. It is remarkable both that the lions did not remember their forests and the other beasts and birds of every kind did not go to seek their habitations, and that the contemporaries of Noah, see-

ing all that took place both outside and inside the ark, were not convinced to leave off their evil doings.”⁸⁷

The clean animals referenced here are those creatures that were intended for sacrificial offerings (the cow, the sheep, the goat, the turtledove, and the dove) and were used for the needs of man, while the unclean are all other creatures that breathe. That the former might better multiply, three pairs were taken (we know that immediately after the Flood God permitted the consumption of meat, and it was therefore necessary that the population of these in particular rapidly increase), while the seventh animal was designated for the sacrifice which Noah resolved to offer after his deliverance.

In addition to the animals, along with stores of food for himself and for them, according to tradition Noah took with him the relics of Adam, so as to remain unharmed by his prayers. He also took with him the books that had been previously written.

And so it was that “the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah’s wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; they, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. And they went in unto Noah into the ark ... male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the Lord shut him in” (Gen. 7:11–16), so that when the deluge began the people might not force an entry.

⁸⁷ St. Ephraim the Syrian.

Part V

THE GREAT FLOOD



Chapter 1

The Flood

It was an ordinary spring day in the year 3246 from the creation of the world, with no intimation of disaster. Many gathered together and feasted, while others held wedding festivities. Everything was proceeding as usual... Then suddenly the heavens caved in upon a doomed world. A window opened in the azure depths, and the waters which God had placed above the firmament on the second day began crashing down in a thunderous downpour upon the earth, which suddenly belched forth flame, and gigantic geysers spouted up. The ocean floor began to heave, and the dry land to sink. Tall, threatening, foam-capped waves seemed to rush forward to meet the waters from which they had been separated two millennia hence and crashed down upon palaces and shrines, walls and huts. The people fled to the mountains in terror, hoping to hide from destruction. “Those who married and feasted quickly sprang up from their feasts with faces pale and sought where to flee; the groom and bride hastily arose from their bed, ran out of the chamber, and parted one from another, running hither and thither, wishing to escape the waters; trembling mothers flitted from one corner to another, holding infants in their arms and not knowing where to hide themselves.”⁸⁸

In mountain strata, here and there are found the tracks of people (both shod and barefoot), dinosaurs, and other animals running in an attempt to escape the water. These imprinted on the earth, which was instantly covered with a layer from a torrent of mud that later fossilized. These fossilized footprints of various

⁸⁸ St. Demetrius of Rostov, *A Cell Chronicler*.

living creatures, which the evolutionists believe to have existed in different eras, serve as a terrible confirmation of the biblical narrative. Mountains and hills, high walls and gigantic trees were filled with creatures of every kind. The people repented bitterly of not having listened to the words of Noah's prophecy, but it was too late. God had shut the door to the ark, and it could not be entered. In heartfelt sorrow, standing upon elevated points, they watched the waters rise higher and higher, then finally cover them. Some tried to escape in boats, but the ceaseless earthquakes set the sea undulating with monstrous waves, which overturned every means of staying afloat. Terrible tsunamis would tower in immense black walls above the bared ocean floor, which would briefly dry; then new layers of water and sediment would come crashing down upon it.

The entire surface of the waters was littered with trees torn up at the roots, on which people and animals tried in vain to take refuge. Upon entering another current they would descend to the bottom, where the fiery wellsprings of the great abyss awaited them, and the high temperatures and pressure of the watery mass charred them black, transforming them into bituminous coal. The geysers that spewed forth from beneath the earth were high in salt, which settled into deposits.

"And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered" (Gen. 7:17–20).

The powerful downpour continued until the onset of summer.

"And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died" (Gen. 7:21–222).

The sacred author shows us the depth to which antediluvian people had fallen. In listing those that had perished he places people even after creeping things, thereby indicating their tremendous fall, lower even than the level of cattle, to the point

of becoming like the demons and aspiring toward non-existence. They had lost the breath of the Spirit in their hearts, and so they were likewise deprived of the breath of the spirit of life in their nostrils. During the first forty days, the continuing downpour were the last gift of mercy from the Creator to perishing mankind. Those who repented during this time, like the citizens of Nineveh, though they did not escape death, were able to later be liberated by Christ from hades. He “once suffered for sins ... that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing” (1 Pet. 3:18–20).

“And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days” (Gen. 7:23–24) and reached their limit by the onset of autumn. The question arises: how could the water have prevailed for 150 days, if the rains lasted for only 40 days? The answer is simple. Firstly, the Bible does not say that the windows of heaven were closed before the onset of autumn; hence, water continued to fall upon the destroyed world for another 110 days, though it is possible that this was in the form of snow or hail rather than rain. Secondly, the water sources continued to well up from beneath the earth; the ocean floors continued to heave, and the water level to rise.

Chapter 2

The Ark

We would be remiss if we did not discuss the wondrous ship upon which the seed of life was preserved. The Bible left us a description of this remarkable construction.

“Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: the length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it” (Gen. 6:14–16).

The gopher wood used for the construction was, in the opinion of Met. Philaret, cypress wood; or, as ark researcher Fernand Navarra attests, a variety of oak peculiar to Iraq. In any case, this wood was impervious to rot (as we know from the Septuagint translation). “The timbers forming the sides and bottom, as well as the floors of the intermediate decks, were probably cut and shaped from great trees that had been growing since the world began”⁸⁹—that is, for 2,200 years. Gigantic trees of this kind are found to this day in coal beds. Pitch (in the Hebrew, *kafar*, or shell) was an ideal water repellent. To this day we do not know of what it was comprised, though even before the birth of Christ many would bring it from Ararat and use it for amulets.

The dimensions of the ark change depending on how long a cubit is considered to be. The minimum size is 44.5 cm, and the maximum (a long cubit) is 52 cm, but ordinarily its length is set at 45.5 cm.

Given the smallest cubit size, the ark was 133.5 m (438 ft) long, 22.25 m (73 ft) wide, and 13.5 m (44 ft) high. This corresponded to a volume of 39,655 m³ (1,400,403 ft³), and a displacement of 13,960 tons. Ordinary dimensions: length – 136.5 m, height – 13.65 m, width – 22.75 m; volume – 42,388.369 m³. Maximum dimensions: length – 156 m, height – 15.6 m, width – 26 m; volume – 62,273.6 m³. This is equal to the volume of hundreds of railway cattle cars. A single boxcar has a usable capacity of around 76 m³; consequently, even the minimum size of the ark was equal to 522 box cars (the ordinary size being equal to 557, and the maximum – 832). Considering that an ordinary box car can hold 240 sheep, it is obvious that the ark could have contained between 125,280 (given the minimum cubit length) and

⁸⁹ Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, p. 292.

199,680 (given the maximum) sheep. This volume is sufficient to hold all terrestrial animals (birds, winged insects, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians), both currently living and extinct. To demonstrate this, firstly let us recall that “kind” in the book of Genesis did not always correspond to “species” in modern classification, frequently being nearer to “family.” Secondly, the animals that entered the ark were most likely juveniles, rather than adults, for they were to repopulate the earth. For this reason they took up less space than adult animals.

To bolster this argument we will use the calculations cited in the scientific film *A World Lost* (*Pogibshy mir*). In the world today there are 1,075,100 species of animal. The majority of these, however, did not need to be saved, for they either live in the water or are capable of spending an indefinite time there in the form of roe. Noah did not need to worry about the 21,000 species of fish, 1,700 species of tunicate, 600 echinoderms including starfish and sea urchins, 107,000 species of mollusk, 10,000 species of coelenterate (corals, hydroids), 5,000 species of sponge, or 30,000 species of protozoa. [This also is true of] certain mammals—aquatic animals such as whales and dolphins—as well as certain reptiles (sea turtles) and amphibians. The majority of arthropods (there are 838,000 species) are aquatic animals (crabs, lobsters, shrimp), while insects are quite tiny and take up hardly any space (especially in a cocooned state). The majority of the 35,000 species of worm could have survived even without the ark. It is claimed that the ark had to hold no more than 35,000 individual animals. If we add a certain number of extinct animals (dragons, unicorns, ibises, etc.), the ark had to contain 50,000 creatures. There are few very large animals, such as the elephant and the rhinoceros: these most likely were represented by juvenile specimens. Returning to the comparison of the size of the ark with box cars, these 50,000 animals would have occupied 208.3 boxcars, which account for only 37.3% of the average volume of the ark (the minimum volume being 39.9%, and the maximum – 25%). Thus, 60% of the ark remained for the living quarters of Noah’s family and for food. “And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them” (Gen. 6:21). That is, for the duration of the flood God restored men and animals to their paradisaical state:

they fed on the same food—plants (meat was permitted only after the Flood)—and were not hostile toward each other. Noah reassumed the authority over the animals which Adam had lost.

There was no command to take water with them, for the rains were of fresh water and could be drunk by all the inhabitants of the ark. Noah drew water through a special opening (a window—Gen. 8:6).

People frequently wonder how Noah could have assembled and caught such a great number of beasts. They claim that the account in Genesis is a fable, since Noah could not have gone running off to Australia after a kangaroo. But we have already said that the beasts came to the ark at the command of God (Gen. 7:15–16), apparently led by the guardian angel of these creatures from among the spirits known as Principalities. It is known that to this day many animals sense danger in advance and seek refuge in a safe place, so this could certainly have happened prior to such a terrible catastrophe. As for the kangaroo, it could well have been living in close proximity to the ark: after all, we do not know how the animals were disbursed prior to the flood.

Another objection to the biblical narrative is the fact that eight persons could not have kept so many animals fed and clean. But it is a known fact that even in ordinary inclement weather many living creatures grow sleepy. By some accounts, prior to the Flood the atmospheric pressure was twice as great as it is today, with the atmosphere containing 30% oxygen. During the cataclysm, however, the pressure fell to its current level, and most of earth's oxygen was captured in the form of limestone and other sediment rock (today the atmosphere contains 21% of this gas). All this inevitably plunged most of the animals into anabiosis, and the care they required was minimal.

But let us return to the construction of the ark. It had a length-to-height ratio of 6 to 1, making it practically unsinkable. This matter was examined in detail by Henry Morris: "The Scripture says the floodwaters rose at least 15 cubits above the highest mountains (Gen. 7:20), evidently to point out that the ark was floating freely wherever the waters might propel it. The height of the ark was 30 cubits, so it seems probable that the 15-cubit figure represents the draft of the ark when loaded. When the ark was floating at this depth, according to Archime-

des's principle its weight must have equaled the force of buoyancy, which in turn equals the weight of the equivalent amount of water displaced. Fresh water weighs 62.4 pounds per cubic foot and sea water 64 pounds per cubit foot. ... The average unit weight of the ark must then be half that of the water, or 32 pounds per cubic foot. The center of gravity of the ark and its contents presumably would be close to its geometric center, with the framework, the animals, and other contents more or less uniformly and symmetrically dispersed throughout the structure. The ark as designed would have been an exceptionally stable structure."⁹⁰ Calculations show that "for any angle up to 90°, the ark would right itself. Furthermore, its relatively great length (six times its width) would tend to keep it from being subjected to wave forces of equal magnitude through its whole length. ... The ark would tend to be lined up by the spectrum of hydrodynamic forces and currents in such a direction that its long axis would be parallel to the predominant direction of wave and current movement."⁹¹ Thus, the ark was ideally suited to its purpose—to withstand the onslaught of the waves and winds for the duration of a year.

In practice these calculations were "confirmed by testing a scale model of the ark in a large wave tank at Scripps Institute of Oceanography at La Jolla, California. Giant waves were produced in the tank by a mechanical wave generating device, simulating waves on the scale model larger than any ever experienced on a real ocean. The ark did indeed prove impossible to capsize, just as the above calculations had indicated."⁹² As for the volume of the ark, to the above it should be added that in 1609 a certain Dutchman, Peter Jansen, built a ship in the shape of Noah's ark, and it turned out that this shape enabled the ark to hold a third more than ordinary ships. Thus, to modern scientists it is obvious that the ark as described in the book of Genesis could absolutely have done what it was built to do. We will discuss the location of this construction at a later time.

⁹⁰ Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, p. 293.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 295.

Chapter 3

The End of the Deluge

The flood reached its limit, and then, when the tribulations became intolerable, the Lord began to act.

“And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged; the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained” (Gen. 8:1–2).

The word “remembered” means not that God is capable of forgetting, but that He began showing His good pleasure toward Noah in action. He made a wind to pass over the earth—that is, He caused a sharp change in temperature upon our planet. This caused it to come alive with whirlwinds, which the Almighty brought forth from His hidden treasures (Ps. 134:8). Under their influence the waters ceased, for the rain clouds through which the water had fallen upon the earth were dispersed, and a part of them began freezing over at the poles. Another reason for the cessation of the waters was that the geysers that had gushed forth from beneath the earth closed up: the dry land began to rise up and the ocean floor to sink, and the Lord once again separated the waters above the firmament, closing up the windows of heaven, and “the Lord sat enthroned at the Flood” (Ps. 28:10).⁹³

“And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated” (Gen. 8:3). People sometimes ask where exactly the waters of the Flood went. But even today water covers three fourths of the globe. It has been calculated that if the earth’s surface were made perfectly even, it would be covered with a layer of water over two and a half kilometers deep. Part of the waters of the Flood is also found in the polar ice caps. It should likewise be remembered that prior to the Flood the mountains were far lower, and the oceans smaller. When God commenced terminating the Flood,

⁹³ Text taken from Ps. 29:10 NKJV. —*Trans.*

He created a truly new world with a new climate. So that the air currents might carry the water vapor in the proper direction, He raised the mountains (some believe that Psalm 103 describes this process). “The abyss like a garment is His mantle; upon the mountains shall the waters stand” (verse 7)—this too refers to the Great Flood. “At Thy rebuke they will flee, at the voice of Thy thunder shall they be afraid” (verse 8)—this describes the waters’ withdrawal from the earth. The next verse shows the cause of this (we cite it according to the Septuagint translation): “The mountains rise up and the plains sink down, unto the place where Thou hast established them” (verse 8). Finally, the psalm indicates that a Flood by water will not be repeated: “Thou appointedst a bound that they shall not pass, neither return to cover the earth” (verse 10).

Thus, by the mighty action of the Ruler of the world, the mountainous ridges slowly began to rise, while the ocean depths simultaneously sank down. As a result, the streams of waters carved out enormous canyons, such as the Grand Canyon in the USA or Ayers Rock in central Australia. To this day the majority of river valleys bear traces of having channeled a greater water volume than today. Another proof of the gradual recession of the waters from the earth’s surface into the oceans is the traces on the shoreline, similar to those left by the waters of a lake that is drying up. These are found on large inland lakes, into which the waters also withdrew (such as Lake Washington).

“And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat” (Gen. 8:4). Interestingly, computer analysis has shown that God led the ark to almost the very point on earth that was most conducive for man’s repopulation of the earth. This place is located not far from Ankara,⁹⁴ near the place where the ark came to rest. Ancient Sumerian and Babylonian legends tell of how after the Flood the ark came to rest on Mount Nisir. As Flavius Josephus says, the Armenians call this place “the place of disembarkment,” and to this day the natives of that land point out remnants of the ark there. Many historians who have recorded the histories of all different nations have mentioned the Flood and the ark. These include the

⁹⁴ Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, p. 254.

Chaldean Berosus (3rd century BC). In one passage of his writings he states the following: "It is said that to this day, in Armenia on Mount Qardu, there survives a remnant of that ark, and that some take pitch from it, in most cases using it as a remedy against illnesses." This is also mentioned by Hieronymus the Egyptian (4th century BC) who wrote the history of Phoenicia, Mnaseus (around 150 BC), and several others. Likewise, Nicholas of Damascus (1st century BC), in describing this in his 96th book, relates the following: "Above the Minyades region in Armenia there is a high mountain called Baris, upon which according to tradition many people sought refuge and were delivered during the flood. It is also related that someone in an ark came to rest upon its peak, and that for a long time remnants of this vessel survived here. It may be that this was the same person of whom wrote Moses, the lawgiver of the Jews."

Chronologically, the next to make mention of remnants of the ark was St. Theophilus of Antioch (AD 185). In his epistle to Autolycus he says: "The remnants of this ark are pointed out to this day on the Ararat Mountains."

Preserved in Etchmiadzin Cathedral among the holy relics of the Armenian Church is a piece of wood taken from Noah's Ark; and by the western gate of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople the doors of Noah's Ark were preserved, as well as a board from it, which would be brought out for veneration during Passion Week (all this perished during the two assaults on Constantinople).

In 1800 the American Claudius Rich published a communication from Aga Hussein claiming that he himself had seen the remains of the ark on Ararat. In 1829 scientific expeditions to Ararat began, one of which, led by Professor Friedrich Parrot of the University of Dorpat, met with success: together with six others he succeeded in reaching the remains of the ark. In 1840 the ark was examined by the Turks. In 1893 an archdeacon of the Nestorian Church named Nurri officially declared that he had seen the remains of the ark; that "the front and back parts of the ship are reachable, but that the middle remains beneath the ice"; and that it was made of thick boards of a dark brown hue.

In August of 1915 the Russian pilot Vladimir Roskovitsky observed a frozen mountain lake on the eastern part of the snow-covered peak. At the edge of the lake the hull of a gigantic

ship could be seen. Part of it remained covered with ice, but its sides were accessible. Part of them was damaged, and one of the doors was visible. After this, Emperor Nicholas II outfitted an expedition which measured, photographed, and collected specimens from the ark, but its documentation was lost during the revolution.

In the summer of 1953, American oil worker George D. Greene took six distinct photographs from a helicopter of a large ship, half submerged in the mountain rock and ice creeping from a mountain ledge. After his death, however, all the original photographs were lost. Later *The Daily Telegraph* (issue dated 09.13.1965) published photographs from outer space showing the distinct outline of a vessel.

A remarkable discovery was also made by Fernand Navarra and his son Gabriel. On June 6, 1955, they discovered Noah's Ark and chopped out a one-meter piece of wood which, if we accept the radiocarbon dating, is 5,000 years old.

In recent years numerous claims have emerged that the CIA will be declassifying photographs of a mysterious ship on the slope of Ararat, which corresponds perfectly to the description of the ark in the book of Genesis. It is also stated that American officer Ed Davis personally saw Noah's Ark on Ararat during World War II. He claims that its wreckage lies on the Resurrection peak of Mount Ararat. "The vessel had three stories. The stern was destroyed. The animals were most likely placed in the lower part of the ark, since most of the rooms were located there. According to the Russians, when studying the vessel during World War I they discovered metal gratings. But I did not see them." Thus, even to this day Noah's Ark towers over the world at a height of five kilometers as an eternal witness to God's wrath against depraved mankind.

"And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen" (Gen. 8:5). According to one Armenian legend, the first patch of dry land that Noah saw was the future site of Yerevan. "It has appeared! It has appeared!" the patriarch exclaimed—*Yerae* in Hebrew, *Yereval* in Armenian—and later a city would be founded here. "And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had

made: and he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth" (Gen. 8:6–7).

This took place on January 10. The raven, however, did nothing to indicate the degree to which the earth had dried. Finding its normal food—the corpses of men and animals—floating about in abundance, the bird pecked at them, then flew back again and landed upon the roof of the ark. St. Demetrius of Rostov says that the raven is an image of the heretics, who fly out of the Church and feed on the dead food of worldly teaching.

"Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; and the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more" (Gen. 8:8–12).

From this text we see how quickly the water abated. On January 17 the dove had not yet found a place for herself, but by evening of the 24th she brought a newly budded olive leaf. Noah released her for the final time on February 1. The fact that the righteous one released the dove each time after seven days clearly indicates the existence of a weekly cycle even before the Flood. Apparently it was already established in paradise, beginning with the first week of the creation of the world.

Where could the dove have found an olive leaf immediately after such a catastrophe? After any piece of land dried, all the plant seeds immediately began to grow, for in this world freed from sin the creative word of God instilled in the earth on the third day acted freely. It should be noted that scientists consider the region of Armenia the ancestral home of the olive tree. This sacred account conceals a profound prefigurative significance. The dove is a symbol of chastity, purity, and peace, and it was in the form of a dove that the Holy Spirit appeared at the baptism of Christ. The fact that the dove returned in the evening meant that the Comforter would appear on earth at the decline of history.

The olive leaf in the mouth of the dove symbolizes the fact that the Spirit would heal the great wound of human sin.

“And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry” (Gen. 8:13).

On the first of March the earth rested from the waters. Its surface was dry, but beneath this dried-off crust was a layer of dirt that gradually also grew dry, and at the command of God the waters trickled into their subsoil reservoirs. Incidentally, history shows that the world gradually continues to dry out: at one time even the great deserts (such as the Sahara and the Gobi) were full of water, as attested by dry river beds. There were plains there in which countless herds of hoofed animals found pasture, and they were densely inhabited by men. The closer the world draws to its end, the drier it becomes, ultimately to perish in the final flood—the flood of fire.

We must note the righteousness of Noah: upon seeing the longed-for dried-out land covered with fresh greenery, he did not immediately rush out, though what could have been more natural after ten months of confinement in the ark? Rather, he waited nearly two months for God’s command!

“And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried. And God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons’ wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives with him: every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark” (Gen. 8:14–19).

On Sunday, April 27, 2263, a new history of the world began. On that day, living creatures began repopulating the earth, and it is difficult not to see in this a harbinger of another renewal of the world that would occur several thousand years later on another Sunday in April.

The Lord God bore witness that man had regained his place in the hierarchy of creation. This time in the list he is placed not after the creeping things, as he was before the Flood (Gen. 7:21), but at the very beginning, as the crown of creation. Once again to man are entrusted the animals which he must lead out of the ark. To all those who left the ark, men and animals alike, God gives the paradisaical command: "Let them be fruitful and multiply upon the earth." According to Chrysostom, "As Adam was the beginning and root of all who lived prior to the flood, so also this righteous man becomes, as it were, the leaven, the beginning, and the root of all those after the flood." Another command given to all those who were delivered was this: "Let them disperse across the earth." The dumb beasts carried out this will of God, but the Lord was obliged to scatter human beings by means of the curse of the Tower of Babel.

On that Sunday all the animals that had entered descended from the peak of Ararat, two by two. During the flood they had all preserved their purity, with one exception: Ham had begotten Canaan (Gen. 9:18), thereby justifying his name ("hot-blooded," "passionate"). Remarkably, all the creatures walked by kind, without either mingling or devouring each other. This doubtless occurred because in the vicinity of a righteous man the grace of the Spirit gives off its fragrance, restoring animals to their primordial state.

"And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar" (Gen. 8:20). Wishing to give thanks to the Lord for their deliverance and to entreat His mercy for the sins of mankind, Noah began the new history of the world with a sacrifice. For the first time he erected an altar, which from that time to this has been a necessary, primary part of any Orthodox church. At any rate, here the Bible speaks of a special place for sacrificial offerings. God did not command Noah to perform this sacred rite: it proceeded from his pure love for the Creator.

When the animals were entering the ark, God foresaw this sacrifice of love and led in seven of the sacrificial animals, so that one of them might be slain. The clean animals, in the opinion of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, were those creatures

which under the Mosaic Law were designated for sacrifices. Of livestock these were the bulls, sheep, and goats, while of birds they were doves and pigeons. All of these were offered as a whole burnt offering, as a sign of full recognition of one's infirmity and renunciation of one's own will. According to the book of Leviticus, the ritual of whole burnt offerings was as follows: "Let him offer a male without blemish. ... And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord: and the priests ... shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar. ... And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces. And ... the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire: and ... shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar: but his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord" (Lev. 1:3-9). In addition, sacrifices were always sprinkled with salt (Lev. 2:13), and the skin belonged to the priest (Lev. 7:8). Perhaps it was on this skin that Noah recorded the so-called Laws of Noah. Indeed, Noah's sacrifice, offered with heartfelt zeal, was pleasing to the Creator: "And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:21). Naturally, we ought not to think that God finds the smell of burnt meat pleasing. On the contrary, He is pleased by the spiritual fragrance of a human heart permeated with grace, of which the apostle Paul wrote: "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life" (2 Cor. 2:15-16). According to the venerable Seraphim, when the Holy Spirit appears to a person, one of His manifestations is an extraordinary fragrance, incomparable to any of the smells of the flowers of earth. Seeing that man, though debased by sin, was nevertheless able to assimilate the fragrance of the Comforter, the Lord firmly established never again to destroy all of mankind by the

waters of a flood. Whereas before the cataclysm men had not only sinned as a result of original sin, but had themselves invented more and more new transgressions, after it mankind in the person of Noah showed that it could also suppress in itself the defilement transmitted through conception. And so God made for Himself a rule that His justice was to be meted out individually (Sodom, Pharaoh, the Hebrew nation after the murder of Christ), but compassion to all.

“Neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Gen. 8:21–22). According to the explicit word of the Almighty, there will never again be a complete destruction of every living thing, up until the changing of the world and the end of time. After the flood the Lord created a new climate, and He promised that throughout the days of the earth the rhythms instilled after the flood would be preserved—seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and the days and nights that regulate them, the duration of which varies. Apparently, after the flood God set the earth’s axis at its current position of 23.5° from its supposed plane of orbit. If before the flood the earth’s axis was perpendicular to this hypothetical plane, the whole earth had a single (tropical) climate, and there were no seasons. This change in the reciprocal position of the earth and its surrounding sphere that occurred after the flood made it possible for the seasons and various climate zones to exist, created the agricultural cycles, and produced various durations of daylight and darkness during the day. All this will continue not forever, but throughout all the days of the earth. Clearly, here we have an explicit prophecy of the fact that one day the universe will be changed, “the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat” (2 Pet. 3:10). The knowledge of this last day is preserved throughout humankind and in nearly all religions.

And when Noah had performed his sacred rite, an enormous and wondrous rainbow, the sign of reconciliation between God and men, stretched out for the first time over the entire world that had been cleansed of lawlessness.

Chapter 4

Extrabiblical Evidence of the Great Flood

If the Flood was indeed as Moses described it, it may be presumed that lore concerning it would have survived among other nations, as well. Such is indeed the case. There are hundreds of independent accounts of a gigantic deluge that destroyed nearly the entire world. In writing this chapter we took as our basis facts cited in the popular science film *A World Lost*, though other sources are also used. Ethnologists have discovered 59 legends of a flood among the aborigines of North America, 46 in South America, 17 in the Near East, 23 in Asia, 31 among the Old Europeans, and 37 in Australia and Oceania.

“Not one of us now living is descended from the original race of men, who all perished. We are sprung from Deucalion. The people of the first race were arrogant, prideful men. They did not keep their word, did not take in strangers, and were deaf to entreaties” (Greek legend). “Much time passed after Kumuhonua, the first man. The whole earth became mired in sin and men ceased to worship the gods. One man was righteous. His name was Nu-u”—so states a Hawaiian legend. “Deucalion and his wives took refuge in an enormous vessel. To it came boars and horses, lions, serpents, and other beasts, and it held them all” (Greece). “An old man built an enormous ship and entered into it together with his whole family and numerous animals” (Cuba). “Nu-u built an enormous canoe. He got into it, taking with him stores of food, plants, and animals” (Hawaiian). “Wishing to bring down a flood, God warned Nota and his wife Neta, saying, ‘Hollow out an enormous cypress. In it you shall be delivered in Rottozoti.’⁹⁵ The waves will reach up to the heavens.’ This they did, and God shut the door” (Aztec legend). “The angry God

⁹⁵ Possibly an alternate spelling of Huey Tozoztli, the name of a month. — *Trans.*

Mbenga gathered the rain clouds, and from them there poured forth streams of water upon the burdened earth" (Fiji islands legend). "The earth unexpectedly opened its sluices. A terrible downpour ensued. The rivers left their banks" (Greek). "Overflowing, the rivers rush across the open plains, simultaneously washing away not just orchards, flocks, houses and human beings, but sacred temples and their contents. [The bodies of those who perished floated about like trunks of trees. They were like the fish roe in the sea.] Any building that has stood firm, surviving the great disaster undamaged, still has its roof drowned by the highest waves, and its towers buried below the flood. ... All is the sea, the sea without a shore. Wolves swim among the sheep. ... The circling bird, after a long search for a place to land, falls on tired wings into the water" (Latin poet Ovid).⁹⁶ "Every day the rain fell, and every night the rain fell. The sky collapsed. There was no earth. All the animals were drowned. Dry land was no more" (Athabascan Indians). "God filled the world with water" (Lapland). "All perished but Deucalion"—St. Theophilus traces his very name back to his exhortation to sinners: "Come; God calls (*deune, kalei*) you to repentance"—"who due to his virtue was saved. And from him there sprung a new race of men." "A year later the water began to recede" (Transylvania). "A sharp wind arose and dried the earth" (Persia). "He released a raven, which at first did not return, then stayed to peck at the dead bodies, but then flew back, holding a green branch in its beak" (Mekoaken⁹⁷ Indians). "All who were saved, of whom there were eight, sailed to Mbenge" (Fiji islands).

Several other legends concerning the flood may be added. The Egyptians described how the gods cleansed the earth with a great flood, after which only a few shepherds survived. The Hindus say that Manu escaped a flood on a ship, which a fish pulled to a mountain. The druids of England also spoke of a second populating of the earth by means of a pious patriarch, sent to punish the people for their great depravity. A Greenland legend asserts that at one time the earth was shaken, and all the people

⁹⁶ Translation by A.S. Kline, from *The Metamorphoses by Ovid*.

⁹⁷ No references to this tribe were found. The Mequachake appears to be the closest, but the translator found no reference to a flood legend among this people. —*Trans.*

drowned except for one man and one woman, who then repopulated the earth.⁹⁸

Although all these legends have numerous individual differences and are considerably muddled by pagan overwriting, all of them concur on three main points: a destructive flood occurred, there was a ship on which to escape, and the human race was saved in the person of several people (usually a single family).

Many legends relate that people survived on a high mountain. This is apparently a recollection of the ark coming to rest upon the Ararat mountains.

To any rational person it is clear that the vast reach of the flood legend must have had an equally far-reaching cause. It is absolute madness to think that dozens of accounts which coincide in many details (right up to the name—Noah, Nu-u, Nota) could have been produced by various localized floods (as proposed, for example, by V.N. Vernadsky), let alone by an ordinary flooding of the Euphrates. At the most modest estimate, the probability that 213 legends would coincide in even one common detail is one in 7.5 multiplied by 1065, which is absolutely impossible from a mathematical standpoint.

We must give particular attention to the legends of Babylon and Sumer, which the wisdom of this age, accompanied by modernist “theology,” considers the source of the biblical narrative. Naturally, we would be greatly deceived in thinking that the “biblical criticism” which produced so exotic an opinion contains even a pitiful shadow of a percentage of the truth. In actuality, this phenomenon, like most modern “historical” doctrines, was by no means produced by a search for the truth. For a long time now hardly any scholar has pursued this search (if any ever did). They are occupied with a far more entertaining pursuit: the desire to justify their own godless existence. It is therefore all the more important that they prove that the Bible is by no means the Word of God, but merely a fictional work of Hebrew literature. The false teaching called “biblical criticism” is a typical example of the fanatical aspiration to debase Christ and His Church by any means possible—an aspiration based (like other “historical theories”) upon the initially flawed principle of a “presumption of guilt” and upon clearly false premises; yet when these premises

⁹⁸ Halley, *Halley's Bible Handbook*, p. 75.

are unmasked and rejected, the ideas inferred from them nevertheless are not reexamined.

By way of example, we will cite the “five authors of the Pentateuch” theory, which directly intersects with our topic. When this “scientific-ish” fable was created, it was claimed that Moses could not have written the entire Pentateuch, since in his time writing did not exist. It has been known for nearly two centuries that this art existed no less than 1,500 years before Moses, yet the theory based on this obvious falsehood (which was apparent even when it appeared) is alive and well, now relying on other equally absurd arguments. It is presented as an infallible truth, both in godless history books and in the works of modernists (such as Knyazev, Men, and others). The foundation has been pulled out from beneath the house, but the house remains standing. Clearly its chief basis is not below (scientific arguments), but in the air (in pridefulness and hatred for the Creator, inspired by the prince of wickedness in high places).

Based on this, the Orthodox person must take a hypercritical view of every attempt to repudiate that which the mind of our Church has accepted (for example, the authenticity of the works of St. Dionysius the Areopagite, the reality of the existence of the apostle Andrew, the Orthodoxy of St. Isaac of Syria, the fact that the works of St. Nilus were in fact written by him and not by the heretic Evagrius, etc.). Such views almost certainly had not the slightest value from the outset as evidence of the truth, and are merely one of the tools of the enemy of the human race.

But let us return to the supposed “sources” of the biblical account in question—the myths of the inhabitants of Mesopotamia. The chief personage of these legends is a person named Unapishtim (the Babylonian version) or Ziusudra (a Sumerian legend), who was the tenth pre-Flood king. The names themselves are most likely not proper names, but appellatives. *Unapishtim* means “one who has found breath, who has retained his soul,” while *Ziusudra* means “one who has found long life.” Men could well have given this soubriquet to one who had escaped a flood. If Moses copied from the Babylonians, where did he get the name Noah (“calm,” “comfort”), the origin of which is confirmed by legends from Hawaii and Mexico (the Aztecs)? This is the first fact that renders impossible the theory that the Bible borrowed from other sources.

The hearts of the Great Gods moved them to inflict the Flood.

...

Ea, the Clever Prince(?), was under oath with them
so he repeated their talk to the reed house:

'Reed house, reed house! Wall, wall!

Hear, O reed house! Understand, O wall!

O man of Shuruppak, son of Ubartutu:

Tear down the house and build a boat!

Abandon wealth and seek living beings!

Spurn possessions and keep alive living beings!

Make all living beings go up into the boat.

The boat which you are to build,

its dimensions must measure equal to each other:

its length must correspond to its width.

Unapishtim did so, and the ark is described as follows:

Its walls were each 10 times 12 cubits in height,

the sides of its top were of equal length, 10 times 12 cubits each.

I laid out its (interior) structure and drew a picture of it (?).

I provided it with six decks,

thus dividing it into seven (levels).

The inside of it I divided into nine (compartments).

I drove plugs (to keep out) water in its middle part.

I saw to the punting poles and laid in what was necessary.

Three times 3,600 (units) of raw bitumen I poured into the bitumen kiln.⁹⁹

Naturally, there are many parallels to the biblical narrative here, but the size of the ark does not match, and its construction is different (nine stories, rather than three as in the Bible). Clearly, both accounts independently originated from the same source.

But let us examine the description of the flood itself:

Shamash had set a stated time:

'In the morning I will let loaves of bread shower down,

⁹⁹ *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, "Tablet XI: The Story of the Flood." Maureen Gallery Kovacs, trans. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989), pp. 97–99. (This translation differs significantly from the Russian. –*Trans.*)

and in the evening a rain of wheat!¹⁰⁰
Go inside the boat, seal the entry!

...

Just as dawn began to glow
there arose from the horizon a black cloud.
Adad rumbled inside of it,
before him went Shullat and Hanish,
heralds going over mountain and land.
Erragal pulled out the mooring poles.

...

The Anunnaki lifted up the torches,
setting the land ablaze with their flare.
Stunned shock over Adad's deeds overtook the heavens,
and turned to blackness all that had been light.

...

No one could see his fellow,
they could not recognize each other in the torrent.

...

The gods were cowering like dogs, crouching by the outer wall.
Ishtar shrieked like a woman in childbirth,
the sweet-voiced Mistress of the Gods wailed.

...

The gods—those of the Anunnaki—were weeping with her.

...

Six days and seven nights
came the wind and flood, the storm flattening the land.
When the seventh day arrived.

...

The sea calmed, fell still, the whirlwind (and) flood stopped up.
I looked around all day long—quiet had set in
and all the human beings had turned to clay!

...

There emerged a region (of land).
On Mt. Nimush the boat lodged firm,
Mt. Nimush held the boat, allowing no sway.

...

¹⁰⁰The Russian translation cited in the source makes no mention of bread or wheat. Literally it reads, "When in the evening the lord of darkness shall send a downpour..." —*Trans.*

When a seventh day arrived
 I sent forth a dove and released it.
 The dove went off, but came back to me;
 no perch was visible so it circled back to me.
 I sent forth a swallow and released it.
 The swallow went off, but came back to me;
 no perch was visible so it circled back to me.
 I sent forth a raven and released it.
 The raven went off, and saw the waters slither back.
 It eats, it scratches, it bobs, but does not circle back to me.
 Then I sent out everything in all directions and sacrificed
 (a sheep).
 I offered incense in front of the mountain-ziggurat.
 Seven and seven cult vessels I put in place,
 and (into the fire) underneath (or: into their bowls) I poured
 reeds, cedar, and myrtle.
 The gods smelled the savor,
 the gods smelled the sweet savor,
 and collected like flies over a (sheep) sacrifice.¹⁰¹

Clearly, this describes the same event as in the Bible. But it is equally clear that the Babylonian legend is greatly distorted. As we have seen, the Flood (according to the Babylonian myth) lasted 7 days (and not a year, as in the Bible), but that time was simply not sufficient for all the events described in the legend (the releasing of the birds could not have occurred in a single day). On the other hand, this narrative was clearly influenced by fellowship with the demons, for who but they could have so accurately described their own state? In reading this account one vividly beholds the horror of the demons, staggered by a catastrophe they had not foreseen, and before which they themselves trembled like dogs. Naturally, they then attempted to pass themselves off as the masters of the flood, but in this they clearly failed. Here we evidently have two different revelations, divine and demonic, and “what communion hath light with darkness?” (2 Cor. 2:14). It is clear that Moses’ words are not echoing a distorted Babylonian legend, but are a precise account of actual events as revealed to this great prophet by the Eternal Spirit.

¹⁰¹ *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, “Tablet XI: The Story of the Flood,” pp. 100–102.

From all of the above we see that the great catastrophe that destroyed the entire first world is traced in characters of fire upon the memories of all the tribes and nations that descended from Noah and his family. Hence, any attempt to repudiate the very fact that a global flood occurred or to reduce it to a localized flood equates to accusing most peoples of the Earth of insanity, and thereby reflects the mental state of its authors.

Chapter 5

Geological Evidence of the Great Flood

In the preceding chapters we have already partially touched on a number of proofs of the flood discovered in sediment rock of the earth's core (fossilized tracks of men and dinosaurs, their fossilized remains in the "wrong" strata, large river beds that appeared after water runoff, traces of drying out on the shores of lakes and oceans, etc.). All this presumes that all (or most) sediment rock was formed during the year of the flood. But in that case a logical question arises: if this is so, where did scientists get the geological column that indisputably attests to millions of years of evolution? Why are more primitive creatures always located deeper down than those that are more complex? How could such a layer of rock, especially one consisting of multiple strata, have appeared in the year of the flood?

To the first objection we will respond as follows: not one geological stratum bears a label with its age. Likewise, the geological column that we see in school textbooks does not exist in nature. Not one place in the world has sediment rock arranged in complete accordance with the stratigraphic geological column. Nowhere have all the layers been found in order (most often only two or three layers are found lying in the "right" order). This diagram is merely a theoretical system created on the basis of evolution. All the sediment rock ascribed to various geological eras does not differ in its makeup. The same various minerals are

found in all these layers: they can possess every possible physical structure and may lie at all different depths. The location of any of them is determined not by these characteristics, but merely by the fossilized remains of living creatures. Based on the presumption that evolution is irreversible, geologists determine the age of rock based on “master fossils.” Considering that evolution is impossible, however, since it violates a host of natural laws, and that evolution as such has never been observed by anyone, we thereby lose the ability to learn the age of any rock formation. As noted above, the very process of determining the age of geological material is based on circular logic: evolution is proven by the location of fossils, which is established based on the theory of evolution. The whole affair is a cock and bull story.

On the other hand, throughout the world there are dozens of instances of “incorrect stratification,” where the “older” geological material (on the evolutionary scale) is located above the “younger.” This applies not to small lots, but to entire cities. For example, “in Wyoming, across an area of about 30 × 60 miles (2,000 square miles), a layer 300 million years old was found above a layer 60,000 years old. According to evolutionists, this whole stratum of 2,000 square miles slid over the younger stratum. Another example of an ancient stratum on top of a younger stratum is found on the Matterhorn and the Mythentop in Switzerland. The phenomenon is explained by supposing that the top layer of the Matterhorn, together with other mountains, moved over a distance of about sixty miles to the place where it is now. The Mythentop, according to some evolutionists, even shifted all the way over from Africa.”¹⁰² And this despite the fact that there is not the slightest trace of so momentous an event—no boulders, no rubble. Clearly, one of the genies from Scheherazade’s stories was involved. It is obvious that these “incorrect stratifications” prove the far-fetched nature of the geochronological column, which exists solely in the feverish imaginations of the supporters of evolutionism.

It must be noted, however, that for the most part more primitive organisms are found lower down than those that are more complex. How is this fact to be viewed from the standpoint of cre-

¹⁰² Ben Hobrunk, *Modern Science in the Bible* (Howard Books, 2011).

ationism? There are two mutually complementary explanations. Firstly, the most primitive creatures live in the sea and are practically incapable of independent movement. This is why the mud-flow caused by the global flood buried them first. The more mobile fish and amphibians were trapped later, and consequently their remains are located higher up. Reptiles, mammals, and birds are capable of escaping the water for still longer, and so they are found in the uppermost strata. Man could survive for even longer, for which reason people are found in very small quantities and most frequently at the very top of the geological column. They simply did not have time to fossilize, but decayed on the surface of the water. The second explanation is based on the laws of hydraulics. It has been proven that eddying streams of water are capable of “sorting” the objects within them into groups of similar size and shape. “This sorting action is basically produced because the amount of hydrodynamic ‘lift and drag’ forces on immersed objects are directly related to the size and shape of the objects. The same applies, of course, to objects falling vertically through water, so that objects that are simpler in shape (and thus, supposedly more ‘primitive’) would tend to settle out of a decelerating flow more rapidly and be buried more deeply than would objects of complex geometry. This tendency would be further augmented by the fact that these simpler organisms (shells, for example) normally are of somewhat greater specific gravity than ‘higher’ organisms.”¹⁰³ Thus, the general tendency observed in the bowels of the earth is easily explained from the standpoint of the flood theory. This theory also predicts that there would be exceptions to this rule (unthinkable in the context of evolutionism), which is precisely what we find. In addition to the above-mentioned “incorrect stratification” of rock formations, these exceptions include enormous graveyards of various fossilized animals that had perished suddenly. Some appear to have clearly been killed by water. Frequently among these masses of creatures that perished, animals are found that lived in different eras (judging by the geochronological table). The evolutionary explanation of the locations of these fossils does not stand up to criticism, if for no other reason than that throughout the earth’s crust not a single

¹⁰³ Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, pp. 329–330.

transitional link has been found between different classes of living beings—the most important predicate in the context of this theory.

Finally, it is time to answer the third objection: how could such a mass of sediment rock have formed during the single year of the flood? The very formulation of the question is only possible if we allow for the principle of uniformism, which presumes that all processes currently happening have always progressed at the same speed at which they are progressing today. (Consequently, since today freshwater and saltwater silt accumulates at a rate of only a few centimeters annually, it took millions of years for all sediment rock to form.) Not only is this supposition completely baseless, it contradicts numerous facts. Even evolutionary geology has acknowledged a number of catastrophes of planetary significance. For example, the generally accepted hypothesis today is that the dinosaurs perished due to a meteorite falling into the sea, thereby creating the Gulf of Mexico. American scientists have hypothesized that the Black Sea was created in a matter of hours due to the collapse of the embankment between its basin and the Mediterranean Sea. What is most remarkable, however, is that despite the fact that the catastrophic nature of the chalk strata (the destruction of the dinosaurs) has been proven, the dating (64–70 million years) remains sacrosanct, though it was calculated based on the opinion that the sedimentation processes occurred at a constant rate. Here we see in effect the irrational factors of a false religion that enslave the minds of scientists.

The fossil graveyards mentioned above also brilliantly demonstrate the brevity of the fossilization process and of sediment rock formation. All these remains were almost instantaneously covered with a layer of sediment, which immediately hardened. Otherwise nothing would have been left of them, since they would have decayed due to bacteria and predators would have carried them off. This is especially clear when we see the fossilized remains of dinosaurs. If sedimentation had occurred as slowly as it does today, not one bone would have survived the millions of years it would have taken. This is attested by trees discovered in coal strata that had turned to coal, which sometimes bisect several layers of rock (sometimes up to six meters thick).

How did the stratified structure of sediment rock form, if it is not indicative of yearly accumulations over millions of years? In reality, the speed of sediment accumulation depends on a number of factors:

1. Hydraulic characteristics: the slope, shape, and cross-section of the bed; the quantity of water that passes through the cross-section in a unit of time; the relief features of the floor and walls of the bed; the constancy of stream parameters; water temperature; etc.

2. Topographical factors: the shape and size of the basin; the type of soil and the vegetation covering it; branching of the tributary system; characteristics of the subsoil water basin.

3. Meteorological factors: frequency and intensity of rainstorms; direction of air mass movement; rain duration.

4. Lithological factors: size, shape, homogeneity, specific density, and chemical makeup of water-borne particles.

The moment any one of these parameters (for example, current speed) changes, the speed with which hard particles settle as sediment immediately alters. The formation of a given layer is interrupted, and the formation of the next begins. In other words, in any rock comprised of a series of strata, each stratum corresponds to an unbroken process that proceeded at a constant rate of speed, and consequently with unchanged parameters. Under actual conditions, this constancy can be maintained for only a few minutes or hours, after which one of the constant factors is certain to change. As a result, each layer of sediment rock formed over a period of time lasting several minutes to several hours. Since adjacent layers of sediment rock are parallel to each other and similar in their makeup and structure, this definitely attests that the process of sedimentation was unbroken, and also that the entire formation took place over a few days at most.¹⁰⁴ Since throughout the world sediment rock has comparatively few layers, it is logical to suppose that the process of their formation occurred over a short time and universally—a superb proof of the biblical narrative concerning the Great Flood.

In the course of that terrible year the majority of mineral resources appeared. And—O bitter irony!—modern civilization,

¹⁰⁴ Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, pp. 319–323.

which wishes to restore the pre-Flood world, subsists on the products of that world's dissolution: the oil, gas, and coal formed from the decaying corpses of the first men, beasts, and plants.

Chapter 6

Did the Flood Cover the Whole Earth?

Throughout the previous account we proceeded on the assumption that the Flood was global—an opinion that was universally accepted until the 20th century. The great exegete of Holy Scripture, St. John Chrysostom, for example, says that “our Lord, having cleansed the whole universe by this flood, and having in a sense freed it from man’s ungodliness and the defilement of extreme depravity, made it most beautiful and once again showed us its face to be bright, not permitting even a trace of the former hideousness to remain. ‘Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered’ (Gen. 7:20). Not without reason does Scripture relate this to us, but that we might know that not only men, cattle, four-legged beasts, and creeping things perished, but even the birds of the air, and all beasts and other dumb animals that inhabited the mountains.”

St. Irenaeus of Lyons says the same: “Then destruction overtook all men, as well as the animals that were on the earth. Only those who had taken shelter in the ark were left alive.” St. Theophilus of Antioch explicitly rejects Plato’s opinion that only the plains were submerged, and asserts that only those who were in the ark escaped. Blessed Augustine likewise demonstrates the global nature of the flood. More examples could be cited, but this is already sufficient, for “in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established” (Mt. 18:16).

In our time, however, an opinion has become widespread among many theologians that the Flood did not affect all dry land. There are two views on what portion of the earth was submerged. The most radical of these, naturally, belongs to Archpriest Alexander Men. In his opinion, “there is no doubt that the model for the narrative of the Yahwehist [one of the mythical

five “authors” of the Pentateuch] was the Sumerian and Babylonian legend.” He says that the origin of this legend was a gigantic flooding of the Euphrates, known as “Woolley’s Flood.” “Did the flood cover the whole earth?” asks Archpriest Men. “Those who seek geological facts in the Bible will be disappointed. The poetic shell of the legend overshadows the external details and facts. Geology knows no global flood, but it is quite possible that the more ancient cradles of civilization suffered a catastrophe.” Apparently, for this archpriest the Flood (if it ever happened) did not even affect all people. One could go no further down the path to destroying divine revelation!

More moderate is the opinion of theologians such as Archpriest Stephan Lyashevsky and Deacon Andrey Kuraev, who assert that the Flood affected the whole of mankind, but not the whole world—that is, it submerged only those places inhabited by man, who (in 2,200 years!) had not yet spread out over all dry land. Although they acknowledge that all mankind perished in the waters of the Flood, for some reason these theologians have a hard time acknowledging that the animal subjects perished along with their human masters.

When one examines their arguments in defense of their viewpoint, their weakness is astounding. The sole biblically based proof that the flood merely affected all of humanity is the quite substantiated assertion that sometimes “all the Earth” refers merely to “the whole world known to the Jews” (Rom. 10:18, 1 Kings 10:24, Acts 2:5, Lk. 2:1). But for some reason it is deduced from this that this account likewise refers specifically to the region known to Moses and his contemporaries. How this explanation was reached is left unstated. Yet Scripture uses the expression “all the earth” to mean all mankind (Ps. 99:1). Ought we not then to understand the entire story of the Flood allegorically? After all, water in Scripture is an image of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 7:38–39). If we take this unceremonious approach to Moses’ account, we may well decide that all mankind was seized by the grace of the Spirit, from which only Noah and those with him were saved. This is an absurd interpretation, just as the interpretation used by modernists is equally false, for it directly contradicts the 19th canon of the Council of Trullo, which prohibits understanding Holy Scripture differently than the holy fathers understood it. If we do not

adhere to this canon, any sacred text may be twisted any way one wishes, to the point of becoming the exact opposite of its own meaning, if one only has the desire and the imagination! This is precisely the source of all heresies that assert that one can understand the Bible on one's own. We have already seen patristic opinions that the waters of the flood covered all dry land. Let us then examine this biblical account in more detail and learn which opinion explains it more naturally—that of the holy fathers or that of the modernists.

Before beginning our analysis of all the biblical accounts of the Flood (which are found not only in the book of Genesis), we must first note that divine revelation uses the expression “all the earth” in the literal sense, as well (Rev. 5:6, 13:12; Is. 54:5; Mic. 4:13; Zech. 4:14). We then must select from the various meanings the one that does not contradict the cohesiveness of divine revelation.

If an unbiased person were to read the biblical account, he would naturally form the impression that the Flood was a planet-wide event. Our reader would encounter no fewer than thirty testimonials to the global nature of the catastrophe. He would learn, for example, that God decided “to destroy every living substance from off the face of the earth” (cf. Gen. 7:4); that the Lord said that everything beneath the heavens and upon the earth would die (Gen. 6:17); that this is in fact what occurred (Gen. 7:21–23); and that only Noah and those with him in the ark were left. The water rose so high that it covered all the high mountains under heaven to a depth of 15 cubits (Gen. 7:19–20)—not merely the earth known to the Hebrews. This catastrophe continued for a year, which never happens in the case of minor flooding. Naturally, not being burdened by evolutionary fables, our hypothetical reader would arrive at the conclusion that this refers specifically to a world-wide flood. This conviction would only be strengthened if he were to remember that at that time mankind most likely inhabited all dry land, for the people of those times were particularly endowed with longevity and fertility. Furthermore, in the beginning God commanded them to fill the whole earth (Gen. 1:28); consequently, a world-wide flood was required in order to destroy it.

This conviction would solidify into a certainty if he were to look at what is said concerning the Flood in the other books of the Bible. The most powerful evidence in favor of the traditional

understanding of the nature of this catastrophe is the words of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself: "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. ... Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Lk. 17:26–27, 30). If no one will be able to hide from the world conflagration in that day of the end of time, no one was able to escape outside Noah's Ark in the day of the destruction of the first world. The leader of the apostles echos his Teacher, testifying that God "spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly" (2 Pet. 2:5). These words cannot be applied merely to the valley of the Euphrates or to the inhabited dry land, which can hardly be considered the world. Clearly, this catastrophe affected not only the earth, but also the celestial regions. The atmosphere was altered, and perhaps it was then that a flood occurred on Mars. For according to Scripture "the windows of heaven were opened," and the water that is above the firmament poured down upon our planet. Other words of the apostle Peter still more greatly emphasize the traditional interpretation: "By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pet. 3:5–7). Thus, if divine revelation is to be believed, there can be no doubt that the waters of the flood covered all dry land, and that no one but those who were in the ark were able to escape. By the same token, no one will escape the last fiery cataclysm except those who through baptism enter the new ark of the Ecumenical Orthodox Church (1 Pet. 3:21). It appears that it is this biblical juxtaposition of the end of the world and the Flood that conceals one of the hidden levers that forces people to reject the world-wide nature of the flood, though naturally the primary reason for the creation of this hypothesis was the desire to adapt to the spirit of the time. For if escape from the Flood was possible even without the ark (for example, by fleeing to some place that had not been flooded), there is no need for us to live

in the Church: with all our information systems and technological abilities we are quite capable of learning of any localized cataclysm in advance, and we will escape either beneath the water or on a spaceship. But in this we will fail: "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down. ... And though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them" (Amos 9:2-3), says the Lord.

We might also touch on a series of other reasons why the opinion of the modernists is completely improbable. Firstly, God promised never again to send the waters of a flood upon the earth (Gen. 9:15), and the prophet Isaiah proclaims on behalf of the Lord: "This is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee" (Is. 54:9). This is referring to the New Israel, born as a result of the redeeming sacrifice of the Servant of Yahweh. If the waters of Noah covered only a part of the dry land, God is shown to be a liar at every localized flood, and hence His regard for the Orthodox Church is wholly unpredictable. Naturally, to think thus about the Lord is to completely place oneself outside the bounds of salvation and to repudiate any connection between oneself and divine revelation.

Secondly, the very construction of a gigantic ark would have been completely pointless, since in a hundred years Noah and his family could have emigrated to any corner of the planet. Additionally, an ark that size would have been needed only for a flood that covered the whole world, not the whole of humanity. Like Noah, any animals and birds could have retreated to any unflooded area, and if the Lord on some whim had wished for Noah to escape specifically on a ship, it could perfectly well have been built dozens of times smaller than described in the book of Genesis. This is the more true since it is stated that the ark was created "to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth" (Gen. 7:3).

We have already seen that nearly all sediment rock constitutes the geological traces of the flood. The question arises, however: what catastrophe does the so-called "Woolley's flood" indicate? In 1929, while excavating the ruins of Ur, the birthplace of Abraham, British archaeologist Leonard Woolley discovered that be-

neath the city strata there lay a stratum of river mud that was completely devoid of any traces of humanity. "Beneath it a stratum was found containing numerous but more ancient archaeological remains. Woolley surmised that the strata of river mud had been deposited during a gigantic deluge—a real biblical flood. Later, however, the matter proved not to be so simple. Firstly, in the vicinity places were discovered that bore no trace of the stratum linked to the flood. Secondly, one analysis showed that the majority of the stratum indicated was of eolian origin—that is, the sand had been brought by the wind, not by the water." Another substantiation of the fact that this phenomenon was not the result of Noah's flood is the fact that the borders of this stratum do not reach Ararat, where the remains of Noah's Ark lie to this day. Most likely these deposits appeared on that terrible night when God confounded the tongues of those who were constructing the Tower of Babel. According to tradition, the Lord's descent was accompanied by a terrible storm (the river mud), frightful whirlwinds (the sand), and rain. In the morning a rainbow appeared above the clouds, and the Almighty averted destruction from depraved mankind. It was during that remarkable time that the strata were formed which Leonard Woolley discovered.

Part VI

THE CHURCH FROM NOAH TO EBER

Chapter 1

Biblical Chronology: The Sin of Ham and the Fates of the Races

The reason why contemporary liberal historians reject the reality of most of the ancient sacred events described in the Bible is that secular chronology does not match that of the Bible.

After the Flood, Noah and his sons began tilling the earth. He planted a vineyard, and when the fruit ripened he made wine. Not yet knowing the properties of that beverage, he became drunk and lay down naked in his tent. Seeing him, his middle son Ham went outside and, laughing, told his brothers of what had happened. But Shem and Japheth acted nobly: they took clothing, entered the tent facing backward, and covered the nakedness of their father without looking at him.

When Noah awoke and learned how Ham had mocked him, he said, “Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant” (Gen. 9:25–27).

Thus Ham was punished in the person of his son Canaan, who according to tradition told his father what Noah had done. Ham himself was not cursed, because Noah did not wish to curse one whom God had already blessed. The descendants of Canaan (the Palestinians and the Phoenicians) have indeed been historically subject to the descendants of Shem (the Hebrews) and Japheth (the Europeans).

The blessing of Noah was a great prophecy of the fates of the races. As the righteous one had foretold, the descendants of Shem were distinguished by particular religious aptitude. With them, in the person of the Hebrews, the Covenant was made. Most importantly, it was from Shem that the Saviour descended according to the flesh.

The descendants of Japheth, as Noah had foretold, dispersed throughout all the world, and after the divine incarnation they entered into the Testament of Shem. The tents of Shem—the Old Testament Church—received the descendants of Japheth: the gentiles who accepted Christianity. Thus a single Church was formed that united all the nations.

After the Flood Noah lived another 350 years, then died, having instructed his descendants to preserve peace among themselves.

Chapter 2

The Original Monotheism

Now there is very good ground for guessing that religion did not originally come from some detail that was forgotten because it was too small to be traced. Much more probably it was an idea that was abandoned because it was too large to be managed. There is very good reason to suppose that many people did begin with the simple but overwhelming idea of one God who governs all and afterwards fell away into such things as demon-worship almost as a sort of secret dissipation.

—G.K. Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man*, part 1, chapter 4.

The attentive reader of the Book of Genesis will readily be convinced that there is no progress to be observed in the religious life of mankind. Originally, all men acknowledged the one true God the Creator, and it was only millennia later that worshipping creation instead of the Creator came about. Different holy fathers

set the time of this distortion at different periods. For example, St. Irenaeus of Lyons said that even before the Flood the fallen angels taught the daughters of men "idolatry hateful to God, through the introduction of which into the world the work of the evil one increased and spread, and the work of righteousness decreased and weakened." Other fathers, such as the venerable John of Damascus and holy hierarch Demetrius of Rostov, said that worshiping creation was invented by Nimrod and Serug. One opinion does not contradict the other, for all the "wisdom" of the giants was washed away by the cleansing waters of the Flood, and after it for a time the descendants of Noah continued in monotheism. Thus, according to the conviction of the Orthodox Church, the religious life of mankind is in a state of constant regression. It begins with exalted ideas of the immaterial God the Creator, from Whom at the dawn of history man fell away but Who promised to save him, progresses through the stage of worshiping luminaries and spirits, and reaches the point of venerating idols and animals.

But secular science adheres to a fundamentally different concept, formulated by Tylor and other evolutionists. According to this concept, there originally existed a cult of human souls (animism) and the spirits of animal ancestors (totemism). Later, influenced by the development of agriculture and animal husbandry, cults of nature arose. Later, in the period of military democracy, the cult of the political leader arose. Later the cults of political leaders and of various natural elements would transform into cults of the deities of each nation. This was the origin of polytheism. But when powerful monarchies arose, one of the gods first came to be revered as supreme, and later declared himself to be the sole deity.

This simplistic idea, put forward as early as the late 19th century, is promoted to this day even in university textbooks. It is attractive and wins support by transforming all humanity (with the happy exception of its adepts) into a crowd of frenzied lunatics who believe in their own dreams. But unfortunately it had one weak point that authentic scientific evolutionary theory ought not to have had: it allowed for a slight but definite possibility of checking the facts.

"If Tylor was correct, primitive societies would be devoid of monotheistic presuppositions, since class stratification and the

later concept of a monarchy had not yet developed to prompt the notion of monotheism.”¹⁰⁵ And because of the fatal negligence of academic censorship, this theory was indeed checked.

“In 1898 ... it happened. ... That ‘favorite pupil’ of Tylor’s, Andrew Lang, allowed himself to read a missionary’s report, sent home to supporting churches from a distant field. The missionary said that primitive inhabitants of that distant place already acknowledged the existence of a Creator God even before the missionaries arrived!”¹⁰⁶ Wilhelm Schmidt¹⁰⁷ describes Lang’s reaction: “‘His impression was that the missionary had made a mistake. But the further his studies took him the more examples of this kind he met with, and at last he came to the conclusion that this fundamental tenet of Tylor’s would not hold water. To this conviction he gave public expression in 1898, in his book *The Making of Religion*. ... Apart from this, Lang was unweariedly busy and on the watch for new particulars to discover and publish, mistakes and misunderstandings to clear up, attacks to repel. ...

“Schmidt comments repeatedly throughout his work on the persistent tendency of scholars to ignore or discredit the sky-god phenomenon. Not until as late as 1922, he says, did the first scientific monograph on the subject appear. It seemed that the possibility of using any other aspect of religion as the starting point for the development of religion had to be exhausted before the Sky-God could be considered.

“In Schmidt’s eyes, evolutionary theories like Tylor’s seemed *strange* because of this common denominator of indifference among scholars toward the one line of research which they apparently felt would not support an evolutionary explanation. ...

“Still Lang pressed his attack, relying especially on ‘the startling discoveries of A.W. Howitt concerning the Supreme Being of the South-East Australian tribes ... and on information given by Mrs. Langloh Parker concerning [other Australian tribes]. ... He also made use ... of facts from the Bushmen, Hottentots, Zulu,

¹⁰⁵ Don Richardson, *Eternity in their Hearts*, 3rd ed., part 1, chapter 4 (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2005), p. 119.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Wilhelm Schmidt—religious expert, anthropologist, and Catholic priest. Author of the book *The Origin and Growth of Religion* and the series *The Origin of the Idea of God*.

Yao, the West African peoples, the Tierra del Fuegians, and somewhat more extensively from the North American Indians.'

"Long before Lang called public attention to Howitt's Australian research, Tylor himself had read Howitt's papers shortly after they were first published in 1884. What was his response? Schmidt reports: 'His only resource ... was to ... question the native origin of these gods, referring them to European, and specifically to missionary influence.'

"Six years later Tylor expressed this opinion of his officially in an article entitled, 'The Limits of Savage Religion.' But Howitt, who still did not perceive that his research was undermining Tylor's theory, which he admired, and who later actually criticized Lang for using his research to attack Tylor's theory, had already indicated to Tylor that no such 'out' was available.

"Other scholars similarly proved that missionary influence could not explain the same phenomenon already showing up in many other parts of the world besides Australia. It was the beginning of the end for Tylor's theory. Schmidt comments that, toward the end, 'Tylor ... could not be induced to speak, despite Lang's direct challenges to [him].'

"It was Wilhelm Schmidt himself who, appalled by the lack of recognition given to Lang, threw himself into one of the most extensive research projects ever undertaken by one man. Schmidt began documenting and compiling evidence for 'native monotheism,' evidence which was now beginning to flow in like a tide from all parts of the world. In 1912 (the year of Lang's death), Schmidt published his mammoth *Ursprung Der Gottesidee* (*The Origin of the Concept of God*). Still more data kept pouring in, so he published another volume, and another, and another until, by 1955, he had accumulated more than 4,000 pages of evidence in a total of 12 large volumes!

"The entire thirteenth chapter of Schmidt's *The Origin and Growth of Religion* is devoted to quotations from dozens of anthropologists, showing that acceptance of Schmidt's research was virtually universal. The tide had turned! And yet—

"Before its downfall, Tylor's theory had inspired certain scholars to apply his ideas in other fields. One would think that refuting the 'mother theory' would cause its 'conceptual offspring' in other fields to decline as well. This has not been the case. Some

of the conceptual offspring of Tylor's theory took on a life of their own, so to speak, and managed to distance themselves from their mother. Thus when she was axed, they were spared and persist, however unjustifiably, *to this very day!*"¹⁰⁸

We will see more of them later in our analysis of the biblical criticism and theory of contemporary modernists. Today, established Western academia has forgotten Tylor's theory, but at the level of popular thought and university textbooks it lives on.

The successors of Wilhelm Schmidt have shown that the phenomenon of revering a Sky-God exists among practically all nations on earth. Most interestingly, nearly everywhere He is an "idle God." "The absence of a cult and above all the absence of any calendar of seasonal rituals is characteristic of nearly all sky-gods," writes the prominent contemporary religious expert Mircea Eliade. The Sky-God, according to the pagans, is too distant or too good (in the sense of "He will help us regardless") to be worshiped. He is remembered either at particularly mystical initiations (as among the Australian aborigines) or in times of catastrophes—such as a hurricane or an epidemic—that cannot be evaded by appealing to the usual spirits (as the saying goes, "there are no atheists in foxholes").

Interestingly, this Sky-God always distinctly differs from other deities or spirits in that He is omnipresent, uncreated, and unbegotten, absolutely limitless, and not depicted, since He is invisible. Despite His remoteness from the world, He is a judge and the creator of the moral law (which apparently explains why He is not worshiped, since He cannot be bribed). It is important that, despite the existence of numerous and varied cosmogonic systems, the Sky-God is nearly always linked with the idea that He created the world and man (or primordial man). It is apparent that modern religious studies have inadvertently confirmed the biblical thesis of original monotheism.

To illustrate the thesis that the Sky-God was universally revered, below we cite a list of His names among various nations, which we have compiled based on material from the *Mifologicheskoy slovar'* [*Mythological Dictionary*; Moscow, 1992].

¹⁰⁸ Richardson, *Eternity in their Hearts*, chapter 4: "Scholars with Strange Theories."

Nation	Name of God
Koreans	Hananim (Celestial), Sinmyon (Most High), Cheongje (Master of Heaven), Cheonvan (Heavenly Lord), Cheonsin (Heavenly Spirit), Sanchon (Supreme Heavenly Master), Okchvan Sanje (Jade Supreme Master)
Obi Ugry	Numi-Torum
Mansi	Kors-Torum
Samoyed Nenets	Nga, Num
Chechens and Ingush	Dyala
Dinka	Nyalich
Jingpo	Nfanva
Bantu peoples	Nyambe, Ndyambe, Nzambi, Ndyambi-Kalunga
Ao Naga	Longitsungba
Chibcha (Muisca)	Chiminigagua
Komi	En
Canaanites	El Elion, Ilu
Aryans	Varuna, Dyaruspitar
Igbo	Chi, Chineke
Miao	Ndo-Ty
Kinh (Vietnamese)	Ngọc Hồng
Nuer	Kwoth, Kott, Kot
Bataknese (Sumatra)	Mulajadi
Quechua (Inca)	Viracocha
Ibibio	Obumo
Binin	Ogbora
Finns	Jumala
Sioux	Wakan
Iroquois	Orenda
Algonquins	Manitou
Ekoi	Obassi Osaw
Fon	Mawu-Lisa

Nation	Name of God
Yoruba	Olorun
Melanesians	Agunua
Arabs	Allah
Dogon	Amma
Zuni	Awonawilona
Ede (Vietnam)	Aê Diê
Micronesians	'Io
Mari	Kugu Jumo
Abkhazians and Abazins	Antsva
Mon-Khmer tribes	Ndu
Chinese	Shangdi (Heavenly Master), Tiān, Tiān-dì

We should note that in a number of cases the original pure concept of God has been obscured and combined with various mythologies. This is related, for example, to the question of proper translation of biblical concepts into various languages. (For instance, in China there was a dispute as to whether the term *Shangdi* was appropriate with regard to the Lord.) We must also consider the fact that many religious scholars, constrained by evolutionary prejudices, reject all evidence of belief in one God that could bear the slightest trace of Christian or Islamic influence. This limitation discards those concepts of various nations which organically coincided with the true faith that was proclaimed to them.

To illustrate the phenomenon of primitive monotheism that the peoples of the earth preserve to this day, below we present evidence that describes the beliefs of “primitive peoples.” It should be noted that there is a pattern: the less civilized a nation is, the more it preserves the original concepts of the true God. This is because debauchery, which separates people from the Lord, is less developed among “uncivilized” tribes.

Metropolitan Nestor, enlightener of Kamchatka, described the faith of the Koryaks: “The Koryak pagans believe identically in a Great Light God Who dwells in the heavens, revering Him as the one God of all nations. But the pagan considers himself powerless by prayers or sacrifices to influence the Light God, Who de-

termines the existence of every human soul in the afterlife. In justification of the sacrifices offered to dark spirits a native said that every nation and each individual country has its own all-powerful guardian spirit, the invisible lord of a person's body and soul, the protector of the animal world and ruler of the terrible forces of nature. For this reason he mollifies and in a sense bribes this spirit with bloody sacrifices in the hopes of thereby obtaining wealth, health, and prosperity in his earthly life. Hence, shamanism applies solely to the material aspect of life, and has no moral foundation."

Still more remarkable is a report cited by Don Richardson concerning the peoples of East Asia. These data are found in a rather inaccessible source, and so we will quote the author himself extensively:

* * *

Near Rangood, Burma, in the year 1795, an encounter took place in the following manner.

"If the inhabitants of that village are not Burmese," asked a sun-helmeted English diplomat, "what do they call themselves?"

"Karen," replied the diplomat's Burmese guide. ...

"Very well," said the Britisher. "Let's see what these 'Carianers' look like."

The "Carianers," it turned out, were even more interested to discover what the Englishman looked like! This first encounter with a European's white face electrified people in that village. Drawn like moths to a lamp, they converged upon the diplomat, who recoiled slightly as wiry brown hands reached out to touch his arms and cheeks.

The Burmese guide, meanwhile, spoke disparagingly of the Karen: "Be careful! They're just wild hill people given to stealing and fighting," he scoffed.

It was not entirely true. The Karen were in fact the most progressive of Burma's many tribal peoples. Burmese, however, had abused and exploited the Karen for centuries, making such descriptions self-fulfilling.

Nor could Burmese Buddhists forgive the Karen minority for stubbornly adhering to their own folk religion in the face of unremitting attempts by the Burmese to make Buddhists of them!

The Englishman, in any case, was no longer listening to his guide. Cheerful Karen voices now charmed his ears. Every man, woman and child around him glowed with radiant welcome. How refreshingly different, he thought, from the usual Burmese crowd's aloofness toward foreigners.

A Karen man who could speak Burmese explained something to the guide.

"This is most interesting," the guide said. "These tribesmen think you may be a certain 'white brother' whom they as a people have been expecting from time immemorial!"

"How curious," replied the diplomat. "Ask them what this 'white brother' is supposed to do when he arrives."

"He's supposed to bring them a book," the guide said. "A book just like one their forefathers lost long ago. They are asking—with bated breath— 'hasn't he brought it?'"

"Ho! Ho!" the Englishman guffawed. "And who, pray tell, is the author whose book has power to charm illiterate folk like these?"

"They say the author is *Y'wa*—the Supreme God. They say also ..." at this point the Burman's face began to darken with unease, "... that the white brother, having given them the lost book, will thereby set them free from all who oppress them." ...

"Tell them they're mistaken," he ordered, hoping to set the Burman at ease. "I have no acquaintance with this god called *Y'wa*. Nor do I have the slightest idea who their 'white brother' could be."

Followed by the guide, the diplomat strode out of the village. Hundreds of Karen, palled with disappointment, watched him leave. They intended no political ploy. They had simply repeated in all sincerity a tradition which had haunted them as a people since antiquity.

"Could our forefathers have been mistaken?" asked a young Karen.

"Don't worry," responded an elder, managing a hopeful smile. "One day he will come. Other prophecies may fail, but not this one!"

Returning to the newly established British embassy in Rangoon, the diplomat reported his strange experience in the Karen village to his superior, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Symes.

Symes in turn mentioned it in a manuscript entitled *An Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava in the Year 1795*, published 32 years later in Edinburgh, Scotland. ...

Beginning in 1824, Britain launched a series of attacks against Burma and eventually became, for about one century, rulers of that exotic land.

Even before the first British invasion, however, history recorded a second foreigner's encounter with the Karen people's lost book tradition.

In the year 1816 a Muslim traveler happened to enter a remote Karen village about 250 miles south of Rangoon. The Karen scrutinized him carefully as they had scrutinized all foreigners who ever came their way—especially light-skinned ones—looking for their “white brother.” Well, the Muslim was not very light-skinned, but he did have in his possession a book. And he said the book contained writings about the true God.

Seeing intense fascination with the book, the Muslim offered it as a gift to an elderly Karen sage. Later the people said he told them to worship it, but it seems unlikely that a Muslim would give that kind of advice. Perhaps he simply urged them to take good care of it until one day, hopefully, a teacher would come who could interpret it for them.

The Muslim continued his journey, and never returned.

The sage who received the little book wrapped it in muslin and placed it in a special basket. Gradually the people developed rituals for venerating the sacred volume. The sage adorned himself with ornate garments befitting his role as keeper of the book. He carried a special cudgel as a symbol of his spiritual authority. And, most poignant of all, he and his people kept constant vigil for the teacher who would one day come to their village and open the contents of the sacred book to their understanding.

But that is not all. In perhaps a thousand or more Karen villages of Burma, men called *Bukhos*, a special kind of teacher representing not demons but *Y'wa*, the true God—yes, the Karen actually esteemed them as prophets of the true God—kept reminding the Karen that the ways of *Y'wa* and the ways of *nats* (evil spirits) were not the same. One day, these *Bukhos* affirmed, the Karen people must return fully to the ways of *Y'wa*.

Karen prophets actually taught their people hymns passed down from generation to generation by verbal communication alone. ... By means of these hymns, awe and reverence for *Y'wa*, the true God, were kept alive in the hearts of Karen people so that they would not lapse into Buddhism with its idolatry.

One such hymn extolled the eternity of *Y'wa's* being:

Y'wa is eternal, his life is long.
One aeon—he dies not!
Two aeons—he dies not!
He is perfect in meritorious attributes.
Aeons follow aeons—he dies not!

Another hymn extolled *Y'wa* as Creator:

Who created the world in the beginning?
Y'wa created the world in the beginning!
Y'wa appointed everything.
Y'wa is unsearchable!

Still another hymn conveyed deep appreciation for *Y'wa's* omnipotence and omniscience, combined with acknowledgment of a lack of relationship with Him:

The omnipotent is *Y'wa*; him have we not believed.
Y'wa created men anciently;
He has a perfect knowledge of all things!
Y'wa created men at the beginning;
He knows all things to the present time!
O my children and grandchildren!
The earth is the treading place of the feet of *Y'wa*.
And heaven is the place where he sits.
He sees all things, and we are manifest to him.

The Karen story of man's falling away from God contains stunning parallels to Genesis chapter 1:

Y'wa formed the world originally.
He appointed food and drink.
He appointed the "fruit of trial."
He gave detailed orders.
Mu-kaw-lee [Satan] deceived two persons.

He caused them to eat the fruit of the tree of trial.
 They obeyed not; they believed not *Y'wa* ...
 When they ate the fruit of trial,
 They became subject to sickness, aging, and death....

An author named Alonzo Bunker, who lived among the Karen for 30 years during the late nineteenth century, describes a typical late-evening teaching session in the jungle led by Karen Bukhos near Toungoo, Burma:

It is quite impossible to describe the solemn and reverential manner in which these white-haired elders recited the attributes of *Y'wa*, and with what awed attention the children listened ... they were drawn as a magnet to this council of elders. For a while there was silence, save the crackling of bamboo and brush in the fire. And then the old prophet of the village ... arose and extended his hands, as if in benediction, and said:

"O children and grandchildren, formerly *Y'wa* loved the Karen nation above all others. But they transgressed his commands, and in consequence ... we suffer as at present. Because *Y'wa* cursed us, we are in our present afflicted state and have no books."

Then a great hope seemed to light up his face as, looking toward the stars, ... he exclaimed:

"But *Y'wa* will again have mercy upon us, and again he will love us above all others. *Y'wa* will save us again. It is [because we listened] to the language of Mu-kaw-lee that we suffer."

Then followed ... [an] impassioned recitation in the lyrical verse of his ancestors.... The old man ... spoke with a native eloquence which can be felt, but not described:

"When *Y'wa* made Tha-nai and Ee-u, he placed them in a garden ... saying, 'In the garden I have made for you seven different kinds of trees, bearing seven ... kinds of fruit. Among the seven, one tree is not good to eat. ... If you eat, you will become old, you will sicken, you will die. ... Eat and drink with care. Once in seven days I will visit you ...'

"After a time Mu-kaw-lee came to the man and woman and said, 'Why are you here?'

“Our father put us here,’ they replied.

“What do you eat here?’ asked Mu-kaw-lee.

“Our Lord Y’wa has created food for us, food without limit.’

“Show me your food,’ said Mu-kaw-lee. “... They pointed them out, saying, ‘This one is astringent, this sweet, this sour, this bitter, this savoury, this fiery, but [as for] this tree, we know not whether it is sour or sweet. Our Father, the Lord Y’wa, said to us, ‘Eat not the fruit of this tree. If you eat, you will die.’

“... Then Mu-kaw-lee replied, ‘It is not so, O my children. The heart of your Father Y’wa is not with you. This is the richest and sweetest. ... If you eat it, you will possess miraculous powers. You will be able to ascend to heaven. ... I love you, and I tell you the truth, and conceal nothing. If you do not believe me, do not eat the fruit. If you will each eat the fruit as a trial, then you will know all. ...”

In paragraphs that follow, the man, Tha-nai, refuses the enticement and walks away. The woman, Ee-u, lingers, succumbs to temptation, eats the fruit and then entices her husband, who also eats. Alonzo Bunker’s translation continues:

“... The woman returned to Mu-kaw-lee and said, ‘My husband has eaten the fruit.’

“[Mu-kaw-lee] laughed exceedingly, and said, ‘Now O conquered man and woman, you have listened to my voice and obeyed me.’

“The next morning Y’wa came to visit them, but they did not follow him with the singing of praises as usual. He drew near to them and said, ‘Why have you eaten the fruit of the tree that I commanded you not to eat? ... Therefore you shall grow old, and you shall become sick, and you shall die.’

“... When Y’wa had cursed man, he left him. ... In course of time sickness began to appear. One of the children of Tha-nai and Ee-u fell ill. Then they said to one another, ‘Y’wa has cast us off. We cannot tell what to do. We must go and ask Mu-kaw-lee.’

“So ... they went to him and said, ‘... we obeyed your words, and ate. Now our child is ill. ... What will you advise?’

“Mu-kaw-lee replied, ‘You did not obey your Father, the Lord Y’wa. You listened to me. Now that you have obeyed me once, obey me to the end.’

Then the old prophet related, still continuing in the ancient verse of his people, how Mu-kaw-lee instructed them in the principal offerings to be made [for] various kinds of sickness. These offerings were to be made to his servants the nats [demons] who presided over certain diseases, as well as accidents.

He also told how Mu-kaw-lee instructed them to divine by the bones of a fowl, which became to these hillmen the guide to almost every act of life.

Alonzo Bunker also quotes a Karen “Song of Hope,” expressing their longing for the eventual return of Y’wa:

At the appointed season Y’wa will come
 ... Dead trees will blossom and flower ...
 Mouldering trees will blossom and bloom again.
 Y’wa will come and bring the great Thau-thee.
 [“Thau-thee” seems to be the name of a sacred mountain.]
 Let us ascend and worship.

A second song of hope speaks of a king who will return:

Good persons, the good,
 Shall go to the silver city, the silver town.
 Righteous persons, the righteous,
 Shall go to the new town, the new city.
 Persons who believe their father and mother
 Shall enjoy the golden palace.
 When the Karen king arrives,
 There will be only one monarch.
 When the Karen king arrives,
 There will be neither rich nor poor.

Karen prophets, in spite of the ever-present and pervasive influence of Buddhist idolatry in Burma, constantly fortified their people against idolatry through proverbs such as the following:

O children and grandchildren!
 Do not worship idols or priests!
 If you worship them, you obtain no advantage thereby,
 While you increase your sins exceedingly.

Honoring one's parents was also a sacred obligation:

O children and grandchildren!
Respect and reverence your mother and father!
For when you were small, they did not suffer so much as a mosquito to bite you.
To sin against your parents is a heinous crime.

Prophets of God among the Karen also emphasized man's duty to love God and one's neighbor:

O children and grandchildren!
Love *Y'wa*, and never so much as mention his name [lightly].
If you speak his name [lightly],
He goes farther and farther from us!
O children and grandchildren!
Do not be fond of
Quarreling and disputing, but love each other.
Y'wa in heaven looks down upon us.
And if we do not love each other,
It is the same as if we do not love *Y'wa*.

Karen who violated the code were called to repentance with a promise of mercy from *Y'wa*:

O children and grandchildren! If we repent of our sins,
And cease to do evil—restraining our passions—
And pray to *Y'wa*, he will have mercy upon us again.
If *Y'wa* does not have mercy on us, there is no other one who can.
He who saves us is the only one—*Y'wa*.

The importance of prayer was not overlooked:

O children and grandchildren! Pray to *Y'wa* constantly
By day and by night.
...

One of their hymns stated:

The sons of *Y'wa*, the white foreigners,
obtained the words of *Y'wa*.
The white foreigners, the children of *Y'wa*,
obtained the words of *Y'wa* anciently.

During the 1830s, a Karen named Sau-qua-la gave an address before the English governor-general of Burma. He said that Europeans, the “white foreigners,” were originally younger brothers of the Karen people! The Karen, as older brothers (rascals that they were), negligently lost their copy of Y’wa’s book. The white brothers, on the other hand, carefully preserved their copy. As a result white people became “righteous” and are known as “guides to God.” They also learned to sail in ships with “white wings,” crossing oceans.

Alonzo Bunker summarizes the tradition as follows: “The Deliverer [of the Karen] ... was to be a ‘white foreigner,’ and was to come across the sea from the west with ‘white wings’ [sails] and bring Y’wa’s ‘white book.’ Some versions of the tradition said the book would be of gold and silver.”¹⁰⁹

* * *

Sadly, to this day no true heralds of the true God—Orthodox missionaries—have come to these people bearing a golden book. Nor have they come to their neighbors—the Kachin, the Wa, the Lahu, the Naga, the Mizo, and the other tribes of Indochina, who to this day await God’s messengers with their precious book. Some of them have even prepared special rooms in their homes in which a lamp is lit each night in expectation of the messenger. In their stead came the Baptists, who converted a part of them to their superstition and sowed among them the seeds of sectarianism, which swept through the new converts. When will the hopes of these nations finally be realized? This is for the pious reader to decide.

Similar traditions are found among the Santal people who live in East India. The Norwegian missionary Lars Skrefsrud preached Christ to them, and in answer heard the following:

* * *

Santal sages, including one named Kolean, exclaimed: “What this stranger is saying must mean that *Thakur Jiu* has not forgotten us after all this time!”

¹⁰⁹ Richardson, *Eternity in Their Hearts*, chapter 1: “Peoples of the Vague God.”

Skrefsrud caught his breath in astonishment. *Thakur* was a Santal word meaning “genuine.” Jiu meant “god.”

The Genuine God?

Clearly, Skrefsrud was not introducing a new concept by talking about one supreme God. Santal sages politely brushed aside the terminology he had been using for God and insisted that *Thakur Jiu* was the right name to use. That name, obviously, had been on Santal lips for a very long time!

“How do you know about *Thakur Jiu*?” Skrefsrud asked (a little disappointed, perhaps).

“Our forefathers knew Him long ago,” the Santal replied, beaming.

“Very well,” Skrefsrud continued, “I have a second question. Since you know about *Thakur Jiu*, why don’t you worship Him instead of the sun, or worse yet, demons?”

Santal faces around him grew wistful.

“That,” they responded, “is the bad news.”

Then the Santal sage named Kolean stepped forward and said, “Let me tell you our story from the very beginning.”

Not only Skrefsrud, but also the entire gathering of younger Santal, fell silent as Kolean, an esteemed elder, spun out a story that stirred the dust on aeons of Santal oral tradition ...

Long, long ago, according to Kolean, *Thakur Jiu*—the Genuine God—created the first man—Haram—and the first woman—Ayo—and placed them far to the west of India in a region called Hihiri Pipiri. There a being named Lita tempted them to make rice beer. Then Lita enticed them to pour part of the beer on the ground as an offering to Satan. Haram and Ayo became drunk on the rest of the beer and slept. When they awoke, they knew they were naked and felt ashamed.

Skrefsrud marveled at the biblical parallel in Kolean’s story.

But there was more ...

Ayo later bore Haram seven sons and seven daughters, who married and founded seven clans. The clans migrated to a region called Kroj Kaman, where they became corrupted. *Thakur Jiu* called mankind to “return to Him.” When man refused, *Thakur Jiu* hid “a holy pair” in a cave on Mount Harata (note the resemblance to the biblical name “Ararat”). Then *Thakur Jiu* destroyed

the rest of mankind with a flood. Later, descendants of the “holy pair” multiplied and migrated to a plain called Sasan Beda (“mustard field”). There *Thakur Jiu* divided them into many different peoples.

A branch of mankind (which we shall call “proto-Santal”) migrated first to “Jarpi land,” and then continued eastward “from forest to forest” until high mountains blocked their way. Desperately they sought a way through the mountains, but every route proved impassable, at least to their women and children. Not unlike the children of Israel in Sinai, the people became faint on their journey.

In those days, Kolean explained, the proto-Santal, as descendants of the holy pair, still acknowledged *Thakur Jiu* as the genuine God. Facing this crisis, however, they lost their faith in Him and took their first step into spiritism. “The spirits of these great mountains have blocked our way,” they decided. “Come, let us bind ourselves to them by an oath, so that they will let us pass.” Then they covenanted with the *Maran Buru* (spirits of the great mountains), saying, “O, *Maran Buru*, if you release the pathways for us, we will practice spirit appeasement when we reach the other side.”

Skrefsrud no doubt had thought it strange that the Santal name for wicked spirits meant literally “spirits of the great mountains,” especially since there were no great mountains in the present Santal homeland. Now he understood.

“Very shortly,” Kolean continued, “they came upon a passage [the Khyber Pass?] in the direction of the rising sun.” They named that passage Bain, which means “day gate.” Thus the proto-Santal burst through onto the plains of what is now called Pakistan and India. Subsequent migrations brought them still further east to the border regions between India and the present Bangladesh, where they became the modern Santal people.

Under bondage to their oath, and not out of love for the *Maran Buru*, the Santal began to practice spirit appeasement, sorcery and even sun worship.

Kolean added: “In the beginning, we did not have gods. The ancient ancestors obeyed *Thakur* only. After finding other gods, day by day we forgot *Thakur* more and more until only His name remained.

“In this present age it is said by some,” Kolean continued, “that the sun god is *Thakur*. Therefore, when there are religious ceremonies ... [some people] look up to the sun ... and speak unto *Thakur*. But the forefathers taught us that *Thakur* is distinct. He is not to be seen with fleshly eyes, but he sees all. He has created all things. He has set everything in its place, and he nourishes all, great and small.”¹¹⁰

* * *

We could cite many more such examples of original monotheism that has survived to the present among the “more primitive peoples.” But what has been said is already sufficient to show that Christianity is not foreign to pagans, but rather comprises the forgotten message for which all nations of the earth long in their heart of hearts.

Here however we should consider one objection that atheists may raise. It is that all modern evidence in favor of monotheism can be suspected of Christian influence (influence which even field researchers have not observed). Our answer to this is as follows. Firstly, all modern concepts of primitive religion are based on observations of “primitive peoples,” which attest to the veracity of the Bible. Secondly, there are a number of historic manuscripts from pre-Christian eras which attest to this same phenomenon.

¹¹⁰ Richardson, *Eternity in Their Hearts*, chapter 1: “Peoples of the Vague God.”

Part VII

THE TOWER OF BABEL



Chapter 1

The Rebellion of Nimrod

A storm, or even a river-flood would be of little avail against our present enemy. Your weapon would break in your hands. For the Hideous Strength confronts us and it is as in the days when Nimrod built a tower to reach heaven.

—C.S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*

After the Great Flood, the greatest rebel against the power of the Creator was King Nimrod, whose ideas continue to shape world history to this day. He was the first to establish a universal empire, intended to enslave and eradicate from man all that reminded him of the Lord. He became the standard-bearer of false pagan faith. Nimrod restored the secret knowledge that the rebellious prince of the angels had revealed to the antediluvian giants, and since that time it has comprised the secret of secrets for all occult and magical communities and orders. And archaeological artifacts show that even in Sumeria there existed a concept of secret knowledge originating from the gods. It has been proven that this “hidden wisdom” is older than the written word and was one reason for the creation of writing. Finally, it was Nimrod who may deservedly be called the first socialist. But let us examine the mystical words of the book of the Bible that describes for us this proudest of giants:

“And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore

it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city" (Gen. 10:8–12).

Among the many progenitors of nations and tribes Moses singled out the name of this son of Cush, who determined the fate of mankind for many millennia to come, yet left no descendants. And indeed, even in appearance this man differed from other rulers. His very name means "rebel," "mutineer," "perturber," and terrible was his visage. He was a giant with a dark face and a still darker heart. Scripture applies to him the same words which it uses to describe the antediluvian giants (*gibbor*), and indeed he restored all the vileness of this accursed tribe. As St. Demetrius of Rostov wrote, "His malice exceeded his physical age, and with it he filled the whole earth."

"He began to be a mighty one in the earth," Scripture says, using the same words that King David would later apply to all ungodly men in general: "Why dost thou boast in evil, O mighty man, and in iniquity all the day long? Thy tongue hath devised unrighteousness, like a sharpened razor hast thou wrought deceit. Thou hast loved evil more than goodness, unrighteousness more than to speak righteousness. Thou hast loved all the words of engulfing ruin, and a deceitful tongue. Wherefore, God will destroy thee at the end, He will pluck thee out and remove thee from thy dwelling place, and thy root out of the land of the living" (Ps. 51:1–5). Like a portrait, this entire description is copied straight from Nimrod. He was the first to rely not on the will of God, but on his own abilities, which were considerable.

First he won renown as a skilled hunter. According to a Hebrew legend, he possessed the garments of skin in which God clothed Adam. Adam passed them on to Enoch, and Enoch to Methuselah. Noah preserved them during the Flood; Ham then stole them and gave them to his son Cush, who in turn passed them on to Nimrod. When the latter wore this garment, beasts and birds would fall down before him and he was able to catch them with ease. Babylonian seals survive to this day on which he is depicted wrestling with a lion. Since that time the great lords

of Assyria and Egypt have loved to depict themselves in hunting scenes, and hunting itself became an aristocratic form of sport. Seeing this, the people declared him to be a supernatural being, and Nimrod decided to mount a rebellion against God.

Not long before this, after Noah died (in the year 2612 from the creation of the world), his three sons were the first to descend from the mountains. They were accompanied by their descendants, whom these three patriarchs assured that no new Flood was to be feared. While fording the river Tigris (in 2659), Salah begat a son, whom Arphaxad, his grandfather, named Eber, meaning “crossing.” This name, given in honor of the river’s fording, was prophetic, for Eber accomplished a spiritual crossing over from this fallen world when he refused to help build the tower. Nimrod and he were of the same age, but spiritually they were polar opposites. One was a citizen of the Celestial City in exile, while the other wished to establish his own City on earth. But the people did not follow the righteous man, choosing instead to follow the iniquitous one, for their perverted nature hindered them from following God. They desired earthly stability, ease, and comfort without the Creator. They desired to find a place that no one could reach—a thing that is impossible in the Lord’s sight.

But let us return to our story. Upon descending from the Armenian highlands, the people found a land that they called in the Hebrew *Shinar* (in which name we easily recognize the universally familiar “Sumer”). It may be supposed that the valley was given this name by its discoverer, Salah, whose name means “messenger,” “exile.”

Incidentally, the Sumerians, who themselves originated from Bahrein, claim to have originated from a country called Aratt with which they were in contact over the course of many centuries even after the dispersion (this very name is easily linked to the name of Ararat). Judging by the descriptions, it was located in the highlands of that mountain.

When people began to settle in the valley (which is corroborated by the archaeological culture of El-Obeid, which resembles the highland culture) and to erect the first cities (of which Eridu was apparently the first), constructed of unfired brick and reeds (in the mountains, buildings were already being constructed of stone), God commanded them (most likely through Shem)

to disperse across the face of the whole earth and to cultivate as much land as possible, but they did not obey Him. How often man rejects the will of the Creator in favor of his own plans, failing to understand that God gives all His commandments solely for the benefit of man himself!

Seeing that He was not obeyed, after a time the Almighty repeated His decree. But Nimrod's propaganda machine was now working at full capacity, and it met with an eager reception in the hearts of Noah's descendants. Once again they rejected His will, for they felt that it was they who forged their own destiny. Furthermore, they began claiming that God wanted to disperse them so that they would be easier to manage.

As Josephus Flavius writes, "They were inspired to this brazen disobedience with regard to the Lord God by Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah, a formidable person possessed of tremendous physical strength. He persuaded them not to ascribe their prosperity to the Lord God, but to consider their own valor to be the cause of their welfare. In a short time Nimrod succeeded in achieving supreme authority, being convinced that the people would only cease to fear God and fall away from Him if they first consented to live beneath his, Nimrod's, imperious protection."¹¹¹

And so it was that for the sake of liberty from God the people decided to give themselves over to cruel enslavement to the tyrant Nimrod. Unfortunately, world history contains more than enough examples of this kind of mass insanity (recall revolution), but man has not the slightest desire to learn from them. This behavior is caused by the activity of evil spirits who deprive apostates of their minds, for in the words of the venerable John of the Ladder, "Pride is the mother of foolishness." The famous Russian mathematician, philosopher, and publicist Igor Shafarevich quite rightly compares the work of the revolutionaries with the demonic possession of witches. Both the former and the latter were guided by the same superhuman power of the prince of darkness, who even in Nimrod's time wished to make of earth a hell. And as in every time, this revolution was preceded by propaganda. "Whereas the pre-Flood tyrants ... had acted by force alone, the

¹¹¹ Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, chapter 4.

tyrant of post-Flood times, Nimrod, apparently acted by persuasion as well. An experienced 'ensnarer of souls,' he seduced men by his teaching, a highly developed ideology, forcing them to follow him, take part in his impiety, and apostatize from God. The expression 'before the Lord' (in the original, *lifnei Gashem*) may also be understood to mean "against the Lord."¹¹²

As usually happens, the paradise that Nimrod promised proved a hell. All mankind was imprisoned an enormous concentration camp, which was wholly focused on achieving "the peak of civilization." And as we see today, after the collapse of this first totalitarian regime many would recall that time with longing and attempt to emulate it. (As we will see, Sumer was very much a socialist society.)

It was a terrible thing to live in the kingdom of Nimrod. As the holy hierarch Demetrius writes, "The most-proud Ethiopian and giant Nimrod was the first to begin exalting his power over men in Babylon, subjugating and enslaving all those in the surrounding areas, and forcing by torture those who did not wish to submit to him. He committed violence and murder, and the country trembled in fear of him. He was the first among men to call himself a king, and he commanded the people not as a father, but as a tormentor. Those who were originally the masters of the generations of men, such as Adam, Seth, and Enos before the flood, and Noah after it, called themselves not kings, but fathers, for they governed their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren in a fatherly manner. Nimrod was no father, but a tormentor, persecutor, abuser, and predator. This is why Holy Scripture calls him a hunter: not because he hunted beasts, but because he snared free people into subjugation and servitude and seized their estates, appropriating what was not his own." Thus, this tyrant became the inventor of slaveholding and of expropriation (nationalization) and terror as tools of the government. He originated the idea that politics is not subject to God's laws, and that if you are a ruler you have the right to do as you please with your subjects. (Ivan the Terrible, for one, was his successor in this.)

¹¹² D. V. Shchedrovitsky, *Vvedenie v Vetkhii Zavet. Kniga bytiya* [Introduction to the Old Testament: The Book of Genesis].

Naturally, his slaves could not be left to live without supervision, and so Nimrod resurrected the work of Cain: the work of city building. As Moses writes, he built “Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar” (Gen. 10:10). Babylon, which was initially so named because the plan was to make it a place of contact with cosmic demons (in Akkadian, “the doors of the gods”), but which later received this name due to the confounding of the tongues (in Hebrew, “confounding”), was intended to become the capitol of mankind. It contained the center of every abomination of the earth and all of global paganism. For this reason in Holy Scripture Babylon is a symbol of all of anti-Christian civilization and of all the world powers hostile to God. Numerous prophecies concerning the fate of this city permeate the entire Bible. And many of them have already been strikingly fulfilled, showing that the Bible is not a piece of historical literature, but the Word of the Eternal God (for example, see Is. 47 and Jer. 50–51). The remains of the city of Nimrod are unlikely to be found, except for the ruins of the great Tower, for the earth itself does not wish to reveal its evil secrets: high groundwater levels do not permit excavation even to the level of the city from the time of Hammurabi.

Erech (in Sumerian, *Uruk*)—the second of these cities built by Nimrod—was a center of ritual debauchery and its patron Inanna (she was considered both a virgin and a celestial harlot), who was apparently a deification of the antediluvian Noema (Gen. 4:22), the inventor of prostitution. To this day there survive the remains of a temple which Nimrod built and dedicated to this goddess, made of lime slabs, which attests to the fact that it is older than the tower of Babel, which was constructed using fired brick. The walls and floor of this pagan temple were covered with a carpet-like mosaic of small red, black, and white clay pins. The city was also famous because in it an ancient library was discovered, proving that the builders of the tower already had a written language. Soon after the collapse of the tower, the famous hero of the Epic of Gilgamesh came to power, who sought immortality and battled a dragon. It is even said of him that he met with someone who had survived the Flood. As writes David Livingston, the British researcher of Africa, “‘Divine’ Gilgamesh listed above, actually visited a survivor of the Flood family (see Tablet XI of the Gil-

gamesh Epic). Therefore, Gilgamesh must have reigned shortly after the Flood regardless what the Kinglist says.”¹¹³ Judging by the description of the journey (a crossing of the sea), I think that Gilgamesh most likely met with Japheth.

This king built a double wall around Uruk measuring ten kilometers long, with 800 guard towers, situated every ten meters. The city existed for a very long time, and was only destroyed in the third century by the Persians.

Accad, the third city built by the first tyrant, became the capitol of Mesopotamia under the new conqueror, who attempted to reestablish the oneness mankind had lost. In it reigned Sargon the Great, who adopted the title “the king of the four countries of the world,” and conquered not only Sumer, but also Cappadocia, Syria, and Elam. Accad retained its significance during the Third Dynasty of Ur. The city itself has not yet been discovered, though its approximate location is known—the place where the Tigris and the Euphrates flow closest to each other. It is our hope that the discovery of and excavations in Accad will provide further material for studying the period of Nimrod.

The fourth city built by Nimrod was Calneh: it is equated with Ctesiphon, which later became the center of Christianity in Mesopotamia. Thus, originally the kingdom of Nimrod encompassed what is now southern Iraq.

And so it was that at that time Asshur, being hard pressed by Nimrod, withdrew from Babylon into the upper regions of the river Tigris, where he “builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city” (Gen. 10:11–12). Thus, the power of Nimrod was shaken, but apparently not seriously, for these cities themselves (especially Nineveh) are called the land of Nimrod in Scripture (Mic. 5:6). This tells us that Asshur too failed to break free from the power of the son of Cush, and the cities became a part of Nimrod’s empire.

Nineveh, which became a scourge for Israel, was the greatest city of the East ever discovered by archaeologists, with luxurious palaces and libraries. But Nineveh became the capitol many centuries after the tower perished.

¹¹³ David Livingston, *A Universal Flood: 3000 BC*.

Rehoboth is equated with Larsa, but it was more likely the city of Arraphe (modern Kirkuk), which later became the capitol of the Hurrian kingdom. Translated literally from the Hebrew, the name of this city means “city of streets,” bespeaking its expansiveness.

Calah was discovered in 1845 during the excavation of the hill of Nimrud. (Incidentally, the fact that this hill retained the name of the founder of the city hidden beneath it attests to the reliability of tradition as a source of historical date.) In Calah a library was discovered, along with enormous depictions of cherubs, which today adorn many museums.

Resen is mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions, in the annals of King Ashurnasirpal I (883–859 B.C), where it is referred to as “city of the hunter,” which once again confirms Moses’ testimony concerning Nimrod. This city was located not far from Nineveh.

Thus, the Bible describes the original global empire, which at that time encompassed all of humanity. Geographically it extended to the lands of Iraq and parts of Iran and Syria.

King Nimrod, however, was faced with a far more serious task than simply uniting mankind (though even this remains beyond the abilities of great conquerors to this day). He desired to break into the heavens. It was this for which the insurgent cherub was preparing him.

Chapter 2

Construction of the Tower

Nimrod established a great empire, but he was not satisfied with this. He decided to give men a task that would replace their hearts’ desire for the spiritual heavens. And what better solution could there be than to attempt to break into them by their own abilities?

“And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them

thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Gen. 11:1–4). Thus Scripture describes this great constructive effort of mankind. According to tradition, the chief reason for the building of the tower was fear of a new global flood. "We will build a Tower to the heavens and seek refuge there from the flood that is coming," reasoned the builders. "Then God will be no threat to us." This was one of the first examples of campaigning to cause men to renounce their reason in the name of propaganda. After all, the idiocy of the idea that human effort could overturn the Creator's sentence appears patently obvious. If you do not trust a Creator who promises that the Flood will not be repeated, how can bricks help you? But the builders, like all the godless, were by no means governed by logic, but by the proud desire to surpass the Unconquerable One. Alas, the desire to war against the Truth has not disappeared to this day.

So it was that under Nimrod's guidance a truly global construction effort began. Later many tyrants would attempt to emulate this first "assault on heaven," but none ever succeeded in so sweepingly enveloping mankind as the son of Cush. This will be achieved only at the end of time in the reign of the Anti-christ.

It is no accident that the expression "to make oneself a name," also encountered in Babylonian texts, emphasizes the thirst for personal glory, the egotistical assertion of one's own self. Among the inscriptions left by the warlike Akkadian rulers one frequently encounters the expression, "to make them men of a single tongue." This is a unique formula of subjugation, of conquering a people and incorporating them into a vast empire.

Construction was therefore in full swing. Enthusiasm filled the builders. Some molded bricks, others fired them, while still others mined asphalt. And the head architect of this global project was Nimrod, who received his orders from the world of fallen angels.

It should be noted that Scripture observes that the city and the tower were not in the same place. The Tower of Babel cannot therefore be equated with the temple of Etemenanki. It is more

likely that this refers rather to the great Borsippa Ziggurat, located a dozen kilometers or so from Babylon.

This ziggurat had seven steps ascending upward, corresponding to the planets of the celestial sphere, and it was adorned with seven colors: black, white, purplish red, blue, bright red, silver, and gold—that is, the colors of the seven planets, including the Sun and the Moon.

The golden spire of the ziggurat was turned toward the sun, the silver one toward the moon, and so on. Thus, the celestial sphere beginning at the spires of the Borsippa Ziggurat and the planets upon it signified what is now our ordinary seven-day week. To this day the remains of this tower rise 46 meters above the plain.

Accounts of this great construction endeavor have come down to us from the legends of many nations of the earth. Concerning this great tower the Sumerians sing the following in their hymn:

O flowering shrine, Ekur, azure temple, from the dust it arose,
Like a high mountain it was raised on an empty place...
In Azbu a mighty shrine were you set!
In the depths of the mountain, in the dark place of worship
to venerate you.
In azure Ekur, the temple of greatness, you shall shine!
The splendor of the temple reaches heaven!
Its shadow fell upon every land!
Its teeth pierce the sky!¹¹⁴

The texts of Ugarit likewise describe the construction of a celestial palace of Baal, who was a deification of Nimrod. The purpose of this construction was to equate him to the other denizens of heaven, especially Il (a Phoenecian form of the name El, used to denote the Creator among all the Semitic peoples, as well as in the Bible).

The legends of many Indonesian tribes include accounts of the building of a tower, of how this incurred the wrath of God, and of how the people were dispersed throughout the earth. The Greeks

¹¹⁴ Sumerian Hymn, in *Poeziya i proza Drevnego Vostoka* [Poetry and Prose of the Ancient East] (Rus. ed.). Translated from the Russian by current translator.

spoke of the Titans, who desired to conquer heaven by stacking mountain upon mountain, and were stricken by fire from heaven. I think the massive construction of the pyramids and towers undertaken by the tyrants of old likewise had its origins in recollections of this great first project pursued by Nimrod for the spiritual symbiosis of men and demons.

Chapter 3

The Confusion of Tongues

This proud ambition of men did not go unpunished by the Lord: “And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men built. And the Lord said, Behold, there is one race, and one lip of all, and they have begun to do this, and now nothing shall fail from them of all that they may have undertaken to do. Come, and having gone down let us there confound their tongue, that they may not understand each the voice of his neighbour. And the Lord scattered them thence over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city and the tower. On this account its name was called Confusion, because there the Lord confounded the languages of all the earth, and thence the Lord scattered them upon the face of all the earth” (Gen. 11:5–9 LXX).

When Scripture says that God comes down, this naturally means not the spatial movement of Him Who fills heaven and earth, but a particular wondrous action that demonstrates His presence.

Incidentally, the words of Scripture contain an overt mockery of the foolishness of pagan mythologies. Here men wished to build a tower to the heavens, while the Sumerian texts state that it was the size of Absu (the god of the global ocean of subterranean fresh water that surrounds the earth, and the origin of life); yet in order to examine this “greatest work of men’s hands” the true God had to come down to see it! Clearly Moses wished to show the insignificance of all the ambitions of the hubris of men and angels before the infinite mind of the Creator.

And so Yahweh descends to look upon the hearts of men, and piercing the depths of their spirit with His omniscient eye He sees that the obstinacy of their will is unbending. Then once again, as at the creation of man, the making of the woman, and the casting out from paradise, a kind of mystical Council is held in the bosom of the Life-creating Trinity. The Father, addressing the Son and the Spirit, says: "Let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." In every instance the Council of the Trinity heralds a fundamental alteration in the fate of mankind. But whereas the first and second instances involved beneficent creation, in the third and fourth God establishes certain preventive limitations so as to curb the spread of sin.

Thus, from the Late Stone Age to our own time, all representatives of *homo sapiens*, the "wise man," are united by a single origin, a single biological species, a single material culture, realism in art, oneness of ethnographic customs. All the languages of the world come from a single language—the language of *homo sapiens*—and the mythology of the peoples of the world originated from the first myth of the World Tree—a model of the world that retains its significance to this day.

Only recently American linguists fed data on all the languages of the earth into a computer (based on the lexical array of the languages of the natives of the Americas) within the context of vitally important contexts such as childbirth, breastfeeding, etc. Believe it or not, the computer produced a conclusive result: all languages without exception share a common lexical basis.

Legends of a language once common to all are recorded in various parts of the globe among exotic peoples that are completely dissimilar and absolutely unrelated, such as the VaSena tribe in East Africa, the Kacha Naga in Assam, India, and the South Australian aborigines dwelling on the shores of Encounter Bay.

A Sumerian version survives concerning the account of the confusion of the tongues at the Tower of Babel:

In times of old there were no serpents, there were no scorpions!
 There were no hyenas, there were no lions,
 There were no dogs or wolves,
 There was no fear, nor horror,

everything could yet be reversed with the aid of powerful magic, a terrible human sacrifice. And suddenly a powerful gust of wind tore a piece from the wall, stained with human blood, and an invisible avenging hand bore it down straight upon the impious one. The last thing the son of Cush was to see in his lifetime was the webbed wings of the demons who were waiting to carry him off to the depths of the abyss, to a land where the soul eats clay and drinks dust, and breathes eternal ennui... Then a monstrous blow fell upon the great Tower, the glory of the universal kingdom of mankind. With extraordinary force, guided by the hand of the true God, lightning encompassed it entirely, from the top tier to the very bottom, and it crumbled, burying the most zealous builders beneath its debris. Some of those who had labored with particular vehemence at building the Tower lost their human form and became frightfully deformed, and their appearance gave rise to ancient concepts of various monsters such as cynocephali, trolls, gnomes, and other similar creatures.

The storm increased in intensity, but just when it seemed that the waters would once again cover the whole earth the sun rose, and a rainbow appeared in the clouds. God had remembered His covenant, and He did not destroy the earth.

“And the Lord scattered them thence over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city and the tower” (Gen. 11:8). So says the book of Genesis concerning the end of the first colossal effort to construct a godless “new world order.” According to the ancient Hebrew legends, which found acceptance among the holy fathers, this event was accompanied by a storm and a hurricane. A piece of the Tower built by Nimrod, according to St. Demetrius of Rostov, “was torn away by the storm and wind and fell upon him, killing him. Such was God’s judgment, that he who had sinned by building a tower should receive from the tower his punishment. Others report that he was carried away alive from that place by demons. Both the former and the latter accounts may be considered probable, since for his opposition to God and his countless malefactions he was fated to receive no other place than with the demons. He was struck down by God, and carried away to hell by the demons.”

If we turn to extrabiblical sources, we find this same story corroborated. The Sibylline Oracles say the following concerning the destruction of the tower:

But on the air the Immortal straightway put
A mighty force; and then winds from above
Cast down the great tower and stirred mortals up
To wrangling with each other; therefore men
Gave to that city the name of Babylon.¹¹⁶

The following words of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, are preserved: “Marduk [a deified Nimrod] commanded me to erect the Tower of Babel, which prior to me had been weakened and brought to collapse.”¹¹⁷ Archaeologists have confirmed that “the tower of which the Bible speaks was probably destroyed in the era of Hammurabi. In its place another was built, erected in memory of the first.”¹¹⁸ Thus, the tower “was brought to collapse,” but how?

The history of Babylon in the time of the Old Babylonian dynasty (contemporary to the Middle Kingdom in Egypt) is practically omitted in historical sources. Babylon is first mentioned in writing in the time of King Naram-Sin, but at that time it was under Akkadian rule. We see that at that time the city had not yet recovered from the shock caused by the collapse of the tower and the confounding of the tongues. But are there sources that describe the great history of that city? Yes. These are the myths of Babylon. Tradition names Marduk as the founder of Babylon (son of the sacred hill Duku = Tower of Babel), also called Bel (Baal = master), who was equated with the Sumerian Enlil or Asalluhi. His cult extended throughout the Near East, although originally he was revered under the name Marduk only in Babylon. Naturally, this was a deification of Nimrod, the great hunter before the Lord, whom Moses mentions. If we turn to the sacred accounts of the pagans, beneath the veil of mythology we find actual history. Baal (or Marduk) is a later god according to both Babylonian and Canaanite mythology. Although he takes part in

¹¹⁶ *The Sibylline Oracles* 3.122–126, Milton S. Terry, trans. (New York: Eaton & Mains, Cincinnati: Curts & Jennings, 1899).

¹¹⁷ A. A. Oparin, *Religii mira i Biblii* [*Religions of the World and the Bible*].

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

bringing primordial chaos to heel, this role of his disappears rather sharply from the overall cosmogenic picture, and is obviously ascribed to him for the purpose of amplifying his magnificence. (Here however we can see in his image a combination of two persons—King Nimrod and Lucifer, his inspiration.) One of the primary works of Marduk/Baal/Enlil is the creation of a heavenly palace, or a sacred tower (the “heavenly Babylon”), at the dedication of which he holds a feast—and at that moment the god of death Mutu (in Ugarit) overtakes him. The mountains tremble and the shores of the sea shake.

After the disappearance of Bel, confusion ensues in the city and fighting breaks out. His wife helps him to escape the underground kingdom, and he fully becomes a god. It is curious that the name Marduk (Enlil) is linked to the origin of a state and even the production of fired brick. (A remarkable coincidence with the biblical narrative!)

What rational explanation can there be for the occurrence of this story (one shared, incidentally, by all the peoples of the earth)? The answer can only be that the remembrance of the first tyrant, deified by his descendants and contemporaries for his magical abilities and direct links to Satan, was preserved in the memory of the dispersed nations. Indeed, the similarity with the scriptural account is tremendous. Nimrod perishes practically at the zenith of his glory through the intervention of inhuman forces. His death is accompanied by a catastrophe, and he himself is carried off by the demons, then later proclaimed a god. According to the venerable Ephraim the Syrian, “So greatly did the new tongues distance the tribes from one another that they were unable to understand each other; and the divisions brought about by the difference in tongues caused strife among them.”¹¹⁹ It was for this reason that the time of Nimrod seemed wonderful to the apostate nations—in comparison with the period of global war that began after his demise. Nevertheless, the memory of the pagans preserves not only these outwardly attractive traits of the “great hunter,” but also many of his vices—the raping of young

¹¹⁹ St. Ephraim the Syrian, *Tolkovanie na pervuyu knigu Moiseya Bytiy* [*Explanation of Genesis, the First Book of Moses*], in *Tvoreniya* [*Collected Works*], vol. 3 (Rus. ed.).

girls, neglect of the First God, cruelty, and unpredictability. With good reason his favor was sought with the aid of human sacrifices and ritual prostitution. Unfortunately, the knowledge that Nimrod received from the fallen spirit on the peak of the Tower did not vanish with the destruction of the latter.

I think that proof of the legend of the Tower's destruction by a sudden hurricane may also be found in archaeological data. Many have heard of the so-called "Woolley's Flood"—a layer of silt and sand discovered by Leonard Woolley while excavating Ur and other cities of Sumeria. Some (such as Fr. Alexander Men and Fr. Stephen Lyashevsky) began claiming that this layer was deposited by the Great Flood. It turned out, however, that, firstly, places were discovered in the vicinity where there was no trace of the layer connected with the flood; and, secondly, one analysis showed that the majority of the layer in question was of ash origin—that is, the sand was brought by the wind, not by water. Of five shafts, traces of flooding were only found in two. The flooding in Ur did not leave the settlement depopulated—it did not even interrupt its way of life.

Nevertheless, after the catastrophe the settlement alters abruptly in appearance. Whereas prior to the layer of silt and sand it had been a primitive stone age settlement with handmade ceramics and clay brick houses, after it a city arises with dishes produced on a potter's wheel (which would go practically unchanged throughout the entire existence of the Sumerian civilization), villas in which the first floor was made of fired brick, and an enormous ziggurat in the center. In the cities of Sumeria a veritable "communist" civilization became predominant. The city-state was headed by a ruler called an *ensi*, who for all purposes was the owner of all the inhabitants. The latter were conscripted to labor for the temples, from which they received their sustenance. One part of them had a right to have a family, while another did not. There were no private businesses—all trade shops were the property of the ruler. The land also belonged solely to the state. Trade was a state monopoly. When necessary, laborers were shifted from one city to next. Even the concept of a man-day was introduced. Everything was strictly overseen and accounted for. There were even special "death camps" to which prisoners of war were driven to be put to death.

If the inhabitants of a city suffered a catastrophe (as is apparent from excavations), why this sharp spike in culture—one that favored a totalitarian state? To my mind, the only answer can be to recognize that we are looking at evidence of the Babylonian catastrophe. The former settlements were temporary habitations either of pioneers of the area or of rural inhabitants who provided food for the builders of the Tower. These had not yet progressed to fired brick, and did not enjoy the “fruits of civilization.” Subsequently, after the destruction of the first kingdom of Nimrod, new settlers appeared, and these attempted at least to some degree to resurrect their lost dream. Not for nothing did Kings Sargon and Ur-Nammu appear in Sumeria and Akkad, who attempted to turn back time and unite the four corners of the earth. It is they who were the cause of this cultural revival, as well as the horrific totalitarian society that arose in Mesopotamia. This was a pale imitation of Nimrod’s empire, which had ingloriously perished beneath the ruins of his proud design.

The most powerful and terrible witness to the destruction of the great Tower is its remains, which stand to this day 15 km from the center of Babylon, in Borsippa. Here is one description of this remarkable edifice:

“In Borsippa the Germans pitched their tents at the very foot of the tower, amid the ruins of a temple that half a century before had been more or less successfully excavated by Hormuzd Rassam. Now the Germans gazed upon the enormous cult structure of the temple and its extraordinarily massive walls. They bore the traces of some long-ago fire—a catastrophe that had reduced the temple to ashes.

“Immediately adjacent the tents the temple tower rose sharply skyward. This tower had likewise suffered considerably during the fire.

“No explanation could be found as to the cause of such a fire, which had not merely made the hundreds of fired bricks red-hot, but had in fact liquefied them, and had scorched the entire framework of the tower with all its walls of clay. ...

“The Germans gazed contemplatively, like the Frenchman Fresnel and the Englishman Rawlinson fifty years before, upon the ruins of the tower. ... In 1852 both of these, the Frenchman and the Englishman, felt it essential to place beneath the entire

structure, which the fire had fused into a solid mass similar to molten glass, 'a mine whose explosion would crack the tower and break it open from within.' For them, this appeared the most simple method—one that would permit them to learn the secret of the tower, while saving both time and money. Ultimately, however, they themselves rejected this bold plan. ...

"To this day the remains of this enormous tower, apparently the largest temple tower in Mesopotamia, rise to a height of 46 meters above the ruins. How did this terrible fire start? The Bible says nothing about it. It only relates that the Lord 'came down' and 'confounded' the tongues of all the builders of the tower. They left off building the tower and were dispersed throughout various countries (the first book of Moses, 11).

"Were they forced to flee by this gigantic fire that engulfed the tower? No doubt such was the case. The catastrophe, apparently, is what 'confounded' their tongues. The builders of the tower attempted to find words, but could no longer understand each other.

"Thus, the catastrophe came from heaven. Was it a terrifically powerful discharge of lightning that laid the tower low? Everything points to the explanation given by Wilhelm Koenig (a member of the German expedition to Warka), which appears to be the most probable: 'Ordinary construction bricks could only have been melted by an extremely powerful fire. But how could this have happened in the open air? What was the cause? Where was this power source that was capable of melting brick? Even if one were to behave quite irrationally, namely by covering the entire ziggurat with an easily flammable material, then setting fire to it, how could the inner part of this massive brick structure have melted? And yet this is precisely what happened. To this day, millennia later, the witnesses of this lie in plain view upon the ground... Involuntarily I thought of the powerful lightning typical of this country—and gradually the confused supposition took on a definite form: yes, this was the very power source that could have been capable of melting the massive ziggurat to its foundation. This is in accordance with what we know from the sphere of natural science. Electrical discharges formed by an accumulation of water vapor or dust clouds are typical of Iraq at a certain time of year. There electrical discharges in the

air are frequently so great that during thunderstorms horses, for example, which have natural insulators—hooves of keratin—are seen with their long tails standing out like bottle brushes. Consequently, under some unknown circumstances the atmospheric charge caused a tremendous bolt that struck the tower, where a high degree of humidity created favorable conditions for an electrical discharge to occur. Furthermore, the humidity created tremendous resistance, which helped produce a temperature so high that the internal brick sheathing of the massive structure melted, and the water that had accumulated on the tower walls evaporated, causing numerous explosions. These explosions destroyed part of the stonework, which came crashing down from the high terrace, and the burning, melted core shifted upward.”¹²⁰

The naivety of the godless is truly remarkable. Faced with obvious evidence of a miracle, they attempt to find a natural, non-catastrophic explanation for it. How could an ordinary discharge of lightning melt so great a mass when tektites are no more than a few centimeters in size? The most it could do would be to melt one or two bricks, but to turn a structure taller than Ostankino Tower¹²¹ into a glassy mass? No, this is completely impossible, if for no other reason than that this would require a temperature of about 2,000 °C over the entire body. Clearly, we have before us clear evidence of a miracle of God, Who confounded the tongues and dispersed the foolish rebels.

Later, in the time of Nabonidus, attempts were made to restore the Tower, as attested by a tile found at its base, but these too were unsuccessful, for if God destroys a thing, who can rebuild it? Due to these attempts, however, people try to date the tower itself to the middle of the first millennium BC, which contradicts the testimony of the restorer himself, who wrote: “The tower was destroyed in ancient times. ... I have restored it to its former state.”

¹²⁰ Erich Zehren, *The Biblical Hills*. Translated from the Russian by current translator.

¹²¹ A television and radio tower in Moscow, standing 1,772 feet tall—the tallest freestanding structure in the world from its construction in 1967 until 1974. —*Trans.*

Chapter 5

The Table of the Nations

1st generation	Noah
2nd generation	Shem, Ham, Japheth
3rd generation	Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, Aram. Cush, Mizraim, Phut, Canaan. Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, Ti- ras
4th generation	Uz, Hul, Gether, Mash, Cainan. Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, Sabtechah, Nim- rod, Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathru- sim, Sidon, Heth, Jebusite, Amorite, Girgashite, Hivi- te, Arkite, Sinite, Arvadite, Zemarite, Hamathite. Ashkenaz, Riphath, Togarmah, Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, Dodanim
5th generation	Salah. Sheba, Dedan.
6th generation	Eber
7th generation	Peleg, Joktan
8th generation	Reu, Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Obal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophil, Havilah, Jobab

One of the most remarkable documents contained in the book of Genesis is the table of the nations. There exists no other such detailed or historically accurate ancient account describing the protohistory of mankind. The 72 nations mentioned in this chapter of the book of Genesis have practically all been discovered in the annals of history. Their memory is preserved by their descendants and the descendants of some of their neighbors. As we will subsequently see, even genetic information helps in part to make sense of this most subtle witness to human history. But before proceeding to an analysis of the particular names in this genealogy, let us say a few words both about the significance

of this chapter for understanding the spiritual history of our race and about what lessons we are to draw from it today.

The first thing that we must clarify for ourselves is the fact that all mankind originated from a single root. All men are brothers not figuratively, but literally. Hence, all attempts to develop racist or nationalistic theories are utter foolishness. All nations came forth from the hand of the One Creator. All of them are under His care, and no one will escape His Judgment. Hence, all attempts to introduce various prohibitions against interracial or international marriages or interaction are not pleasing to the Creator, except for the purpose of preventing joint rebellion against God (for example, modern globalization).

As the apostle Paul said concerning this at the Areopagus, God “hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring” (Acts 17:26–28). On another occasion the apostles Paul and Barnabas thus described the goals of the existence of the nations: “God ... in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14:15–17).

From these words of divine revelation it becomes apparent that the division into nations is not a chance phenomenon, nor is it merely a curse. The purpose of this dispersion was an attempt to find God by feel (that is, by groping about in the dark). And this goal did not go entirely unrealized. For example, Greek philosophy, Lao Tzu in China, and many other people did indeed find traces of the Lord, and thereby paved the way for the preaching of the Gospel. Furthermore, one vision of the Last Judgment (that of Gregory, disciple of the venerable Basil the New) describes a particular host of the saved—the pagans who found the Creator and rejected idolatry.

Incidentally, from the words of the apostles it is clear that knowledge of God is linked to the fertility of the earth.

As the prophet Jeremiah said, “Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? art not thou he, O Lord our God? therefore we will wait upon thee: for thou hast made all these things” (Jer. 14:22). Consequently, originally all feasts of fertility were to serve for the glorification of the Almighty. And we know that the feast of the New Year and of First Fruits was already observed by Abel and Cain. But after man fell away from God and became subject to the power of the demons, this holy day on the calendar became defiled by magic and debauchery. The Church therefore acted very rightly in Christianizing these feasts. It was not pandering to paganism, as the sectarians absurdly claim, but was restoring to these festivals their original meaning: the glorification of the Lord of the weather.

But even when the nations did not come to the knowledge of God, their fates served the purposes of Providence. Some built empires and laid roads for the spreading of the gospel; others served as avenging scourges for apostates and the ungodly; of still others God made examples, showing His long-suffering and justice.

Chapter 6

The Spread of the Descendants of Shem

We will now examine the genealogies of the nations. This we will begin by describing the dispersion of the descendants of Shem, the firstborn son of Noah, from whom Christ our God descended in the flesh.

“And to Sem himself also were children born, the father of all the sons of Heber, the brother of Japheth the elder. Sons of Sem, Elam, and Assur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram, and Cainan. And sons of Aram, Uz, and Ul, and Gater, and Mosoch. And Arphaxad begot Cainan, and Cainan begot Sala. And Sala begot Heber. And to Heber were born two sons, the name of the one,

Phaleg, because in his days the earth was divided, and the name of his brother Jektan. And Jektan begot Elmodad, and Saleth, and Sarmoth, and Jarach, and Odorrha, and Aibel, and Decla, Eval, and Abimael, and Saba, and Uphir, and Evila, and Jobab, all these were the sons of Jektan. And their dwelling was from Masse, till one comes to Saphera, a mountain of the east. These were the sons of Sem in their tribes, according to their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations" (Gen. 10:21–31 LXX).

Shem is named first in the genealogy. The first ancestor of many nations, his very name means "he who names," "he who listens." Truly marvelous was the clairvoyance of his father, Noah, in giving him so accurate a name. For religious intuition was a particular gift of the descendants of Shem, both unto good—in the person of the Hebrew prophets, the righteous Job, and the apostles—and unto evil, in the person of the Hindu mystics, Muhammad, and the magicians of Persia.

The genealogy of the Semites begins not with the ancestor of the Hebrews, but with Elam. This, incidentally, shows the objectivity of the author of Genesis. For if Moses had wished to exalt the Hebrew nation, he would have named Arphaxad first. Translated, Elam means "youth." His descendants were the Elamites and the Persians who descended from them. Their kinsmen also include the Dravidian peoples of India and the inhabitants of Ceylon.

The second son of Shem was Asshur, the ancestor of the Assyrians.

The descendants of Arphaxad were the Chaldeans (the Hittites, the Kaldu). He was known to the Hurrians (Carians) as Ar-*ip-hurra*, founder of Chaldea (the Nuzi tablets). The Akkadians knew him as Arrapha. He founded the city of Arpachiyah 6 km from Nineveh.

From Lydia there came the Lydians.

From Aram there came the Arameans and the Syrians. A clay tablet from Ur bears the name "Aramu."

Uz produced the Damascene Syrians. It was in this land that the righteous Job was born.

Hul gave his name to the Hula Valley at the headwaters of the Jordan.

Gether (Geter, Gater) did the same for Bactria.

Mash is a people in the hills of Lebanon. Among the Akkadians this people was called the Mashu, and among the Egyptians—the Msh't. From them there proceeded the Cappadocians.

Cainan produced the Cainites,

Eber produced the Hebrews.

Thalek (Peleg) produced the Pelasgi.

Joktan produced the Joktanites (an Arab tribe dwelling on the shores of the Red Sea). His name survives in the name of the city of Jektan near Mecca.

Almodad means “instigator.” Arab historians know him as Almorad. He produced the Geborites.

Sheleph produced the Saliph tribe and its capitol Sulaph, located 60 miles from the city of Sanaa.

The descendants of Hazarmaveth, known to Flavius as the “Hazermoth,” lived in the valley of Hadhramaut (in pre-Islamic inscriptions, HDRMT, HDRMVT). Interestingly, the name of this valley translates as “The City of Death.”

Jerah produced an Arab tribe known to Ashurbanipal as the “Yarki.” His name survives in the name of the city of Jerakon Kom (according to Ptolemy), which lay on the banks of the Mara.

Hadoram produced the inhabitants of the land of Hadarim. Ashurbanipal knew his descendants as the inhabitants of the city of Hurarin (near Yarka).

Uzal is the founder of the city of Sanaa, the capital of Yemen. His tribe was known to the Assyrians as the “Azalla.”

The descendants of Diklah lived near the river Tigris. They were known to the Assyrians as the “Idiklat,” and to the Akkadians and Arameans as the “Diklat.” Apparently, before they invaded Mesopotamia they lived on the island of Bahrain, which the Sumerians called “Dilmun”; there they had established a highly developed civilization.

Obal produced a South Arabian tribe known to the Arabs as the Ebal (in ancient Yemenite inscriptions, “Abil”). They lived between Sanaa and Hodeida.

Abimael produced the inhabitants of South Arabia, according to the Sabaeans.

Sheba founded the city of Sheba and produced the Sabaeans.

Ophir produced the Indians—the Dravidians and the Tamils—and founded the city of Sopara (60 km north of Bombay). This

nation created the Ancient Indian civilization in Mohenjo-daro. Part of his descendants lived in South Arabia and traded with their brethren in India. They founded the city of Maafer. Possibly it is these same descendants of Ophir who are the ancestors of the Australian aborigines. In any case, during the excavation of Mohenjo-daro a statue of a dancer was discovered pertaining specifically to an Austaloid race.

Havilah [populated] Bengal, Nepal, and Tibet (the Pishon/Ganges river). Part of his descendants lived in the East Arabian peninsula, on the banks of the Persian Gulf.

Jobab's descendants were known to the Akkadians as the "Jabibi," and they lived in a city that bore his name: Juhaibab (near Mecca).

Rahab (Reu) is found in Akkadian inscriptions as a proper name, and appears as "Ra'u." He gave his name to an island on the Euphrates below the city of Anata, known to the Akkadians as Ra'ilu, and to the Greeks as Ragu.

Serug gave his name to the Syrians. He founded the city known to the Akkadians as Saruggi, located west of Harran.

Nahor's descendants settled in Harran, which then came to be called the city of Nahor.

Pharra (Terah) lived not far from Harran in a city known to the Assyrians as Turahi, but to the Akkadians as Turahu; the ruins of this city are known as Til-Sa-Turahi.

Chapter 7

The Spread of the Descendants of Japheth

"Now these are the generations of the sons of Noe, Sem, Cham, Japheth; and sons were born to them after the flood. The sons of Japheth, Gamer, and Magog, and Madoi, and Jovan, and Elisa, and Thobel, and Mosoch, and Thiras. And the sons of Gamer, Aschanaz, and Riphath, and Thorgama. And the sons of Jovan, Elisa, and Tharseis, Cetians, Rhodians.

From these were the islands of the Gentiles divided in their land, each according to his tongue, in their tribes and in their nations" (Gen. 10:1–5 LXX).

The table of the nations begins by listing the descendants of Japheth. First we must examine how well the memory of our progenitor was preserved among his descendants.

The very name Japheth has two meanings, which, as we have already had occasion to mention, contain a prediction of the subsequent fate of his descendants: "beauty" and "dispersion." And indeed, for his descendants the ideal becomes, on the one hand, an aspiration to create things of beauty, sometimes to the point of equating beauty with righteousness. Greeks and Romans, Germanic peoples and Russians, Japanese and Chinese, Indians and the French created inimitable specimens of representational art.

In the same way, among the descendants of Japheth there existed an invariable pull toward massive geographical expansion, from the time of the Greek colonization and the original migration of the Indians and Polynesians to the campaigns of Genghis Khan and Alexander the Great. Russian coastal dwellers and English colonizers alike submitted to this objective of the descendants of Japheth. Curiously, neither the Hamites nor the majority of the Semites succeeded in creating such lasting empires as did the Japhetites. Noah's other sons had other objectives.

Thus, Japheth is our common ancestor. The Greeks knew him as Iapetus, father of Prometheus, who begat Asius, and the ancestor of the Greeks. The Aryans considered him their progenitor "Iapeti." In the Indian and Korean tradition he is known as "Prajapati" and is even revered as a god. Neither, however, forgets that he is their physical ancestor. "Japheth was worshiped in Cilicia, former home of the Sea People."¹²² And "the chronicles of the early Franks, Irish, Britains, Albanians, and many other ancient European ethnic groups independently trace the origin of their nations back to the youngest son of the legendary progenitor who survived the flooding of the whole Earth," whom they most frequently refer to as Japheth. The Chinese Miao-Zu tribe names him (rendering his name as "Jah-phu") as one of the three

¹²² Robert Graves and Raphael Patai, *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis* (1986).

sons of Nuah who survived the flood, from whom through Gomen (Gomer) and his wife Go-yong their own nation descended.

Little is known of his life. Aside from the narrative of the book of Genesis, which describes his virtuous treatment of his father and names seven of his sons, we know nothing about him. According to tradition, before the Flood he founded the city of Jaffa (now a suburb of Tel Aviv). According to a tradition related to us by Byzantine historian Georgy Kedrin, before his death Noah gave Europe to Japheth and his descendants. Japheth revered God the Creator to the end of his life, and for this reason Christ led him into paradise along with the other righteous ones. There is even a tradition that for a time he rose from the dead together with other saints after the Lord's death (Mt. 27:52–53). The Church glorifies his memory on the Sunday of the Holy Fathers (the last Sunday before the Nativity of Christ). Holy righteous Japheth, pray to the Lord for thy descendants according to the flesh!

We now proceed to a description of the dispersion of the descendants of his seven sons. Curiously, genetic analysis of mitochondrial DNA has shown that practically all modern Europeans are descended from only seven women. We see that biblical history finds partial confirmation in genetic information. It is believed that these seven women (who have been given conventional names) lived in the following places: Helena in southern France; Xenia, who came to the West from the Caucasus; Ursula from Greece; Jasmine from the Near East, Tara from northern Italy; Velda from Spain; and Katrine from the environs of Venice.

The first son of Japheth was Gomer ("whole," "perfect"). His descendants are the Cimmerians, who gave their name to Crimea. They led a nomadic existence in the Black Sea region, until in the seventh century BC they were driven out from that place by the Scythians (to whom they were in fact closely related). To this day the remains of the ramparts they built may be seen on both sides of the Kerch Strait. Upon resettling in the Near East they conquered Galatia, and repeatedly warred with Assyria and Lydia. They are mentioned in the cuneiform tablets of Esarhaddon (681–668 BC) and Ashurbanipal (about 660 BC), where they are called the "Gimirrai." The prophet Ezekiel speaks of how the descendants of Gomer dwell in the regions of the north

(Ezek. 38:6). Furthermore, Flavius Josephus sees Gomer as the progenitor of the Galatians or Gauls—the ancestors of the modern French. This equation is born out by ancient Celtic genealogies preserved by Nennius in his *History of the Britons*. Thus, the majority of Celtic peoples descended specifically from Gomer. A part of his descendants went not to Europe, but to the Far East. From him descended the Miao-Zu nation (South China, province of Huangshi), and also possibly the Ket people of Siberia. From the latter there descended a number of Native American tribes in North America, who came there by crossing the Bering Strait (at the time there was a land bridge). Genetic analysis has shown that, judging by mitochondrial DNA, the Celts, the Kets, and a number of Native American tribes are related to each other. Indeed, we know that the Cimmerians led a nomadic existence in the Great Steppe that stretches from the Carpathian Mountains to Mongolia, as the Scythians and the Mongols did later, and consequently the tribes that broke away from them began to settle in both China and America. Furthermore, genetic material has shown that all Native Americans from Canada to Tierra del Fuego can trace their origins back to four women. Consequently, America was most likely settled very soon after the destruction of the Tower of Babel, and this may be traced from one small nomadic tribe or from four individual families, most likely descended from Japheth.

Gomer had three sons: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah, who fathered their own nations. Gomer most likely had other children as well, but they were not included in the sacred text specifically because they did not sire their own nations.

The first-born son of Gomer was Ashkenaz. Flavius says that he produced the Ashkenazites, whom the Greeks call the Rhegines. It is generally accepted that he is the ancestor of a number of Germanic peoples. But first and foremost Ashkenaz is the progenitor of the Scythians (whose direct descendants are the Ossetians), who received their name from him. Furthermore, from him the Scots of Scotland also received their name, and the kings of Norway and Denmark trace their genealogy back to him, as do the Anglo-Saxons, Norwegians, and Icelanders. Odin (Wodan), whom the Germanic tribes deified, is a 17th-generation descendant of Ashkenaz. Curiously, six independent genealogies

give a practically identical list of names. Furthermore, the pagan genealogies consider Skythes (Sesketh, Set, Sketh) a son of Noah. Naturally, no Christian copyist could have written this, since according to both the Bible and, incidentally, the traditions of most nations, the man who survived the Flood had only three sons. Bill Cooper considered Skythes just another name for Japheth. But the Anglo-Saxons themselves and the first monastic copyists distinguished between them. On the one hand, the name ascribed to the son of Skythes, Bedwig, does not coincide with that of any of the sons of Japheth. Furthermore, Ashkenaz himself is explicitly called Skythes in a number of ancient texts. Why then is he specifically called a son of Noah? I think the reason is that in the ancient usage the word *son* frequently also signified “legally recognized descendant” (cf. Mt. 1:9).

Riphath was an ancestor of the inhabitants of Paphlagonia. He also produced the denizens of the Riphean Mountains, by which the ancient authors apparently meant the Carpathian Mountains. But I think the Finno-Ugric tribes also descended from Riphath. It was probably the descendants of Riphath who founded Arkaim and other cities of the Southern Urals. Later some of his descendants traveled down the great northern rivers and became the ancestors of the Paleoasians (the Nentsy, the Lapps, the Sámi, and the Chukchi).

Togarmah populated Armenia and Georgia. It is remarkable that to this day Armenians, Georgians, and Caucasian tribes in general trace their lineage back to Gomer through a certain Torgon, and call themselves “the house of Torgon” or, as the Bible designates him, of Togarmah.

Magog produced the Mongols, Huns, Scythians, Caucasus natives, and Irish. Quite probably it is he whom the Chinese venerated as “Ma-Wan” (“Lord of Horses”). Isidore of Seville writes, “There is no doubt that this tribe is a very ancient one. Some trace its origin back to Magog, the son of Japheth, reasoning thus based on the similarity of the last syllable and drawing this conclusion primarily from the words of the prophet Ezekiel.”

Madai produced the Medes, Aryans, Sarmatians, and Saka.

Tiras produced the Thracians and Franks. Part of his descendants migrated to Central Asia, where they gave rise to the Turkish nations. Tiras is deified under the name of Tor.

Javan (“flexible”) produced Ionia and the Britons. The Koreans may possibly have descended from him (their progenitor Tangu was the son of Hwanung, grandson of Hwanin (Javan?), great-grandson of Prajapati (Japheth).

Meshech (“armful,” “grasped with the arms”) produced the Mesche, the Cappadocians, and the Finno-Ugric tribes.

From Tubal came Tobolsk, the Tuvans (Finno-Ugric tribes?), and the Tiber river (according to Flavius). The ancient name “Tovely” was applied to the Georgians. Tibet (?).

Elishah gave rise to Ellada.

Tarshish—Tarsus, Tartessus (the Basques of Spain), the Etruscans.

Kittim—Cyprus, Macedonia (the ancient name being “Makketia”), the Italics.

Dodanim (Rodadim)—the Dardanelles, Rhodes, the Russians, the Latins. From his name originated the Oracle of Dodona, deified by the Slavs as “Rod.”

It is interesting to cite certain ancient sources regarding the settling of Europe. Nennius (8th century), who wrote *The History of the Britons*, writes the following concerning the ancient origin of the European nations:

“I have learned another account of this Brutus from the ancient books of our ancestors. After the deluge, the three sons of Noah severally occupied three different parts of the earth: Shem extended his borders into Asia, Ham into Africa, and Japheth into Europe. The first man that dwelt in Europe was Alanus, with his three sons, Hisicion, Armenon, and Neugio. Hisicion had four sons, Francus, Romanus, Alamanus, and Bruttus. Armenon had five sons, Gothus, Valagothus, Cibidus, Burgundus, and Longobardus. Neugio had three sons, Vandalus, Saxo, and Boganus.

“From Hisicion arose four nations—the Franks, the Latins, the Germans, and Britons: from Armenon, the Gothi, Valagothi, Cibi-di, Burgundi, and Longobardi: from Neugio, the Bogari, Vandali, Saxones, and Tarinci. The whole of Europe was subdivided into these tribes.

“Alanus is said to have been the son of Fethuir; Fethuir, the son of Ogomuin, who was the son of Thoi; Thoi was the son of Boibus, Boibus of Semion, Semion of Mair, Mair of Ectactus, Ectactus of Aurthack, Aurthack of Ethec, Ethec of Ooth, Ooth

of Aber, Aber of Ra, Ra of Esraa, Esraa of Hisrau, Hisrau of Bath, Bath of Jobath, Jobath of JJoham, Joham of Japheth, Japheth of Noah, Noah of Lamech, Lamech of Mathusalem, Mathusalem of Enoch, Enoch of Jared, Jared of Malalehel, Malalehel of Cainan, Cainan of Enos, Enos of Seth, Seth of Adam, and Adam was formed by the living God. We have obtained this information respecting the original inhabitants of Britain from ancient tradition. ...

“The Britains were thus called from Brutus; Brutus was the son of Hisicion; Hisicion was the son of Alanus; Alanus was the son of Rhea Silvia; Rhea Silvia was the daughter of Numa Pompilius; Numa was the son of Ascanius; Ascanius of Eneas; Eneas of Anchises; Anchises of Troius; Troius of Dardanus; Dardanus of Flisa; Flisa of Juuin; Juuin of Jafeth; but Jafeth had seven sons; from the first, named Gomer, descended the Galli; from the second, Magog, the Scythi and Gothi; from the third, Madian, the Medi; from the fourth, Juuan, the Greeks; from the fifth, Tubal, arose the Hebrei, Hispani, and Itali; from the sixth, Mosoch, sprung the Cappadoces; and from the seventh, named Tiras, descended the Traces: these are the sons of Jafeth, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech.”¹²³

“The first people to come to America from Asia were descendants of one of the ancient peoples of Japan. A comparison of ancient and modern human skulls collected throughout the world has shown that the nearest relatives of the first Americans were the ancient Japanese, whose civilization belonged to the so-called Dzemon culture (8th–1st millennia BC) and Ainu culture—another ancient people, though younger, who settled the northern part of the islands of Japan. It was representatives of these two peoples who 15 thousand years ago crossed the Bering Strait (at that time there was a land bridge in its place) and first settled in Alaska, then a thousand years later made their way to Cape Horn—the tip of South America. Modern Japanese retain certain traits of the Dzemon-era people. Those same traits may be observed in the Native American Sioux, Blackfoot, and Cherokee tribes. Scientists have discovered proof that the ancient Japanese were skilled voyagers, and probably sailed south along the western

¹²³ Nennius, *Historia Brittonum*, W. Gunn, trans. (London: 1819), 9–11.

shore of America, establishing settlements in the most favorable areas. This means that man already knew how to build vessels in the hunter-gatherer era, in the Neolithic, long before agriculture appeared. Proof of this is the discovery in Japan of ancient remnants of birch bark canoes, quite similar to the boats later used by Native Americans. The second migration from Asia took place 3,000–4,000 years ago, involving the Chinese, the Mongols, and the inhabitants of Southeast Asia. These probably sailed across the water, crossing the same Bering Strait. From these colonists descended the Eskimos and the Aleuts, while certain migrants moved south and gave rise to the Navajo people.”

Chapter 8

The Dispersion of the Descendants of Ham

Following their unsuccessful attempt to establish a presence in Mesopotamia, the descendants of Ham moved toward the southwestern points of the globe. Part of them settled not far from their ancestral home, in the mountains of Iraq (the Kassites, descendants of Cush) and in Palestine (the Canaanites), while part remained on the Arabian Peninsula. Modern Arabs call their descendants “Musta’rabs,” or sham Arabs. The bulk of Ham’s descendants, however, moved toward Africa.

A particularity of the Hamites was a passionate nature that was particularly advanced among them, and the consequent swift forgetfulness of the Creator. At the same time it must not be thought that the Hamites were people incapable of creating high culture. On the contrary, it was they who created the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Sumeria. But up until the coming of Christ these nations, like the other gentiles, dwelt in a darkness of which they themselves were the authors, for it was the Hamite Nimrod who commenced the worship of creation in place of God. Although practically all nations, including the Hamites, preserved the memory of the One True God, the descendants of Ham

were frequently closest to the power of evil in their religious life (remember the priests of Egypt and the sorcerers of Africa).

Another particularity of the Hamites was a longing for lands unknown. They not only claimed the mastery of the African continent, but were possibly the first to explore America. There is evidence that they were also the aborigines of Britain. At any rate, the ancient chronicles of the Britons relate that Brutus drove out a native race of “giants.” It is hard to say whether physical gigantism was meant or whether this refers to the fact that they were great warriors who possessed occult abilities (remember the antediluvian giants). We do know however that certain Hamites were indeed of a remarkable height (Goliath). After they were routed by Brutus (around 1104 B.C.) they were obliged to migrate, and about the same time the chronicles of Ireland tell us of an attack by a clan of Fomorians, “who were a clan descended from Chem [that is, from Ham], a son of Noah ... who lived by piracy and by robbing other nations, and these caused alarm throughout the whole world at that time.” Possibly they were the last of the Negroid race—Grimaldi man, whose remnants were discovered in the upper reaches of the Don (in Kostenki), in Switzerland, in northern Italy, and in England, in the Neolithic, Paleolithic, Bronze, and Early Iron Ages. Negroid features are also encountered in Late Paleolithic people found in burial sites. Outwardly they resembled modern black people and Melanesians. Their burial sites show that these descendants of Ham loved to adorn themselves with bracelets and necklaces of seashells, with which they also decorated their clothing. The bodies of the dead were sprinkled with red paint as a sign of eternal life. They perceived death as a new birth, and so they buried the deceased in the fetal position. Of their personal effects, bone ornaments and needles and stone arrowheads and tool heads survive (from the Aurignacian culture). Considering that Negroids survived in Europe up to the Early Iron Age, we cannot accept a multi-millennial dating of the Paleolithic era. After all, the remains of Cro-Magnon man were found in the same cave as the remains of the Negroids—just half a meter above them. There are no grounds to doubt that these two races (the Japhetites and the Hamites) lived practically simultaneously, as reflected in the ancient chronicles already cited above.

Furthermore, it is possible that Neanderthals, who also most likely had dark skin, lived together with the Negroids. The Neanderthals have not however been proven to be Hamites. (Their remains, however, have also been found in Canaanite-era Palestine. Could the Neanderthals have been related to the sons of Anak and the Horites?)

Curiously, Eskimo remains have been found in Ireland, and this also may link them to the descendants of Ham. (The Paleoasians were closely related to the Melanesians in their genetic and morphological traits.)

It is probable that this aspiration to spread extensively throughout the earth was dictated by a desire to overpower the promise of God and prevent the descendants of Japheth and Shem from spreading. But the word of the Lord was fulfilled nonetheless.

We will now describe the dispersion of the descendants of Ham by their tribes.

Ham ("hot"). His name, "Kemi," became Egypt's own name for itself. For this reason that country is called the land of Ham in the psalm.

Cush ("Ethiopian") is the ancestor from whom the Cushites and the Ethiopians descended. Interestingly, in Egyptian historical records the Ethiopians were known as the inhabitants of the pitiful land of Cush. Another branch of this tribe lived in the mountains, to the east of Mesopotamia, and together with the Hyksos they conquered Babylon and Sumeria. Incidentally, the Sumerians themselves were descendants of this son of Ham. It is probable that his name survives in the name of one of the most ancient cities of Sumeria—Kish. We posit, by way of a working hypothesis, that speakers of Khoisan languages (the Bushmen and the Hottentots) are also descendants of Cush.

Mizraim ("canyons") is the founder of Egypt. His name survives in all the Semetic languages as the name of Egypt. Assyrians, for example, called this country Muzur and Muzri; the inhabitants of Ugarit—Msrn; and the Arabs—Misr. The Egyptians themselves worshiped him as very nearly the most powerful of the gods, under the name Osiris—the first king of Egypt, slain by his own brother Set (possibly Heth, a son of Canaan). We have inferred this equation from the sources of Phoenecian mythology.

This nation was well acquainted with the Egyptians and was directly involved in the cult of Osiris, whose body was born by the waves to Byblos. In his account of Osiris (Eiserie), the inventor of three letters, Philo of Byblos calls him “the brother of Khna, who was later given a different name—Phoenix.” Every Egyptian after his death equated himself with Osiris, who was perceived as the king of the afterlife. This equation was possible because Osiris was a blood relative and ancestor of all Egyptians.

Phut (“flight”)—Scripture applies his name to Lybia (Jer. 46:9; Ezek. 27:10, 30:5), in telling of those who warred against Egypt itself. His descendants should not however be confused with the descendants of Ludim. The population of Lybia (it should be remembered that the name Lybia often referred to Africa) belonged to different nationalities, and Phut was the progenitor of the inhabitants of Central and West Africa, Nigeria, and Sudan, who speak the Nilo-Saharan family of languages. His name may have survived in the name of the Fur language. It is important to note that this language family is completely independent and does not depend on the Afroasiatic family; consequently their ancestor was not Mizraim. After being routed in the Ethiopian War, part of the descendants of Phut fled to the west.

Canaan (“merchant,” “servant”) is the ancestor of the Canaanites (the Palestinians). His name was known to the Assyrians, the Egyptians (“Kn’nv”), the Phoenecians (“Kna’an”), the Greeks, and the Hurrians (Khurrites). Both Sanchuniathon and Philo of Byblos confirm that the inhabitants of Canaan received the name of their ancestor.

The descendants of Cush.

Seba founded the kingdom of Meroë between the branches of the Nile (Is. 45:14, 18:2–7), inhabited by the descendants of Cush. He was the founder of the city of Ali Sabieh.

Hamilah (“circle”)—his descendants lived in the territory of Djibouti and Somalia, where they built the town of Avalites (present-day Zeila). His descendants speak in languages of the Cushitic family (Northeast and East Africa).

Sabtah—the southern shore of Arabia, the city of Sabbatha (Sabota), the capital of Hadhramaut in happy Arabia.

Raamah—his descendants may have lived in the territory of Oman. To this day there is a place called Raamah not far from

Ma'an, in Southwest Arabia. It is probable that part of his descendants joined the Semitic tribes of Ophir and Havilah, since there are indications that they settled to the east of Ophir and beside the land of Havilah (according to an inscription from ancient Sheba). If they went with them to India, their descendants may be seen in the Burushaski tribe, which today lives in the mountains of northwest India and is held to have descended from the aborigines. It should be noted that this version is born out by the fact that not far from them there lived another Hamite tribe—the Sabtechah. If this version is correct, the origin of the Melanesians and the Papuan tribes of New Guinea becomes apparent. They left for Indochina and were displaced by the ancestors of the Thai and Vietnamese, driven to the far islands of Indonesia (which was then a peninsula), the Adamantine Islands (also connected to the continent), and Ceylon. At the end of the first millennium BC they settled the islands of the Pacific Ocean. It is probable that the Australian aborigines, the Tasmanians, and the Ainu living in northern Japan descended from this Hamite tribe. Genetically, the center of origin for these tribes is set in East Africa.

Sabtecha—lived on the eastern shore of the Persian Gulf, in the province of Karamania.

Sheba (“oath, union”)—his descendants were the ancient inhabitants of Sheba, displaced by Semites—the Arabs.

Dedan—founded the city of Dedan in Arabia.

Nimrod—founder of Babylon, deified with the name Marduk, progenitor of the Sumerians. He was known to the Sumerians as Amar-Utu, to the Greeks as Zeus, to the Indians as Indra, to the Slavs as Perun, and to the Semites as Baal. The Romans worshiped Nimrod under the name of Bacchus (bar Cush, or son of Cush).

The descendants of Mizraim.

Ludim (“bend,” “struggle”)—gave his name to Lybia (“Lebu” in the Egyptian chronicles). From him descended the Berbers and the Tuareg people (speakers of the Berbero-Lybian branch of languages), inhabitants of the northern Sahara and all of North Africa all the way to Mauritania and the Canary Islands.

Anamim—the jungle inhabitants in the Congo and in South Africa (up to the Republic of South Africa), speakers of the Niger-Congo languages.

Lehabib (“dwellers of the dry steppes”)—the southern Lybians, the inhabitants of Chad, speakers of languages of the Chadic branch (Hausa, etc.). That they descended from Mizraim is confirmed by the similarity of their culture, which could not have been borrowed.

Naphtuhim—the inhabitants of the Nile Delta (in Egyptian sources, the “p’t’rs”). Possibly deified under the name Ptah. From him originated the ancient sacred name of Memphis.

Pathrusim (“southern district”)—gave his name to Thebaid and was the founder of Thebes.

Casluhim—his descendants settled Cyprus. He is also an ancestor of the Philistines. By some accounts, Casluhim and Caphthorim originally lived in the northern part of Egypt. (Let us not forget that prior to the catastrophes of the second millennium BC the Sahara was more of a plain than a desert.)

Capthorim—his descendants were the inhabitants of Cappadocia. Part of his descendants comprised the pre-Hellenic population of Crete. We should note that the Egyptian influence represented particularly broadly on these two islands (Cyprus and Crete) can be explained specifically by a part of their population having descended from Mizraim. For this reason when the Greeks established full control over Crete (in the middle of the second millennium BC) Egypt’s influence there sharply decreased.

The descendants of Canaan.

Sidon (“fishing”). He founded the city of Sidon, and the inhabitants of Lebanon are his direct descendants, known to all as the Phoenicians. Their influence encompassed the entire Mediterranean.

Jebus (“barn,” “downtrodden”)—founder of the stronghold of Zion.

Girgash—his descendants lived in the valley of Jordan between the lake of Gennesaret and the Dead Sea. The Ugaritic inscriptions mention them as the sons of Girgash. As Armenian sources report, after Joshua conquered Canaan the Girgasites fled from there to beyond the Caucasian Mountains and laid the foundations for various nations—the Circassians, the Chechens, and the Ingush, whose customs do indeed resemble those of the Canaanites at times. Apparently the Hittites fled with them as well—the progenitors of the Kets and the Khitan (see below).

Amor—an ancestor of the Canaanites, the inhabitants of Syria and northern Mesopotamia, known to the Sumerians as the Martu, and to the Akkadians as the Amurru. Initially they were nomads, but early in the second millennium they conquered Babylon. The renowned king Hammurabi was a descendant of Amor, and his name contains the name “Amurru.” From them descended the sons of Anak—the giants (presumably the Neanderthals). Several of them, however, also lived among the Philistines. So great was the might of this tribe that the Lord, in rebuking Israel, says, “Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath” (Amos 2:9). But up until the great migrations of the second millennium BC it was the Amorites, and not the Semites, who had possession of Syria and Palestine.

Heth—ancestor of the Hittites who lived in southern Palestine, near Hebron, of which they were the founders. Several Hittites entered into a covenant with Abraham, and thereby joined the ranks of the people of God. His name may possibly be the origin of the Russian name for China, *Kitai*, from *Cathay*—a Khitan tribe in Inner Mongolia, which conquered this country. It is probable that part of the descendants of Heth, either with the Grimaldi or after the catastrophes of the third millennium BC, migrated first to the Caucasian Mountains, then to the Yenisei region, after which part of them settled in Inner Mongolia, having assimilated with the descendants of Japheth.

Hivite—his descendants settled the cities of Ebla, Gibeon, and Sechem. This nation was not destroyed by Israel, for it allied itself with them. They comprised the backbone of the Palestinians—the “Arabs” who today war against the Jews.

Arka—an ancestor of the Arkite tribe, which lived on the shore of Palestine 100 km from Beirut. The Assyrian kings Shalmaneser II and Tiglath-Pileser III called them rebels. Arka himself founded a city that bears his own name, known today as Tel Arqa. This city was known to the pharaoh Thutmose III as Arkanu, while the Romans renamed it to Caesarea of Lybia.

Sinite (“clay”)—gave his name to Mount Sinai and the city of Sin in Lebanon. According to one version, his descendants fled to Xinjian and China (the ancient name of the Chinese for them-

selves was “Shen”). Beginning in the third century BC this country came to be called Sinae in all Western languages. Apparently it was China to which the prophet Isaiah was referring when he spoke of people who would come from the land of Sinim.¹²⁴ The rituals of ancient China’s Shang dynasty (Yin—1500 BC) are reminiscent of those of Canaan, including human sacrifices and ritual debauchery. In the end, the origin of the Chinese remains a mystery: most likely they descended from Shem, as attested by the investigations of Catholic scholars (also called figuracists).

Arvad (“refuge”)—from him descended the inhabitants of the island of Arwad near Tripoli (now called Ruad Island). They were superb sea voyagers, whom even the Assyrians admired. They also played a tremendous role during the conquests of Alexander of Macedonia.

Zemar—founder of the city of Sumer near Tripoli and Smyrna at the western foot of the mountains of Lebanon.

Hamath—the city of Hamath (now Hama, one of the largest cities of Syria) on the shore of the Orontes River. This city was conquered by Sargon II, and near it Nebuchadnezzar routed the Egyptians. The Akkadians knew this city as Amatu, the Egyptians as Hmtu, the Arabs as Hamat, the Greeks renamed it Epiphania, and today it bears its original name. In 853 BC the Hamathites successfully routed the Assyrians, assembling 63,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry, 4,000 war chariots, and 1,000 camels. The Assyrians themselves left us an account of this.

Interestingly, scientists have also concluded that the culture of the peoples of Africa is based upon a unified substratum, which confirms the biblical depiction of the dispersion of the descendants of Ham. In his article “Ancient Egypt and the People of Sub-Saharan Africa,” M.A. Korostovtsev arrived at the following conclusions:

“1. The similarity in the customs and views of the ancient Egyptians and the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa, primarily in West Africa, is chiefly due to a very ancient cultural substratum shared by white and black Africans alike.

“2. From this common substratum there developed the cultures of ancient Egypt and the other nations of Black Africa.

¹²⁴ See Is. 49:12. —*Trans.*

“3. There can be no doubt that, by means of both direct and indirect borrowing, elements of Egyptian culture made their way into the tribes and peoples of Black Africa, but with rare exceptions (primarily Napata and Meroë) these borrowed elements did not play a decisive role in the cultural history of the peoples of Africa.”

And so we see that the descendants of Ham, even those that later degenerated, preserved a common cultural heritage that points to their common origin.

How did their dispersion take place? Originally, it appears, Ham himself moved with his kin toward Mesopotamia, where his grandson later established the first dictatorship. It is probable that Ham likewise did not remain in one place, but that after the destruction of the tower (if he lived to see it) left with his son Mizraim (Osiris) for Egypt, which the psalms consequently call the land of Ham (Ps. 104:23). Tradition tells us that he met with his father Noah just before the latter died, and at that time they divided the land among the brothers. But all this occurred before the confusion of tongues. It is probably this period, when Ham and Mizraim ruled Egypt, that the priests later called the reign of the gods.

After the tongues were confused, individual tribes began spreading in northern and eastern Africa. As cave paintings attest, at that time an endless plain lay on the site of the Sahara, irrigated by numerous rivers, whose dried-up beds may be seen in the dessert to this day (for the earth had not yet dried out after the flood, and the winds brought more moisture from the sea). On this plain there grazed enormous herds of water buffalo, giraffes, dinosaurs, elephants, and ostriches. It was also home to lions and hippopotami, camels and hyenas. The entire plain was therefore a superb place for hunting, providing everything necessary for a life of plenty. And so it was that the Hamites dispersed throughout the entire northern part of the continent. Phut, for example, went as far as Mauritania, where he gave his name to a river. The life of these pioneers was an interesting one. Camps of Phutite scouts have been discovered in Tunis and Algeria. These hunted animals and especially loved to feed on mollusks. (Accumulations of shells have been found spanning hundreds of meters and up to 5 meters high.) A favorite amusement of the descendants of Phut

was to make ornaments out of ostrich eggs, which they covered with delicate carvings of thin lines depicting decorations of ostriches, water buffaloes, bulls, and gazelles. They would paint beautiful pictures on the smooth surfaces of cliffs. Even at that time the Phutites were distinguished by their skill at archery. But their bone tools still lacked refinement. Soon they and the descendants of Lehabim switched to animal husbandry (apparently when the main body of the tribe arrived to join the scouts). They shepherded herds of cows and bulls on the rich meadows. In addition, the Libyans and the Phutites farmed wheat, barley, and sorghum, their farmlands stretching to Senegal in the west.

The descendants of Anamim, after fleeing to the south, created the unique "Bambata" culture. They became hunters and used stone knives of proper laurel leaf shape, which were preceded by Mousterian knives, apparently perfected in the course of one or several generations. In addition to hunting, the Anamimites were avid carvers. But it was their pastel technique that reached the highest development. In a cave in Southern Rhodesia pastel pencils of ochre and hematite have been found. Upon the walls, extraordinarily elegant depictions of antelope are preserved. It should be noted that the cultural level of the early Anamimites remains to this day among the Bushmen. This may serve to disprove the theory that the Paleolithic was a tremendous era of development common to all of mankind (although most likely these settlements belonged to people who sought refuge from natural catastrophes in caves).

Another part of the descendants of Anamim, who lived in Nigeria, cultivated ground nuts, blue peas, yams, and pawpaws (a type of banana). We see that originally both farming and animal husbandry were typical of all the Hamites, and if not all of them pursued this occupation this was due to unfavorable environmental conditions.

Thus, in Africa the Hamites preferred not to create a prematurely developed civilization, but continued to live in tribes subject to elders and pagan priests.

The sole exception to this was the descendants of Mizraim. The Egyptians settled in tribal clans in various places of the Nile Valley, which serves as the beginning of the territorial divisions known as nomes. Later they established two states in the Nile Val-

ley, headed by Naphtuhim and Pathrusim. The capitol of southern Egypt was Nekheb (Heliopolis), and that of northern Egypt was Dep (Buto). Men, a descendant of Mizarim (or Osiris) and Pathrusim, united both kingdoms beneath a single crown and founded a new capitol—Memphis. The kings of Ancient Egypt decided to conquer Nubia (Sudan) and Sinai. By this means, and also thanks to the endless conflicts among the nomadic tribes, part of the nations migrated to the south.

The climate in Egypt was more temperate at the time. As French Egyptologist Christian Jacq writes, “In the era of Scorpion (the king of Upper Egypt prior to the reign of Men) the country was considerably more wooded than in our time.” And of this timber ships were built, which could tame the expanses of the sea, as Thor Heyerdahl proved. “Changes in the climate, of which we know little, also played a role in the changing landscape.” To us it appears obvious that these could only have been caused by the global catastrophes described in the Bible—the destruction of Sodom, due to which the Old Kingdom perished, and the plagues of Egypt, which destroyed the Middle Kingdom.

Today we have the chance to learn how Pathrusim and his descendants lived. They possessed superb stone axes, as well as bows and arrows. They made clay vessels, practiced weaving, fished, and hunted using the boomerang. The first Egyptians tilled the earth with mattocks (and not only stone mattocks—one iron mattock has also been found). They already had domesticated animals—goats, sheep, and cattle. A copper awl found in one of the graves tells us that metalworking was practiced. Art was also on a high level: elegant tulip-shaped chalices and vessels and spoons of elephant ivory have been discovered. Their clothing was of cloth and skins, and all loved to adorn themselves with shell beads and elephant ivory bracelets and rings. Even then women abused cosmetics (made from malachite). Their homes were built from reeds daubed with clay. The other descendants of Mizraim also shared this lifestyle. We see that no period of “savagery” is to be seen in their development, as one would expect if the theory of evolution were correct. They come to Egypt already possessing all the “advantages of civilization.” Considering that in the Old Kingdom electroplating technology was already in use (a toy in the form of a model glider has been found), we can

say that the Egyptians, unlike the other inhabitants of Africa, successfully preserved considerable knowledge and skills from the antediluvian world. It is important to note that at that time the religious ideas of the Egyptians were more advanced than they would later be: they did not place vessels for food in the graves along with their dead, being well aware that the soul has no need of it. By the end of this period, however, burial sites have been found with bodies wrapped in matting and bearing signs of attempted mummification—evidence of expectation of a bodily resurrection, based on God's promise to Noah.

It should be noted that in the Predynastic Period connections remained between Mesopotamia and Egypt—substantial proof of the biblical account that post-Flood civilization had a Babylonian ancestral homeland. Evidence of this is a knife handle of elephant ivory, found in Gebel el-Arak. "It is adorned with carving on both sides. On one side a man taming two lions is depicted, below whom there are several feline beasts. On the other a battle is shown. The warriors are armed with sticks. Furthermore, carved into the handle are watercraft, swimmers, and drowned people. Incredibly, the graphic style is not Egyptian. Before us we have a typical specimen of Mesopotamian workmanship. It may be that the cultural influence of Mesopotamia is also manifested in the enormous brick tombs from the First Dynasty, and in myths featuring fantastic beasts such as griffins."

One account described by Flavius Josephus may serve as an example of the interethnic encounters that led to tribal migration to uninhabited locales. In the early second millennium Ephraim (Ophren), son of Midian, son of Abraham by Keturah (Gen. 25:1–4), invaded Lybia from Arabia and conquered it, giving it his own name, from which the whole continent came to be called Africa. This apparently occurred in the reign of Amenemhet I, who waged war in those same regions. Considering that the descendants of Abraham were on good terms with the Egyptians, it may be supposed that this conquest did not occur without Egypt assisting, at least passively (for otherwise Ephraim would have had to conquer that kingdom). Naturally, a number of descendants of Phut and Ludim did not wish to yield to the authority of the Semites, and migrated deep into the plains. According to information from Josephus, Hercules waged war together with Ophren in Lybia when

he was battling Antaeus. This naturally raises certain questions. According to this account, Hercules married the daughter of Ephher, of whom he begat Diodorus, who in turn begat Sophon, king of the Berbers. The account that Ephher was joined in war by his brothers is more trustworthy.

The Ethiopian war waged by Moses particularly affected tribal migration. During it, Flavius relates, the tribes of Casluhim, Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim, and Caphthorim perished. Those that survived and did not wish to end up enslaved were naturally forced to migrate to the south or to the west. Thus Central and South Africa were settled and the Philistines appeared.

In addition to human battles, however, natural catastrophes also played an important role in tribal dispersion. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (in the late third century) led to the emergence of a gigantic rift stretching from the Taurus Mountains to Tanzania and to Lake Chad. This resulted in new mountain ridges and a sharp rise in volcanic activity. Naturally, the inhabitants of areas affected by this tragedy were forced to migrate to safer regions, although this meant changing their habitat for one less favorable. The catastrophe in the time of Exodus, when fire falling from heaven, a hurricane, an earthquake, and the appearance of new seas produced the Sahara and the Arabian Desert, forced the inhabitants (with limited exceptions) to relocate to the jungles or to congregate in oasis regions.

Chapter 9

A Few Words Concerning the Stone Age

Since antiquity there has existed a concept that in the course of its development mankind went through several developmental stages, corresponding to a series of metals. Hesiod wrote of the Golden, Silver, Bronze, and Iron Ages, which saw a degradation of humanity. Titus Lucretius employed a similar system, but he saw

this rather as man's progressive development from savagery to civilization. Modern times, having adopted the atheistic concept of Lucretius, adopted his theory of the world's eras along with it.

Here it should be noted that the concept of progress in the development of technology and spiritual life is not universal to all mankind. In paganism, on the contrary, what was ancient was universally recognized as better. For example, in ancient Rome a senator who rejected a new law would write, "I adhere to the old." Outside Revelation people adhered to the idea of an eternally rotating cosmos, which completely excluded the idea of progress. From the standpoint of this mythology, advancement and decline, progress and regression mutually compensate each other, so that for the most part nothing happens in history at all. The sole exception among these may be considered the faith of Israel, which asserted that time was linear and directed toward the True End, when the Supernatural and Eternal Creator Himself will enter into the world. Consequently, the faith in progress typical of certain later generations may have become universal specifically because it parasitically feeds off of biblical Revelation, while discarding its essence—the divine incarnation, without which all of human history is a chain of deaths and suicides. Consequently, like every hybrid phenomenon, this teaching proved unproductive, destructive, and short-lived.

If we examine human history, not proceeding from modern (self-contradictory and therefore invalid) views, but based on data concerning the actual beliefs of traditional societies regarding their past, we may conclude that the pattern the Bible presents coincides with them completely. Both paradigms assert man's initial perfection and his closeness to spiritual worlds; both refer to a series of spiritual and subsequently physical catastrophes after which man's quality of life degraded to a greater or lesser degree. Furthermore, this process did not take place at the same speed in different groups. Consequently, some remained more or less "civilized," while others descended into various levels of "savagery." This level was determined less by the knowledge they possessed than by the moral level of the majority in a given group. Today a similar situation is unfolding.

Having presented the sound teaching, let us now examine the evolutionary history of mankind.

The traditional picture of the prehistoric world may be described in the following pattern.

The Stone Age has three stages: the Paleolithic, the Mesolithic, and the Neolithic. Next follows the Eneolithic, when metal also came to be used (primarily bronze, but also gold and silver). This is then followed by the Bronze and Iron Ages.

The longest is held to be the Paleolithic, which from the evolutionist perspective encompasses nearly 99% of human history (1,300,000–10,000 BC). Ordinarily the dating of the Paleolithic is linked to ice ages and interglacial periods.

The second interglacial period (Mindel-Riss) coincides with the Chellean and Clactonian cultures. The third interglacial period (Riss) corresponds to the Acheulean culture. These periods are also called the Lower Paleolithic. Only shaped stones and traces of camps remain of this era. These artifacts are ascribed to various intermediate links between man and ape, although there is not one piece of evidence proving that these stones and fires belonged to these supposed beings.

The Middle Paleolithic corresponds to the third interglacial period and the beginning of the fourth glaciation (the Würm stage). It corresponds to the Mousterian culture. Here we find shaping not only of stone, but also of bone. Here dozens of Neanderthal burial sites are found—the remains of the owners of these artifacts.

The Upper Paleolithic corresponds to the last glaciation. The three cultures (Aurignacian, Solutrean, and Magdalenian) which in Europe correspond to this period in time belong to humans of the modern type (Cro-Magnon man). At this time not only superb tools but also wonderful cave paintings were created.

The Mesolithic is dated to the period following the end of the glaciation (10,000–6,000 BC). This was a period of cultural decline. But it was then that agriculture and animal husbandry appeared in Palestine.

The Neolithic (6,000–4,000 BC) is comprised of numerous different cultures; additionally, by this time nomadic existence and agriculture begin to appear, and early cultures surface.

Here it should be added that we have no evidence of what languages were spoken by the people who left us these artifacts, or of how their society was structured, or of how they dressed,

or of where they resided over the long term, or of whether they had families. All scholarly speculation on the matter is merely the product of the imagination, based on the data of modern ethnology, which says nothing about what primordial human social structure was like.

Now we must briefly analyze the evolutionist outline of world history.

The earliest remnants of human activity pertain to the Oldowian culture and are ascribed to *Australopithecus*. All the supposed ancestors of man are either fictitious (*Pithecanthropus*, *homo habilis*) or are apes (*Australopithecus*, *Ramapithecus*, *Sinanthropus*). Consequently, this culture cannot belong to them. This is the more obvious given that in practically the same stratum the skeleton of an ordinary man was discovered. But most important of all is that the Olduvai Gorge is part of the Jordan Rift Valley, formed not 3,000,000 years ago, but at the time when Sodom perished (about 2000 BC), as attested by the discovery of a city at the bottom of a deep part of the Dead Sea. Thus, the unfortunate apes thought to be our ancestors perished in the time of Abraham.

Not one burial site remains of the Lower Paleolithic cultures that followed, and we therefore have no data for sorting these cultures into separate eras. One might as well designate a "picnic culture," and use campfires and broken bottles to postulate a particular era of human development when people lived around campfires, but also molded glass bottles. Most likely the encampments of the Lower Paleolithic belong to groups of scouts or to outcasts who had fled from society.

The era of the Middle Paleolithic pertains to the Neanderthal, who comprises a perfectly ordinary human, deformed due to rickets or syphilis. Concerning this M. Baudin writes the following:

"Ivanhoe examines the evidence that the Neanderthals suffered from rickets. Here are the chief theses of his article:

"1. Rickets are caused by a vitamin D deficiency in the body. This vitamin is produced in the skin as a reaction to sunlight, or rather to the ultraviolet part of the spectrum. Foodstuffs such as fatty fish and egg yolk are rich in vitamin D, while animal fats and milk contain very little. In meat and vegetables it is practically absent.

"2. Typical Neanderthal characteristics are dependent on two factors:

"(a) geographical latitude—the further north the skull was found, the more marked its Neanderthal traits; the closer to the equator, the less noticeable they become;

"(b) the paleoclimate—skulls found in the same latitude differ strongly from each other depending on the climate in which the Neanderthals lived (those who lived at a colder time more strongly resemble Neanderthals than those who lived in warm periods);

"3. The numerous Neanderthal skulls and skeletons that have been studied present with typical signs of rickets: knock-knee deformity, oversize joints, curvature of the spine, a flat back of the skull, and several bone and tooth deformations. Furthermore, laboratory studies of cross sections of bones and teeth have shown a clear vitamin D deficiency. On top of this, it has long been noted that child Neanderthals—smaller copies of an adult Neanderthal—are unique for primates. ... Rickets are particularly aggressive in the first six months to two years of development. Judging by the skulls discovered, every child of the Neanderthals suffered from acute rickets.

"4. Cro-Magon man, who came after the Neanderthal, had a constant source of vitamin D, as attested by fishing gear discovered at encampments.

"From all this Ivanhoe concludes that 'the Neanderthals descended from a developed erect-walking (pre-Sapien) human, such as those found in Ehringsdorf, Fontéchevade, Rabat, and the like. Their bones were deformed in childhood by rickets, and as adults—by bone disease.'

"He holds that the cause of the vitamin D deficiency may have been:

"(a) an unsuitable diet—they consumed a large amount of meat, but nothing suggests that they ate fish or eggs;

"(b) insufficient exposure to ultraviolet rays—the cold, cloudy climate at northern latitudes limited access to sunlight. Additionally, the low temperatures compelled the Neanderthals to seek shelter in caves. Closer to the equator there was more light, but this was still not sufficient due to overpopulation or to the tradition of wearing a full veil."

J. Wright says, "In a society where nutrition is lacking, rickets and congenital syphilis exist side by side. Without employing modern serum serologic and radiographic methods, it is extremely hard to differentiate between them."

From these two documents it is plain that in Europe there existed a deformed type of *Homo Sapiens*: the Neanderthal. He suffered from improper diet and rickets and had indiscriminate sexual relations, due to which syphilis was a widespread phenomenon. This entire race vanished from the face of the earth, that modern man with his more highly developed culture might later come from the East to supplant him.

The Neanderthals were religious, however. Their burial sites attest to a belief in the afterlife and a hope of resurrection. They cared for the weaker members of society (as attested by discoveries of burial sites of the elderly and of people who had been ill for long periods during their life). Furthermore, they were musical (a bone flute belonging to them has been discovered), and possibly had a system of writing (a shovel bearing symbols resembling writing has been found). The media has reported accounts of the discovery of a Neanderthal wearing iron armor. Consequently, even at this early period man was man, with a culture that was quite developed. The discovery of Neanderthal skeletons in a cave on Mount Carmel may possibly attest that they were those very Horites and Rephaites described in the Bible.

The cultures of the Upper Paleolithic, the Mesolithic, and the Neolithic undoubtedly pertain to modern man. But we lack sufficient grounds to assert that these eras were consecutive. On the contrary, wherever history occurs, it appears from out of nowhere, already fully formed. For example, here is what evolutionist historians say of the cultural centers of the Ancient World: "Archaeologists have not discovered a single Paleolithic tool here (in Mesopotamia): they have only been found in the mountains bordering Mesopotamia." The most ancient settlements of Mesopotamia pertain to the period of transition from the Neolithic to the Eneolithic (the El-Obeid culture). Already animal husbandry, pottery, agriculture, and weaving are in evidence. The first pictographic inscriptions appear.

A similar picture awaits us in another ancient center of civilization. "Truly ancient people began to settle the Nile valley only

when they had already fully assimilated Neolithic technology and had begun transitioning to breeding domesticated animals and cultured plants.” Furthermore, Neolithic settlements (the so-called Tasian and Badarian cultures) are located far from the Nile. There is no documentation or evidence of a gradual formation of the Egyptian state. All that historians say of this is conjectured by analogy with other peoples without any evidence that everything did in fact occur in that manner. Conversely, when we find the Nile valley settled, we see that the Bronze Age had already begun, and that nation states existed (Upper and Lower Egypt).

In Palestine we find almost the same picture. To be sure, here there are also Paleolithic settlements, but they manifest no connection with Natufian culture. There are no grounds for thinking that the ancient agricultural cities did not exist simultaneously with the Paleolithic encampments. Even the stages of the late Stone Age rapidly pass from one to the next in these settlements, demonstrating rapid industrial changes that lasted years, not millennia. For example, in Jericho a settlement of light huts near a sanctuary pertaining to the Natufian culture suddenly gives way to a settlement from the late Neolithic.

It is essential that we say a few words about the very principle of dating based on the degree of tool sophistication. As L.N. Gumilev rightly notes, if St. Petersburg were to be excavated a thousand years from now, dozens of cultures would be found in it—cultures of chinaware, aluminum mugs, glass containers, etc. On these grounds future archaeologists will ascribe thousands of years of history to St. Petersburg instead of its actual 300 years. It should be noted that in all instances when historical evidence shows the actual duration that a people or a culture has existed, archaeologists come up with no such enormous durations. And no wonder. For as has repeatedly been shown, the chief tool of the archaeologists—the radionuclide method—is extraordinarily feeble and cannot provide objective dating. Among recent examples of this, it is worth noting that the crown of the Mount Saint Helens volcano, formed in 1986, has been dated using various radionuclide methods to 0.34–2.8 million years old.

The following facts are the best indicator of the unreliability of the traditional schematic. In the mid-19th century the tomb of St. Joshua the son of Nun was discovered (late 16th centu-

ry BC), in which were the knives with which that righteous man circumcised the Hebrews (Josh. 24:30, in the Septuagint translation). These “stone knives ... were declared similar to Stone Age implements (discovery of 1870). This collection included every type of stone implement without exception—a fact acknowledged by the British Science Association in Edinburgh in 1870. These implements, asserts the Abbé Richard, are identical to similar tools of the Miocene, Pleiocene, and Eocene.” In the opinion of Abbé Moigno, “The flint knives of Joshua son of Nun, whose era is positively known to us, are probably more ancient than the flint implements of Abbeville or Saint-Acheul.” Indeed, the use of stone implements may frequently be occasioned not so much by their possessors’ ignorance of metal as by their cult purpose. It appears that many Paleolithic implements, such as the “Acheul cleavers,” were specialized sacrificial knives, as demonstrated by P. Volkov.

Another fact disproving the opinion that the Stone Age preceded the Metal Age is the discovery of a mummified man (also known as Ötzi) who perished in the Alps. He died before being buried by a glacier. (Yet it is believed that the Alpine glaciers are the remnants of the Ice Age.) In his constitution the man discovered in no way differs from a modern European. He regularly cut his hair, wore an earring of polished stone, and on his chest there was a talisman with a string tassel. He was wearing a fur coat sewn from the skins of three types of animals. On his feet he wore leather gaiters. He was carrying a leather frame backpack, which contained a whole collection of tools: flint and stone implements, a bronze axe head set in a yew axe handle, flint-tipped arrows, and also a yew bow, a spare bowstring, and a portable first aid kit—mushrooms on a leather cord, which contained an antibiotic. He differed from modern man only in that his skull was larger than ours in size (like the Neanderthal), and that despite his age of 25–30 years he had not yet achieved physical maturity. It is known that the Neanderthals matured at approximately the age of 30–32—a fact that confirms the account of the book of Genesis (chapters 5–11) concerning the longevity of the first people. As the priest Timofei justifiably writes, “This ancient man’s selection of tools was interesting indeed. If out of the whole selection only the flint blades had been found, they would have been

ascribed to the Stone Age, and if only the bronze blades had been discovered—the Bronze Age. If only the bow had been found, it would have been dated to the Middle Ages, since the renowned English longbows were manufactured of the same yew wood in approximately the same way. But here all these accouterments are simultaneously found in the possession of a pre-Neanderthal man. This completely overturns the very principle of archaeological dating, the very division of time into the Stone, Bronze, and other ages.”¹²⁵ Similar instances occurred in other places, as well. According to the personal reports of archaeologists, discoveries of stone and bone implements continue right up to the early Middle Ages, which shows that the division into ages is entirely artificial. Just as today, throughout all historical eras highly developed civilizations have coexisted with tribes at a low level of development. Among recent discoveries, the following is of interest: “Using a sensitive mass spectrometer, chemist Richard Evershed of the University of Bristol studied shards of nearly 1,000 pots found at excavations of early human settlements throughout Britain. These fragments, ranging from 1,500 to 6,000 years old, pertain to the Neolithic, Bronze, and Iron ages. A few of these, including the most ancient, were found bearing remnants of milk fat. Consequently, already 6,000 years ago the most ancient inhabitants of the British Isles were engaged in dairy farming. ... Today chemists in cooperation with archaeologists intend to study ceramics found in southeastern Europe, Turkey, and the Near East. It is suspected that cattle were milked there thousands of years earlier.”¹²⁶ Here once again we see the borders of civilization rapidly descending ever lower.

Hegumen N. has made the interesting observation that the very concept of a “savage” is linked to the phenomenon of the vagabond lifestyle. In the West this phenomenon has been studied, and it was found that there is a particular type of person who, through improper spiritual life, has inwardly degraded to such a degree that he loses the ability to do anything constructive. These people are only capable of debauchery, drunkenness,

¹²⁵ Priest Timofei, *Pravoslavnoe mirovozzrenie i sovremennoe estestvoznaniye* [*The Orthodox Worldview and Modern Natural Science*].

¹²⁶ *Nauka i zhizn'*, N° 4, 2003.

and a parasitic lifestyle. Only extremely rarely can they be restored to a normal life. This is apparently how a number of “savage” peoples originated. Worshiping evil spirits led to the rapid degradation of particularly fervent pagans, so that they shifted to a consumerist attitude toward nature, while at the same time ascribing divine attributes to it. The numerous taboos imposed by the demons narrowed the sphere of human activity to an untenable degree. At the same time, only a very few of these prohibitions were of any actual benefit to human nature (these latter being rooted in the voice of the conscience). It is no wonder that these people, terrorized by the demons and corrupted, slid down to such an extremely low cultural level. For example, history tells us that a number of tribes that today are savage in the extreme were much more highly developed even comparatively recently. For instance, archaeologists attest that the Tasmanians, who did not even have fire, who did not know how to make fire and who vanished in the mid-nineteenth century, formerly employed it.

The same was true in antiquity. Simultaneously with the urban civilization of the Fertile Crescent described in the book of Job, others existed nearby—“they ... whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock. Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me, in whom old age was perished? For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste. Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat. They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief;) to dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks. Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together. They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth” (Job 30:1–8). Is this not a classic description of the life of “primitive man,” the contemporary of Egypt and Sumer?

But besides debauchery their descent into savagery was also caused by the cruel behavior of the rulers of the earth (Job 24:7–8), and by global natural catastrophes, from which men sought refuge in ravines and caves (Is. 2:19). These factors explain the degradation of a number of tribes. Imagine if any one of us were to find himself on an uninhabited island without any means of survival. We might be experts in high-precision technologies, but would

even encyclopedic knowledge be of any use to us if we lacked metals and tools? Would we not then be compelled to return to hunting, gathering, and the most primitive tools just in order to survive? Consequently, after the Flood, when all mineral deposits had been lost, along with many secrets due to an inability to practice them, we are moved to wonder rather that man so swiftly succeeded in creating the great civilizations of antiquity than that so many descended into savagery.

Chapter 10

The Rise of Paganism

“Idol worship is the greatest crime in the world, and the sole cause of the Last Judgment,” wrote Tertullian. We know that after the fall of the Tower the majority of nations plunged into the abyss of paganism. What was the reason for this terrible crime on the part of humanity? A detailed analysis of the spiritual causes of this event is given by the apostle Paul in the epistle to the Romans. We will cite these words and attempt to get to the root of this mutiny, especially since even today the world is committing the same crime as the contemporaries of Nimrod. “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Rom. 1:18).

Scattered across the face of the earth, the nations began to depart ever farther from the true faith in God the Creator. Although traces of the original revelation survive in nearly every nation, it is alloyed by numerous superstitions, errors, and absurdities. The reasons for this terrible spiritual catastrophe are described by the apostle Paul (Rom. 1:18–32). Though they had a knowledge of God both from tradition and from observing the ordered harmony in creation, men did not wish to render Him due glorification and refused to give thanks to Him. All their thoughts were of the earth, and they remembered God only on occasion. At all other times their thoughts were enslaved by vanities: there was not

even time to glance toward heaven, and all thought only of their earthly needs. "Oh, I have a family to feed; we don't have time to go to church"—so say the pagans of today. Then the mind of man begins to seek justification for his actions, and it begins to poison a man's heart, so that it forgets how to listen to the conscience, instead heeding its own lusts. In consequence of this darkening, man descends into madness. In order to somewhat placate the voice of God in their hearts, men began inventing counterfeits of their own. At first they worshiped the elements of the earth—the sun, the moon, the stars, the winds, the rocks, the seas. Then they began attributing magical powers to beasts and plants, and finally they reached the ultimate evil: they began worshipping idols depicting deified men, beasts, and monsters, and to believe that they were in fact God. Furthermore, there began the mass worship of the evil spirits behind this process of moral dissolution, and so it was that after the Flood magic, sorcery, astrology, and other black arts once again began to flourish. Demons came to dwell in the idols and performed false miracles in order to lead men as far from the Creator as possible. They established rituals that caused sin to increase in men, thereby drawing them still further under their own power.

In this manner the majority of people became pagans or idolaters, whose religion consists of worshipping creation instead of the Creator. To this day this false faith is adhered to by billions of people on our earth, including Hindus, Shamanists, Buddhists, and many others.

"For the devising of idols was the beginning of spiritual fornication, and the invention of them the corruption of life. For neither were they from the beginning, neither shall they be for ever. For by the vain glory of men they entered into the world, and therefore shall they come shortly to an end. For a father afflicted with untimely mourning, when he hath made an image of his child soon taken away, now honoured him as a god, which was then a dead man, and delivered to those that were under him ceremonies and sacrifices. Thus in process of time an ungodly custom grown strong was kept as a law, and graven images were worshipped by the commandments of kings. Whom men could not honour in presence, because they dwelt far off, they took the counterfeit of his visage from far, and made an express image

of a king whom they honoured, to the end that by this their forwardness they might flatter him that was absent, as if he were present. Also the singular diligence of the artificer did help to set forward the ignorant to more superstition. For he, peradventure willing to please one in authority, forced all his skill to make the resemblance of the best fashion. And so the multitude, allured by the grace of the work, took him now for a god, which a little before was but honoured. And this was an occasion to deceive the world: for men, serving either calamity or tyranny, did ascribe unto stones and stocks the incommunicable name. Moreover this was not enough for them, that they erred in the knowledge of God; but whereas they lived in the great war of ignorance, those so great plagues called they peace. For whilst they slew their children in sacrifices, or used secret ceremonies, or made revellings of strange rites; they kept neither lives nor marriages any longer undefiled: but either one slew another traiterously, or grieved him by adultery. So that there reigned in all men without exception blood, manslaughter, theft, and dissimulation, corruption, unfaithfulness, tumults, perjury, disquieting of good men, forgetfulness of good turns, defiling of souls, changing of kind, disorder in marriages, adultery, and shameless uncleanness. For the worshipping of idols not to be named is the beginning, the cause, and the end, of all evil. For either they are mad when they be merry, or prophesy lies, or live unjustly, or else lightly forswear themselves. For insomuch as their trust is in idols, which have no life; though they swear falsely, yet they look not to be hurt. Howbeit for both causes shall they be justly punished: both because they thought not well of God, giving heed unto idols, and also unjustly swore in deceit, despising holiness. For it is not the power of them by whom they swear: but it is the just vengeance of sinners, that punisheth always the offence of the ungodly" (Wisd. 14:12–31).

Many modern experts on religion, who insist that all religious traditions are one and of equal value, would do well to remember these words. We see that the Creator Himself is wrathful against those who adhere to strange creeds. He declares that there is no such thing as an honorable pagan. Their religion is the product of suppressing with untruth that truth which they know; consequently it is wickedness and falsehood. "It does not befit us to incur the curse of God for calling evil good" (cf. Is. 5:20).

“Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 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; so that they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:19–20). By these words the apostle accuses the heathen not merely of not having found the Savior, but of deliberately rejecting God, Whom they knew. In the words of St. Theophan the Recluse, “When a thing is before one’s eyes, it is compellingly beheld for as long as the eye remains open. So also God is compellingly beheld by the soul. The bodily eye may be closed, but the eye of the soul cannot be closed: it gazes continually. Such is the soul’s knowledge that God exists, that He created and upholds all things, and that His will, which is spoken in the conscience, must be fulfilled. ... The nations knew of God and of things divine not only from what was imprinted upon their souls, but also from that which God later particularly revealed, which was passed down in tradition from generation to generation. Over time the source of tradition is forgotten, and this knowledge merged with natural knowledge... But this is not all. What the soul says of God may pass unheard due to the noise of human busyness and cares. What was passed down by tradition from the face of God Himself can be somehow cut off or obscured in doubt. Consequently, that the reasonable things of God might not be made unclear among the nations, God opened before them the book of nature, which one cannot fail to read, for it is ever before one’s eyes, and in it He inscribed Himself and appeared before the gaze of all.”¹²⁷

Indeed, we see that practically all nations of the earth preserve a remembrance of the Sky God, Who is the Creator, the Source of moral laws and the Recompenser Who cannot be bribed. At the same time, according to renowned religious scholar Mircea Eliade, “It is typical of nearly all sky gods that they have no cult and especially no calendar of seasonal rituals.”¹²⁸ This fact clearly wit-

¹²⁷ St. Theophan the Recluse, *Poslanie svyatogo apostola Pavla k Rimlyanam, istolkovannoe svyatitelem Feofanom* [Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Romans, with an Explanation by St. Theophan]. Translated from the Russian by current translator.

¹²⁸ Mircea Eliade, *Ocherki sravnitel’nogo religiovedeniya* [Essays on Comparative Religious Studies].

nesses against those foolish people who assert that faith in the One God resulted from the later influence of the monarchy upon the religious life of mankind.

Furthermore, the apostle's words are also confirmed by the fact that many people came to the knowledge of God through contemplating the wisdom with which the universe is arranged. An example of this is the life of the holy great martyr Barbara, who learned of God by contemplating the beautiful star-studded sky from the top of the tower in which her father had imprisoned her. Indeed, St. Theophan correctly says that "universal consciousness and awareness explicitly confesses the omnipresence of God; that He exists of Himself, and that His nonexistence is impossible; and the rational mind, which seeks explanations for everything, can only rest when it arrives at the conclusion that God eternally exists. The sensible part of mankind has always rested and will always rest upon this conviction and belief. Only the mentally ill lose it, replacing it by weaving theories that never cease to amaze by their inconsistency and incommensurability with the matters which they are woven to explain. But such digressions from the common standard of belief and religious consciousness can in no way shake the truth expressed by this standard."

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not

convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. 1:21–32).

Thus the apostle Paul describes the spiritual roots of the origin and spread of paganism. This description gives a precise analysis of the human heart that apostatizes from God. We would do well to examine how this contagion developed, the more so since today alongside a renaissance of the ancient falsehood—worship of creation in place of the Creator—among Christians an incredible indifference to this monstrous contagion is emerging.

Many say that the pagan who worships other gods or idols may be saved if he follows the example of his ancestors, as long as he obeys the law of his conscience. These people do not even believe that idolatry is a fundamental perversion of the heart, which dooms a person to eternal torments together with the demons he worships. For one is the slave of whomever he serves. Every man who worships creation in place of the Creator truly abides in darkness, and as the demon said in the "Acts of the Apostle Bartholomew," "When men worship idols, we immediately receive power over them, and after their death we take them away with us to Gehenna." Spiritual practice shows that although the idols are nothing in and of themselves, they conceal real spirits who endow the statues with the power to work wonders, and thereby they enslave their devotees. As an example of this, the life of Gregory the Wonderworker mentions an incident when during a theatrical performance the pagans cried, "Zeus, come! Zeus, come!" And St. Gregory said bitterly, "What are you doing? He will come, you know." And so it occurred. Three days later a plague struck the city of Neocaesarea, and in each home, before the illness took hold, the people would see a black phantom entering through the door. As we see, the name of Zeus concealed a murderous demon. It is not by chance that the Lord calls the altar of Zeus in Pergamos the throne of Satan (Rev. 2:13). Interest-

ingly, a demon would also appear under the same name in far-off Russia. The life of the venerable Abramius of Rostov tells of the terrible idol of Veles that stood in the Chudsky district of Rostov, which struck all who passed by with a panic of terror if they did not offer sacrifices to him. The holy apostle John the Theologian appeared to the venerable one, gave him a reed, and instructed him to cast down the idol. St. Abramius obeyed the apostle, and when he struck the idol with the reed it turned to dust. The demon, compelled by the power of God, admitted that his name was Dius—that is, Zeus. This is why the absurd belief that the lifeless idols are gods is so persistent.

But let us return to the words of the apostle Paul, who described the process of apostasy. Concerning people who have come to know God, St. Theophan justly writes: “What have they learned? Not only that God exists, but also what He is—that He is the Creator; that He uphold all things and provides for all things; that He must be worshiped and pleased in all things, with a sense of duty to Him; and, finally, that after death there will follow judgment and recompense to all for all their deeds, both good and evil. These truths are imprinted upon the heart, and there is no nation that has not confessed them.” Indeed, practically all nations have a concept of the Source of the Universe (as we have seen above) and of the reality of recompense. This concept may be either highly developed, as with the Egyptians and the Chinese, or barely noticeable, as with animist nations (such as the Papuan savages). But everywhere there may be discerned an acknowledgment of the difference between the posthumous fate of men depending on their righteousness or sinfulness.

Contrary to the widespread preconception that to know means to do, the pagans did not glorify Him as God, nor did they give thanks to Him. “The first stage of falling from this state is forgetfulness of God, when the all-bright and all-wondrous face of the Godhead disappears from one’s consciousness. God is forgotten, and the thought of Him rarely comes to mind. Together with this, religious feeling for God grows cold, and the fear of God evaporates. God becomes something conceptual and ceases to shape all the inner movements of a man. The heart no longer glorifies and give thanks to God, although the tongue reads doxology and thanksgiving. Pleasing God ceases to be the chief purpose in life:

in its place other goals appear, which occupy a man entirely. God still exists, but He is no longer glorified or thanked as God.”¹²⁹ So writes St. Theophan. The same occurs today. For example, it is this conviction that is the chief power of the soul for the majority of Russians who assert that “I have God in my heart, but I live for myself”—(or “my children,” or “my country,” or “my job”—there are various possibilities)—“and you can stop bothering me with your churches.” In studying the religious life of mankind we usually encounter this stage of apostasy. African tribes, for instance, usually remember the Creator, but they do not worship Him. For example, the chief god of the Bantu Herero tribe from Southwest Africa is known as Ndjambi. He withdrew to heaven, leaving the lower deities to care for mankind, and for this reason they do not worship him. “Why offer sacrifices to Him?” one native observed. “We need not fear him, for he does us no harm, unlike the spirits of our dead.” Sometimes, to be sure, the Herero offer up prayers to Him, but only when unexpected success befalls them. Similar ideas are common to a great many primitive tribes. “God is too kind. He does nothing bad to us. So let’s stop revering Him!” This logic is typical of nearly the majority of uncultured nations on the planet. But let us contemplate its spiritual meaning. What this means is that for these people religion is merely a form of fear and an attempt to pacify a hostile force of some sort. Here there is clearly no room for love, for honor, or for gratitude—nothing but bare self-serving egoism in religious garb! Indeed, apostasy began specifically with this. Man grew tired of living with God. And as one poet of the Fang people (in equatorial Africa) sings, “God is above, man is below. God is God, man is man. Each in his house, each in his habitation.” The result is a terrible emptiness spawned of pridefulness, which demands to immediately be filled.

“They became vain in their imaginations” [Rom. 1:21].

“This is the second stage of the fall, which occurs along with the first, either as its result or as its cause. They engender one another and are mutually supportive. Becoming vain in imaginations should be understood as it is represented by Solomon in Ecclesiastes—as giving oneself over to cares for the good things of this earth, which do not however provide prosperity, but only

¹²⁹ St. Theophan the Recluse, *Explanation of the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 96.

use it to lure people, and always deceive all hopes. Having been seduced from God, men turn to created things, and in them they wish to find what God alone can give: they wish to achieve their own prosperity without God, on their own, by their own efforts, and with the resources at their disposal. This is all they care for, all they think about, the object of all their plans and goals in life—that is, how to achieve earthly happiness and enjoy sensual good things. Their relationship with God is maintained only outwardly; works of piety are performed only out of custom, without involving not only the heart, but even the thoughts. All is now earth, earth, earth. And the fact that they continually find themselves deceived in no way brings them to reason. The bustle of vanity tirelessly continues in the vain hope that perhaps we will yet achieve what we seek. What excuse can there be for this behavior?!”¹³⁰ And indeed, the more civilized the people, and the more proud they are of the fruits of their own hands, the more foolish their religion, the farther they are from happiness, and the more hideous the crimes that occur among them. And here it is not material things that are the cause, but how man regards them. Great Christian countries have also achieved the heights of culture, yet this did not distance them from God, for the people did not worship the work of their hands.

Interestingly, this kind of apostasy is clearly depicted in the works of the Veda. At first the chief personages of the Hindu pantheon are Varun and Indra. The former is called the Creator of heaven and earth, lord of the elements, omniscient, omnipotent, righteous, beyond bribes, who sends down pangs of conscience upon sinners, and only forgives when they repent. But the god Indra is a god of strength, shameless, wanton, and wrathful, who only descends when a person bribes him to do so. And so it is that “in the later parts of the Veda the number of hymns and prayers to Indra significantly exceed the number of hymns to Varun. ... The hymns to Indra became increasingly colorful and enthusiastic, while the image of Varun grows dim. Finally, in the Atharvaveda (20.106) Varun is depicted as worshiping Indra.” The reason for this was that Indra, the “god of convenience” and patron of

¹³⁰ St. Theophan the Recluse, *Explanation of the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 96.

conquerors, was needed “to maintain the military morale of the army,” while Varun, the god of righteousness, proved a stranger to the ungodly.

“And their foolish heart was darkened” [Rom. 1:21].

“The third stage of the fall is the fruit of the first two: the darkening of the inner man. The heart is the inner man, or the spirit, where self-identification, the conscience, and the idea of God with a sense of complete dependence on Him, and all of spiritual life are of eternal value. As the thoughts become ‘vanitized,’ the whole man becomes darkened. Rules for living are established that are incompatible with the conscience, and so the conscience is suppressed, the fear of God abates, and one is no longer occupied with thoughts of God. Along with this, sensible thoughts of God are forgotten and darken, while the true concepts of man himself, his significance and purposes, become obscured. Absolute darkness reigns within. Nor does the ‘vanitized’ man care to turn his gaze there—it is time-consuming and unpleasant. He is wholly external.”¹³¹

Indeed, we see that man goes on to establish unlawful laws. Examples abound among the pagans, from ritual prostitution and compulsory fornication all the way to cannibalism. And people start to justify all this in the name of religion! How often the ignorant people of our day say that all religions teach what is good. But such is not at all the case. For Christianity alone has reunited holiness and sinlessness. Conversely, the pagans could (and did) find grounds for their every vice in the deeds of their gods, for which they were rightly censured by the apologetes and martyrs.

“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” [Rom. 1:22].

“The fourth degree of the fall is to give this entire perverse manner of living a rational principle, and to establish it as the only fitting standard of life, one inherent in man. This is the height of madness; but in their thinking it is the height of wisdom. This is how these people identify themselves, and by this title they distinguish their behaviors and the views compiled based on them.

¹³¹ St. Theophan the Recluse, *Explanation of the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 96.

Self-opinion and self-reliance are the distinguishing traits of this wisdom: it trusts to itself for all things, to its means and its abilities.”¹³²

This is a trait of all modern and ancient anthropocentric philosophies. “Man is the measure of all things,” said Protagoras. “No one will give us deliverance—neither God, nor tsar, nor hero; we will achieve deliverance by our own hands alone,” sing the communists. This ideology of humanism begins by exalting man and inevitably ends by destroying him, both physically and spiritually. At their root, all false religions prove to be specifically man-worship and, consequently, manslaughter. The reason is that a person becomes himself only in God and with God. Without His almighty right hand he returns to his initial nonexistence, and it is the faithfulness of God that prevents him from dissolving into this.

“And [they] changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things” [Rom. 1:23].

This is the lamentable result of falsehood: idolatry. “Instead of the living, true God they began to honor idols in the form of men and other creatures as god. It is this, namely, that comprised their disfiguration. In other respects they had no little wisdom, as shown by the remnants of the cities of Nineveh, Thebes, and others; but with respect to religion they proved completely deformed [madmen—*Auth.*]. And wisdom in the former respect not only does not gloss over or lessen their deformation in the latter, but on the contrary it adds to it the weight of inexcusable guilt for perverting the truth. There had been no exaltation of themselves by the measure of their own wisdom; but here that measure is applied to a matter of extreme absurdity, inconsistent in everything, irrational to the utmost degree.”¹³³ And indeed, what madness, what militant foolishness, what a terrible darkening of the intellect and what insanity is it to think that an idol made with your own two hands is God?! And not just an attractive figurine, but a deformed monster, a sculpture of a fly, a snake, or a crocodile, that can neither think, nor talk, nor walk?! Yet this

¹³² St. Theophan the Recluse, *Explanation of the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 96.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

is exactly what the pagans did. In the words of the Soviet historian V. Belyavsky, "For the pagans, including the Babylonians, god was envisioned not as an incorporeal, irrational spirit, but in the form of a real object—an idol, a statue of wood, stone, or metal. To the idol were attributed all the qualities that, in the opinion of the pagans, a god created in the image and likeness of the people who worshiped it ought to have. It had to be given food and drink, to be clothed, and to be entertained. It required a habitation, women, and boys. It could be moved to wrath or pacified, deceived or robbed. It could also be bargained with. The pagan god required sacrificial offerings of the fruits of the earth, cattle, personal items, valuables, and—in hoary antiquity—people. ... The pagan god was of a local nature. It was closely linked to a particular community and was honored only in that community. It could perish along with the community, but it could also be taken captive. ... The Babylonian god Bel-Marduk spent 21 years in Assyrian captivity."¹³⁴

How could all this have happened? As we have already said, the source of this error is the devil. "Without the involvement of this sagacious worker of evil it is impossible to explain the origin of idolatry. The preparation, how men fell away from God into selfhood and sensuality, and began to live in forgetfulness of God, as though there were no God, can also be explained by the development of a preceding sinfulness, which the father of sin merely guided, fanning its flames; but how men began to deify lifeless objects and idols can be explained by nothing other than the instigation of the devil. It was like this: man began to forget about God, and became consumed in vanities; his heart darkened, and his sound concepts of God and the things of God grew dim; all his attention and cares were turned towards earthly, everyday things. But the fact that God exists and that He must be honored could not be driven from his consciousness. This idea returned, but it received no attention. Along with the desensitization and corporealization of the senses and dispositions, this idea itself became desensitized and corporealized. Given this disposition, the question would arise: what is God? It will astound with its

¹³⁴ V. A. Belyavskiy, *Vavilon legendarnyy i Vavilon istoricheskiy* [*The Legendary Babylon and the Historical Babylon*].

unexpectedness, but it will demand a solution. It came, and they decided: here are your gods! The sun, the stars, animals, a person. Why did they not return to what tradition had given? The enemy hid that side of the matter and pushed them toward this one. They agreed to accept it because this represented the most convenient means of fulfilling what was demanded by the awareness of an obligatory relationship with God: there is the idol; just burn some incense, and be done! All is completed. Conversely, for the God to whom tradition attested, this could not have been sufficient.”¹³⁵

Historically, this falling away occurred as follows. First, veneration of the Sky God was replaced with veneration of the skies themselves and the celestial bodies that fill them. This was particularly facilitated by cosmic catastrophes that took place as astounded humankind looked on. And the terrifying pictures that the demons presented to men, such as modern UFOs, inclined them to demon worship. Almost simultaneously men began venerating the earth, which was envisioned as the great mother goddess. The earth was perceived as an enormous idol, a living body of sorts, which had to be pacified in order to receive fertility. Statues of this goddess fill the planet. They are noted for the hypertrophied depiction of the breast and the stomach. Originally these idols represented the daughter of the antediluvian descendant of Cain and Lamech, Noema, the inventor of prostitution. It was this link between fornication and fertility that led to her being identified with Mother Earth.

Scripture says the following of those who worship the forces of nature: “Surely vain are all men by nature, who are ignorant of God, and could not out of the good things that are seen know him that is: neither by considering the works did they acknowledge the workmaster; but deemed either fire, or wind, or the swift air, or the circle of the stars, or the violent water, or the lights of heaven, to be the gods which govern the world. With whose beauty if they being delighted took them to be gods; let them know how much better the Lord of them is: for the first author of beauty hath created them. But if they were astonished at their power and virtue, let them understand by them, how much

¹³⁵ St. Theophan the Recluse, *Explanation of the Epistle to the Romans*.

mightier he is that made them. For by the greatness and beauty of the creatures proportionably the maker of them is seen. But yet for this they are the less to be blamed: for they peradventure err, seeking God, and desirous to find him. For being conversant in his works they search him diligently, and believe their sight: because the things are beautiful that are seen. Howbeit neither are they to be pardoned. For if they were able to know so much, that they could aim at the world; how did they not sooner find out the Lord thereof?" (Wisd. 13:1–9).

This is how men fell away from their Creator and converted to worshipping the elements of the world. To this day, in the mind of the masses, one of the most widespread forms of paganism is astrology, which subjects a man to the whirlwind of the elements of this world. Closely linked to it is the belief that a man's life is determined by the name he is given or by social circumstances: every person has his personal stone, tree, animal, or generational curse. All this is needed so that man might forget his great gift of freedom, as well as the Almighty and Righteous Judge Who keeps watch over the universe.

Chapter 11

Eber; the Church Before Abraham

“**A**nd these are the generations of Sem: and Sem was a hundred years old when he begot Arphaxad, the second year after the flood. And Sem lived, after he had begotten Arphaxad, five hundred years, and begot sons and daughters, and died. And Arphaxad lived a hundred and thirty-five years, and begot Cainan. And Arphaxad lived after he had begotten Cainan, four hundred years, and begot sons and daughters, and died. And Cainan lived a hundred and thirty years and begot Sala; and Canaan lived after he had begotten Sala, three hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters, and died. And Sala lived an hundred and thirty years, and begot Heber. And Sala lived after he had begotten Heber, three hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters, and died. And Heber lived an hundred and

thirty-four years, and begot Phaleg. And Heber lived after he had begotten Phaleg two hundred and seventy years, and begot sons and daughters, and died. And Phaleg lived and hundred and thirty years, and begot Ragau. And Phaleg lived after he had begotten Ragau, two hundred and nine years, and begot sons and daughters, and died. And Ragau lived and hundred thirty and two years, and begot Seruch. And Raau lived after he had begotten Seruch, two hundred and seven years, and begot sons and daughters, and died. And Seruch lived a hundred and thirty years, and begot Nachor. And Seruch lived after he had begotten Nachor, two hundred years, and begot sons and daughters, and died. And Nachor lived a hundred and seventy-nine years, and begot Tharrha. And Nachor lived after he had begotten Tharrha, an hundred and twenty-five years, and begot sons and daughters, and he died. And Tharrha lived seventy years, and begot Abram, and Nachor, and Arrhan. And these are the generations of Tharrha. Tharrha begot Abram and Nachor, and Arrhan; and Arrhan begot Lot. And Arrhan died in the presence of Tharrha his father, in the land in which he was born, in the country of the Chaldees. And Abram and Nachor took to themselves wives, the name of the wife of Abram was Sara, and the name of the wife of Nachor, Malcha, daughter of Arrhan, and he was the father of Malcha, the father of Jescha. And Sara was barren, and did not bear children. And Tharrha took Abram his son, and Lot the son Arrhan, the son of his son, and Sara his daughter-in-law, the wife of Abram his son, and led them forth out of the land of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Chanaan, and they came as far as Charrhan, and he dwelt there. And all the days of Tharrha in the land of Charrhan were two hundred and five years, and Tharrha died in Charrhan” (Gen. 11:10–32 LXX).

The Church is eternal. She is as beautiful as the sun, and as terrible as regiments bearing standards. But in her history there have been times when it seemed she was on the brink of disappearing. So it was in the time that followed the collapse of the great Tower. Yes, those faithful to God formally remained descendants of Eber, but among them there spread the worship of creation instead of the Creator. As Joshua said, “Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other

gods" (Josh. 24:2). The venerable John of Damascus asserted that this began with Serug, the grandfather of Abraham. As in other times, however, God preserved for Himself a remnant with which He desired to be on the day of Judgment. I think this remnant may be found in the history of any one of the primal nations. For example, among the Canaanites there lived Melchizedek, a man faithful to God, who was above even Abraham. The Idumeans produced one of the greatest righteous men of all, Job (though he was of course the fifth from Abraham). The ancient Aryan *ri-shi* (wise men), whose hymn may be found (in distorted form) in the Rigveda, worshiped Djarushpitar, the good heavenly Father; the ancestors of the Santans revered the true God and Creator; the hymns of Ugarit tell of the veneration of El, the one God, whom Baal had overthrown in the minds of men. When reading Sumerian texts we see that there existed a concept of two types of people who communed with otherworldly forces: some entered this state with the help of orgiastic cults and magic, while others (such as Atrahasis of Babylon) did so by means of prayers and wisdom. The former became the founders of paganism, while the latter served as a pledge that demon-worship would not last forever. I think the most terrible thing of all was when these latter ones fell. From the beginning, sorcerers were men of flesh and blood, carried away by the lusts of the flesh, power, and a terrible attraction to things supernatural for their own sake. But the righteous ones who went along with them, according to the apostle, "changed the truth of God into a lie" (Rom. 1:25), and their sin is incomparably greater.

At the same time, we may be certain that even in those days God preserved for Himself a remnant. Scripture accurately shows us the sacred chain by which the original Tradition of God was handed down to Abraham, the father of all believers.

As St. Demetrius of Rostov said, "Concerning the forefathers of Christ who descended from the tribe of Seth and lived up until the flood, there is no doubt that all of them were just and holy. But concerning those who are mentioned by name after the flood, from Noah to Abraham, we cannot say that all of them were righteous, except for Shem and Eber. ... Possibly only those who were born in the days of Noah—that is, Arphaxad, Cainan, and Salah—lived as righteous men. Born before the death

of Noah, they beheld Noah's God-pleasing life and heard righteous words from his own lips, instructing them in how to please God. Children benefit greatly from their fathers' virtuous life and words of instruction, especially those of a man so great in the virtues as was the God-pleaser Noah, at whose presence even the savage beasts on the ship trembled and grew meek. How much more ought his children and grandchildren to fear him! Nor did they dare to commit any evil deed during his life. After his death, however, only his grandson Eber is called good, while of the rest nothing is known."¹³⁶

Let us attempt to relate the history of the Church at that dread "time of desolation" (as the Hebrew commentators call it) based on the data afforded us by Holy Scripture and the traditions that survive from those times.

The first of this glorious series of ancestors of the Lord according to the flesh, it must be supposed, was Shem, the son of Noah, born one hundred years before the flood, who outlived his father by 250 years.

Before his death, as Georgy Kendrin, the venerable Nestor the Chronicler, and St. Demetrius of Rostov relate, Noah gathered his three sons and divided the earth among them. To Shem he gave Asia and the most valuable portion thereof—Palestine; to Japheth—Europe; and to Ham—Africa, so that each of them might inhabit them together with their descendants. He likewise commanded that none of them leave his portion, and that they be content with their inheritance. Through this law, love, peace, and accord ought to have reigned among them. This law he wrote, and gave it to Shem as the elder brother. He likewise gathered all his descendants and taught them to venerate God the Creator, to believe in Him and to serve Him, doing good works, and threatened them with divine retribution if they should do evil. Traditions concerning this event are preserved among practically all the nations of the earth, each linking the chief rules of human coexistence with the name of the man who survived the Flood. For example, the Indians tell of the Laws of Manu, the Sumeri-

¹³⁶ St. Demetrius of Rostov, *Letopis', povestvuyushchaya o deyaniiakh ot nachala mirobytiya do Rozhdestva Khristova* [A Chronicle Recounting the Deeds from the Beginning of the World to the Nativity of Christ] (Rus. ed.). Translated from the Russian by current translator.

ans recount the testament of Unapishtim, and the Greeks tell of the laws of Deucalion. The Jews had a teaching on the Laws of Noah, by observing which a gentile might enter the kingdom of God. Their chief import lay in prohibiting idolatry, all its associated rituals, fornication, incest, and murder. In the Church these laws were ratified at the Apostolic Council in AD 50: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication, and that ye do not unto others what ye would not have done unto yourselves" (cf. Acts 15:28–29).

After this, having prayed, Noah surrendered his spirit into the hands of God and departed to Sheol to await the time of redemption. Many millennia later, his Divine Descendant came to hades in order to give eternal repose to him who was named "repose." As the venerable Ephraim the Syrian marvelously describes it, "He descends into hades, desiring to see the righteous ones who fell asleep in their labors, and upon each of them His gaze pauses, like unto a king who at noonday surveys the hosts of his warriors as they repose in slumber. ... He beholds Noah, adorned with righteousness. He beholds Shem and Japheth, adorned with reverence for their father. ... He beholds every righteous one, and gazes upon every prophet. He proclaims: 'Behold, it is I,' and the divine hosts are roused." Following the Divine Redeemer, together with the whole army of the saved Noah enters into paradise restored, there to be reunited both with his great-grandfather Enoch and with his righteous descendants, of whom the justified thief became the first. And now the Church, the New Ark, sings praises to her great saint:

"Thy memory, O blessed Noah, pourest forth the wine of adoration upon those who honor thee, ever gladdening the souls and hearts of those who in purity bless thine honorable life and thy divine commonwealth."

The exact place where the holy body of Noah is buried is unknown, but there is a tradition that, together with his son Shem, he was one of the saints who arose on Great Friday and appeared in Jerusalem (Mt. 27:52–53).

After the repose of the great patriarch, who in himself had united two worlds—the pre-Flood and the post-Flood—mankind

gradually began to degrade. People descended ever further into pursuing the pleasures of the flesh, which was visibly manifested in the migration of the descendants of Shem.

Recent archaeological discoveries permit us to trace the geography of the movements of Shem's descendants. This is possible based on the fact that the cities founded by the ancestors of Christ bear their names. For example, Arphaxad founded the city of Arraphe (modern Kirkuk), located in the mountains to the east of the Tigris River. Up until Eber and his son Peleg there are no cities named in honor of the ancestors of Abraham, which apparently indicates that they resided permanently in the foothills of Iran near Arraphe. There Cainan was born, whose name means "acquisition" (a forebear of the tribe of the Kenites, allies of the Hebrews) in the year 2399 from the creation of the world, and his son Salah in 2529. The name of the latter means "messenger" or "exile." Apparently his father (or Noah himself) prophetically foretold that he would leave Armenia and begin to settle the earth. Later, 47 years after the death of Noah, this prophecy was fulfilled. Arphaxad and his grandfather migrated to Mesopotamia. Salah may possibly have been his scout. When they were crossing the Tigris River (in the year 2659 from the creation of the world), a son was born to Salah. "Arphaxad gave the infant, his grandson, the name Eber, which means 'crossing,' since he was born during the crossing. It was from this Eber that the Hebrews descended." Thus, the word *Hebrew* literally means "crosser of the river." The profound meaning of this name is apparent. For a crossing is a symbol of flight from the bondage of sin to the freedom of children of God. It is a sign of the sacrament of holy baptism. Consequently, it is clear that today the only true Hebrews are the Orthodox Christians, who have been freed from slavery to corruption by the Blood of the Passover Lamb, who are anointed by the Holy Spirit, while those who falsely call themselves Hebrews are not actually Hebrews at all. They are the opposite of their ancestor according to the flesh in every way. Whereas Eber refused to build the Tower, his descendants lead the process of its restoration. Whereas he preserved the language of communion with God, for he lived by prayer, his descendants declare that "it is hard to pray after the Holocaust" (the destruction of the Jews by the Nazis). Whereas he crossed the river and

was justified by his faith, the false Hebrews, refusing to acknowledge the Messiah Who had come and receive holy baptism, lose their right to that glorious name. For according to the flesh it is not only the twelve tribes that may be called Hebrews, but also many Arabian tribes, the Idumeans, the inhabitants of Jordania, a number of Indian tribes (the Dravidians), and even the Gypsies and the Spartans (1 Macc. 12:21).

And so our path has led us to the great insurrection at the foot of the accursed Tower. Two people who then lived show us that enormous abyss that makes its lair in man's heart. Man can become magnificent, like Eber, or horrible, like Nimrod. Of the latter we have already had occasion to speak; it is now time we lauded the former. Imagine the effect on a person when he is opposed not only by his family or his people, but by all of mankind. Supernatural power is needed to withstand the onslaught of society's contempt, which Eber suffered at the hands of the mob of Nimrod's adepts, maddened in their enthusiasm. In his Catechism, St. Demetrius of Rostov marvels that the majority followed after the black foe of God instead of the righteous one, and in this he sees a manifestation of the original sin that depraves our nature. Indeed, to this day "the masses" are far more ready to follow one who summons them to acts of evil than to follow the quiet voice of truth. And so it was that when Nimrod was conducting his propaganda for a global plan of rebellion against the Creator, Eber remained outside the mindless undertaking. One can only imagine how much abuse and mockery he had to endure when his calls to repentance became an object of ridicule. But on the terrible night of the destruction of the Tower it turned out that only Eber had retained the language that men had spoken in paradise. (It is probable, of course, that by that time this language too had degraded, like everything else that there is in human nature.) As St. John Chrysostom said, "Eber himself was left with the same language, that this might serve as a clear sign of division." A similar opinion was held by St. Philaret of Moscow and St. Demetrius of Rostov. But of this we will speak later, in a chapter devoted to the confounding of the tongues.

In the self-same year of the destruction of the Tower (2793 from the creation of the world), a son was born to Eber, whom he named Peleg, which means "division": in his name the terrible ca-

tastrophe of the confounding of the tongues was imprinted. After this blow, man's lifetime became sharply reduced (by half). Reductions of man's lifespan also occurred after other cataclysms; this was a sign of God's wrath against sinful mankind.

Peleg founded a city located in the middle Euphrates river valley and mentioned in the documents of Mari. The descendants of his brother Joktan settled Arabia.

A son of Peleg, Reu (born in the year 2923—in the Hebrew his name means “friend,” apparently of God), founded the city of Rachila, not far from the city of Peleg, and gave his name to an island on the Euphrates south of the city of Anata, which the Akkadians called Ra'ilu. The name of Reu is encountered in Akkadian inscriptions. Possibly he also founded the city of Ragi in Media, which is mentioned in the book of Judith (1:6). In the city of Rachila (in 3055) he begat Serug, to whom he gave a name that signified “he who turns” (or “stronghold”). According to a Hebrew tradition, Reu gave his son this name prophetically, knowing that he would turn to sin.

Unfortunately, Serug apparently misused the powers with which the Creator had endowed him, and like the Chaldeans he began to think that his power was his god (Hab. 1:11). He was the first of the chosen tribe to begin to make idols, and he introduced debauchery into the original Tradition. Apparently he received this from his mother Ora, daughter of Ur, son of Kesed, a Chaldean.

As the venerable John of Damascus says, his idols as yet were not tridimensional, but were painted or depicted in relief. Serug began to make these idols and sell them to others, making his living in this way. He not only seduced others, but also began to venerate them himself. Serug was also the first astrologer among the chosen race. Serug founded the city of Saruga, which lay between Haran and Karsimish.

Nahor (“fighter”) was born in 3185. Tradition does not link him with any particular crimes or the development of idolatry, of which he was however an adherent. He may possibly have achieved renown as a talented military commander, “courageously defending the interests of his race against the onslaught of neighboring tribes.” Like his ancestors, he too founded a city, to which Abraham later sent his servant Eleazer (Gen. 24:10). This set-

tlement is mentioned in the documents of the kingdom of Mari and in Assyrian inscriptions, and is called Nakhuru, or Til Nakhiri. It was located not far from Haran.

There also the city of Farah was built nearby (to the Assyrians, Turakhu, and to the Akkadians, Turakhi), founded by a son of Nachor, Terah (Farah), born in 3264. His name means “moon” or “to convert,” “to migrate,” “to depart.” The first meaning is linked to the idolatrous cult of the luminary of the night, which was widespread in Haran, while the second foretold his fate. According to Hebrew tradition, the year he was born countless flocks of ravens pecked up the crop of Nachor in Ur, and so it was that the idea of abandoning his own land occurred to him. Here we see the hand of Providence, which both punishes apostates and inspires them with ideas that will later be realized in their repentant descendants. Terah began this physical exodus together with his son Abraham, but only the one who had not bowed down to idols—the father of all believers—was able to keep the spiritual Passover.

There are many traditions surrounding Terah. St. John of Damascus says that Terah was the first to begin producing sculpted idols, thereby preparing the way for the fall of mankind. It is also said that he was the head of Nimrod’s royal army (which is chronologically impossible, unless the latter is understood to mean his successor, the king of Mesopotamia). Incidentally, it is possible that here we see the vestiges of the cult of Nimrod, which was practiced in the temple of Sin in Haran. Furthermore, based on the inscriptions, this tyrant was called “the prince of the people of Haran.” Terah took to wife a Chaldean named Amathlai (or Jessica), and of her he begat three sons. When the last was born—Abraham—a comet appeared in the sky, which the astrologers interpreted as a sign of the birth of an emperor. Nimrod attempted to slay the newborn, but the latter was miraculously delivered. This tyrant was most likely the first ruler of all Mesopotamia after Nimrod—Sargon the Great. He was the son of a temple harlot. In childhood an attempt was made on his life. Then, with the help of ordinary community members and soldiers, Sargon came to power and conducted a series of expansionist operations. He conquered Syria, Sumer, and Elam. It is no surprise that in the conquered countries a regime of terror was introduced.

Terah, has been said, was the first to leave Ur, and he migrated to Haran. According to Flavius Josephus, this occurred due to Terah's sorrow after the death of his son Haran, who perished in a temple fire, into which he rushed to save the idols. Here we see the reason why Terah was not vouchsafed to settle in the Holy Land. For we cannot come to God solely that He might assuage our sorrow, if this coming is not joined to repentance. This is why Scripture tells of his death in Haran, showing that God separated the servant of idols from his righteous descendant: he had proven unworthy to share his sacred sojourn.

Thus, we see that, even after the Flood, the process of division in mankind continued, into those who loved God to the point of self-disdain and those who loved themselves to the point of hatred for God. As before the Flood, unfortunately the Church found itself on the brink of vanishing because the lovers of God had desired to become fellows of the lovers of the world. And had not these two loving wills met—that of God and that of Abraham—the history of the world might have ended then and there.

In concluding this chapter, before our eyes let the marvelous figure of that ancient Church appear. Beneath the open sky, upon stone altars (first erected by Noah), in mysterious silence the first-born son offers sacrifice to Almighty God. He is clothed in special sacred vesture, harking back to the coats that the Lord laid upon Adam. Around him stands his entire generation, the inhabitants of the recently founded young cities. Then, partaking of the sacrificial meal, the people sing a hymn of the Creation of the world and of the Great Flood, of the Fall into Sin and of the Tower, in the language that man had spoken from the beginning. And always there one could encounter an elder who could recount his personal meeting either with Noah or with his sons and grandsons. This was facilitated by the gift of longevity, which made it possible to deliver the story of the dawn of the world to the great patriarchs of the Hebrew nation. For from Adam to Abraham there are only seven who participated in relaying revelation. In the south and the north at that time the civilizations of Sumer and Akkad are being built, in which man increasingly comes to resemble an ant, while in central Mesopotamia, at the periphery of the kingdoms, the possibility for true worship of God is preserved.

Part VIII

THE CHURCH OF THE PATRIARCHS



Chapter 1

The Reality of the Patriarchs

Modern “mindless wisdom,” which strives to destroy the truths of divine revelation, naturally arrives at the assertion that practically all the Old Testament patriarchs were mythological personages, which simply signify the migration of nameless tribes. Unfortunately, similar views are held to this day even by certain “Orthodox” writers (such as Archpriest Alexander Men). The following quote is an example of modern pseudo-scientific concepts: “The names of the patriarchs equate to those places or ethnic groups that are known from historical documents, from which it is easy to suppose that they are mythological, the myths being linked to the ancient traditional view of the nomadic life of their ancestors.” These words are very typical, and they superbly show the evidence-based value of all such approaches to biblical criticism and similar disciplines. Let us attempt to construct a similar logical chain pertaining to the more recent past.

In a country called “Russia” (the very name of which is linked to the mythology of the Near East—see Ezek. 38–39), according to popular belief, in the eighteenth century the following rulers reigned: Peter I, Catherine I, Peter II, Anna Ioanovna, Ioann VI, Anna Leopoldovna, Elizabeth Petrovna, Peter III, Catherine II, and Paul I. The first thing that stands out in glancing over this list is the repetition of names (Peter is repeated three times, and Catherine and Anna—twice each). This is obviously connected with the fact that we have before us a reflection of the Eastern Slavic legends concerning three cultural heroes, who

due to their significance were multiplied in different variations of myths (compare to the Slavic beliefs in two suns—the sunset and the sunrise, depicted in embroidery and on windows). Our conviction will become simply irrefutable if we recall that the names Peter, Elizabeth, and Catherine are linked with the names of a number of cities: Petersburg, Petrodvorets, Peterhoff, Elizavetgrad, Ekaterinodar, Ekaterinoslav. All this suggests the existence of persistent ethnic myths that reflect the migrations of various clans, which later melded into a united Russian nation. Researchers differ in their interpretation of the meaning of these myths. For instance, some consider Peter a personification of a chthonian deity of fertility, which dies and resurrects, following a path together with the sun (recall the *botik* overshoe: cf. the barque of Ra and the mystical journey to the west, upon his return from which a series of successful transformations begins; cf. the myth of Osiris). Similar hypotheses exist concerning other personages of folk ethnomythology. Only a small group of fundamentalist fanatics continues to adhere to their now-defunct ideas of history.

The absurdity of this approach is obvious, yet constructs of this kind are typical of historical studies of the modern era. For example, prior to Schliemann's discovery it was customary to consider all the accounts of the Iliad mere fables; prior to the archaeological study of Palestine even the existence of the majority of biblical cities was repudiated, to say nothing of the narratives concerning them, which are found in these cities themselves. I think the time has come for a critical approach to the very paradigm of how sources are studied, the more so since it is of neither predictive nor hermeneutical value.

But now the time has come to move on to the question raised in the title of this chapter. For any thinking person, I believe the discovery of a city bearing the name of its founder would be rather an argument in favor of that person's existence than the reverse. If therefore we proceed from this principle, the fact that Arphaxad, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nachor, and Terah existed historically will become quite obvious. It should be said that the idea that the list of the patriarchs is supposedly an invented, mythological genealogy is highly suspect. In it we see almost exclusive-

ly a dry list of names, dates of birth, and dates of death. If this is to be considered a myth, we must also declare our official records of births, deaths, and marriages to be a myth. Furthermore, the tradition of compiling these lists remains in the Near East to this day, and contains not a trace of any mystical elements. As I.M. Dyakonov writes, "These accounts are based on genealogies committed to memory, which among nomadic peoples forms part of the knowledge of any informed individual. Similar genealogies have come down to us not only from the Bible, but also from the Hammurabi and Shamshi-Adad I dynasties in Mesopotamia, which trace their origins back to the Amorite (Sutean) ancestors, and are also known to this day among the Arab Bedouins." It was not only the nomads who compiled these lists—many others did as well, such as the Celts, the Saxons, the Angles, and others. Clearly, if they are accurate today, what proof do we have that they were not in the past—the more so since the principles on which they are maintained, as we see from the example of Hammurabi, remain the same?

Furthermore, we wish to note that in studying religious history we may infer the following principle: "People may become gods, but gods cannot become humans." Indeed, only philosophers have begun to claim that the gods are merely deified humans. In sagas and in archaic thought we can find no examples of deities being desacralized to the level of mere men. Consequently, practically all the first ancestors (if they were not obvious totems, such as the bear) were real people. This is the more true of the patriarchs, whose existence is confirmed not only by Scripture, but also by other sources. The entire list of the forefathers is cited in the first book of Chronicles (chapters 1–2), the Gospel of Luke (chapter 3), and in Flavius Josephus. The latter cites quotes from ancient sources—Berossus, Hecataeus, and Nicholas of Damascus, who mention Abraham. Flavius Josephus writes the following: "Without actually naming him by name, Berossus likewise mentions our patriarch Abraham, expressing it in the following words: 'In the tenth generation after the flood there lived among the Chaldeans a just and great man, skilled in astronomy.' Hecataeus for his part not only mentions Abraham in passing, but has left us an entire work devoted to him. Nicholas

of Damascus writes in his history: 'Abraham ruled in Damascus, having come there as a foreigner with his warriors from a country called Chaldea, a land that lies above Babylon. A short time later he migrated with his people to the country then called Canaan, but now Judea; there his descendants multiplied, of which I will speak in greater detail in another place. To this day the name of Abraham is well-known in the region of Damascus, and to this day in that place one may be shown villages that are titled after him as "habitation of Abraham."'" Abraham is also mentioned as a historical personage by the Spartan king Darius in his letter to the Judeans (1 Macc. 12:21) and by the Arab genealogies. There exists a Babylonian tablet bearing the name (pronounced "Abi-ra-mu"), and in the Ebla tablets it appears as Abarama, while the name of Sarah is preserved on another tablet. The stele of the pharaoh Shoshenq mentions the geographical name of Hek-el Abram—that is, the Field of Abraham—which hardly suggests that Abraham was a myth. Altars built by him have been discovered. In view of all this, the question of historicity may, I believe, be considered resolved.

One of the most important proofs that all these patriarchs were not mythical personages is the fact that no pagan gods bearing their names have ever been revered. If they are deities, where is their cult? Why are they absent from the lists of deities discovered in abundance in the Near East? And why, conversely, are their names used as perfectly ordinary, so that even scholars fear that Eber (his name is found in the Ebla tablets), Abraham (the Mari texts), Isaac, Jacob (his name is found in Egyptian manuscripts of the Hyksos period), Terah, and others will be lost among the others who bear their names? The obvious answer is that these are real historical persons, who lived at the very time described in Scripture. As one of the greatest archaeologists of the 20th century, Albright, noted, "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob no longer appear to be isolated figures who more likely reflect a later period in the history of Israel: today they appear before us as children of their era, who bore the same names, traversed the same places, visited the same cities (especially Haran and Nachor), and had the same customs as their contemporaries. In other words, the stories of the patriarchs have a historical basis."

Chapter 2

The Birthplace of Abraham

“Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram’s wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor’s wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. But Sarai was barren; she had no child. And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son’s son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram’s wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran” (Gen. 11:27–32).

“The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell” (Acts 7:2–4).

“Thou art the Lord the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; and foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous” (Nehem. 9:7–8).

“This people are descended of the Chaldeans: and they so-journed heretofore in Mesopotamia, because they would not follow the gods of their fathers, which were in the land of Chaldea. For they left the way of their ancestors, and worshipped the God of heaven, the God whom they knew: so they cast them out

from the face of their gods, and they fled into Mesopotamia, and sojourned there many days. Then their God commanded them to depart from the place where they sojourned, and to go into the land of Chanaan: where they dwelt, and were increased with gold and silver, and with very much cattle" (Judith 5:6–7).

With these words Scripture relates concerning the earthly homeland of the father of the faithful, to which he preferred the celestial city. But where is the place that was vouchsafed the first appearance of God, from which the liberation from idolatry began? Beginning in the late 19th century it was customary to think that this referred to Ur in southern Iraq. This had been a center of Sumerian civilization. An enormous ziggurate of the moon adorned the city, which was equipped with all that befitted civilization. The houses of the citizens were equipped with water and sewer pipes. The children studied in schools, and there were libraries. In the time of Abraham, Ur was a hegemon of Mesopotamia. It would of course be very tempting to believe that it was indeed here that the patriarch of the Hebrew nation originated. But if we read the texts of Scripture attentively we will see that his homeland was located "on the other side of the flood" (Josh. 24:2), which refers to the Euphrates. Ur of Sumeria, conversely, was located on the same side of the great stream as was Palestine.

Furthermore, all references link this city with Chaldea. But the authors of antiquity report that the Chaldeans lived in the north, not the south, of Mesopotamia. We might perhaps recall that the attack of this nation on Jerusalem is linked with the north and the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 1:15).

If we turn to authors who lived prior to the late 19th century, we will see that they too believed that Ur was located in northern Mesopotamia, on the territory of modern eastern Turkey. For example, St. Philaret of Moscow writes: "According to the conjectures of Bochart and Grotius, this is that Ur which Ammianus Marcellinus indicates between the Tigris and Nisibis, from out of which the path to the land of Canaan had to have lain through Haran." Similarly, archaeologically all the settlements founded by the ancestors of Abraham were located specifically in northern Mesopotamia—not one tradition links them to the south. On the contrary, the Islamic traditions link the place of Abraham's

birth with the foothills of Ararat, which is quite logically deduced from the description in the book of Genesis. In the same way, according to A. Lopukhin, "Certain commentators, both those of old and those of late, have equated Ur with Edessa in Greece, modern Urfa, which apparently was formerly called Urrha. This city, located in upper Mesopotamia, gained wide renown in the Christian era as the capitol of King Abgar who, according to tradition, wrote a letter to Christ. To this day it retains traces of the legend of Abram in the names of its mosque and lake." The well-known historian S. H. Gordon was of the same opinion. Furthermore, from an etymological standpoint, the names of the patriarchs "are typically Amorite, and in later times are rarely encountered. The Mari documents mention migrations and shifts of the Amorite-Sutean tribes between the Euphrates and Syria." This once again leads us into the region of Northern Mesopotamia. Even Abraham himself, when he sent his servant to the city of N-chor, called Mesopotamian Syria "my country, where I was born" (Gen. 24:4, 10 LXX).

If we turn to the account of Flavius Josephus, we will see that "Haran died in Chaldea, specifically in the city of Ur, called of the Chaldees, leaving behind his son Lot and his daughters Sarra and Milcah. His tomb is pointed out to this day." "But excavations have established that people had ceased living in the Ur discovered by Woolley by some time in the third century B.C., whereas Josephus lived in the first century AD. Consequently, he was certainly not referring to the Ur unearthed by Sir Woolley. To this day the Arabs point out the tomb of Haran—not in Iraq, but in the region of the city of Edessa (modern Urfa). They claim that ancient Haran was named after this same Haran, they point to the wells of Abraham, and so on. ... The coincidence of the Sumerian *Ur* with the Hebrew word not only does not support their being identical, but from a linguistic standpoint attests that they have nothing in common. As we know, in transitioning from one language to another words become distorted. For example, the Sumerian city of Uruk is called 'Er-ekh' in the Hebrew text, while the word *ir*—'city'—is probably a distortion of the Sumerian word *uru* of the same meaning. Finally, it should be noted that from the Ur excavated by Woolley one could reach Palestine by a far shorter path than via Haran,

which was located many hundreds of kilometers away from it to the north-west. Haran was certainly not on the path from Ur to Palestine (Gen. 11:31). From southern Mesopotamia there were caravan paths leading to it, meaning that there was absolutely no need to make such an enormous detour via Haran. Science has also noted the fact that the Chaldeans appeared in and named southern Mesopotamia no earlier than the first millennium BC, while Abraham lived nearly a thousand years previous, whereas in the Ur excavated by Sir Woolley there was not a trace of any Chaldeans.”

Thus, Abraham was born in northern Mesopotamia, in the city of Edessa. Fortunately, archaeologists shed light on this region of that time, as well. Not far from there, to the south, the kingdom of Mari later appeared. In the third millennium and the middle of the second millennium BC it was home to a symbiosis of urban civilization and the nomadic lifestyle, which also most likely existed in the homeland of the patriarchs.

Thanks to the excavations in northern Mesopotamia we are able to envision how ancient Ur of the Chaldees, where the father of the faithful was born, would have looked. At its center stood a palace, in which chronicles were kept and a library was compiled. The city was ruled by a king, whose power however was limited by a communal court. Sacerdocy was of tremendous significance.

If we walk the city streets, we will see a row of manor houses with solid walls extending into narrow side streets. Numerous different trade stands offer their wares from every corner of the globe. Metal and ceramics, rugs and valuables—everything may be seen on the city streets. The inhabitants eat bread baked of barley and wheat. They drink beer (the Sumerians of that time knew several dozen varieties) and wine. In the whitewashed stone houses there are water and sewage pipes and rooms for bathing. The children study several languages in the schools and know basic mathematics. The scribes compile dictionaries for many languages and collect myths from various countries. At the gates the bazaar gathers, judgment is held, gossip and news are spread. For there is plenty of news to be heard: a great trade route lies through the city, leading from east to west. This meant that the inhabitants were in one of the international centers,

where people converged from all the ends of the known world. It should be remembered that all civilizations were then in contact with Mesopotamia. At that time the Indian civilization of Mohenjo-daro also flourished in the valley of Indus. In the foothills of the Urals, the construction of Arkaim was only just beginning. In Egypt, construction of the great Giza pyramids had begun. Babylon was still (and is already) a small town subject to Accad, whose influence was also spreading to the territory in question. Sumeria was also subject to Accad. In south Iran the kingdom of Elam flourished, under the influence of the state of Sargon the Great.

As often happens, however, the zenith of a culture leads to increased wickedness. Numerous idols stand on every corner. As Joshua said, "And the ancestors of Abraham put their hand to their creation." It is probable that in Ur, as in other cities, an enormous ziggurat towered, dedicated to the false gods. At the corner of the temples stood harlots, offering themselves by way of sacrifices to the demons. And people sincerely believed that these images of stone, gold, and silver truly ruled their fate, possessing special magical powers. Naturally, particular attention was given to the art of magic. Numerous astrologers and sorcerers determined the lives of the citizens. Later, the Chaldean kinsmen of Abraham came to be considered advanced experts in the occult knowledge that the antediluvian giants had possessed and the accursed Nimrod had restored.

Beyond the settlements within the city walls there stood villages and encampments connected with cities, trade, and tribute, yet more free of ideological control than the settlements of Sumer of the same period, which at the time comprised a glorified concentration camp. Yes, there the original revelation could still be preserved. For example, among the Ebla texts that perished in Abraham's time we find these words: "Lord of heaven and earth, the earth was not, and you created it; the light of day was not, and you created it; the light of sunrise was not (until) you created it."

But their ties to the cities corrupted them also. For many of the citizens had their own estates beyond its borders, while the nomads participated in the city festivals.

It was in these places that Abraham spent his youth.

Chapter 3

The Calling of Abraham

The time of forgetfulness came to an end when man sought out God, because God had secretly found him before. The ancient traditions say that from childhood Abraham sought whom he ought to worship. By birth he was from the cities of moon worshipers. Once, while observing the luminary of the right, he saw the clouds conceal its luminescence. "I love not that which vanishes," he said. But the sun and the stars likewise showed that they have no power over themselves. Still less are they able to help someone else. Still more quickly he came to the conclusion that the idols his father made could not be gods, and that there existed a Creator of the sun, the moon, and the stars, who lives eternally beyond all the heavens. He then decided that he would worship only this Supreme Being. So it was that Abraham returned to the original monotheism from which his great-grandfather and grandfather had departed. According to Georgy Kedrin, an angel of God helped him to come to the knowledge of God.

It should be noted that in the calling of Abraham there is an element of cooperation between man and God. Nehemiah for example addressed the Lord in these words: "Thou art the Lord the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; and foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites ... and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous" (Nehem. 9:7–8).

So it was that the heart of Abraham was found to be faithful even before his calling. Here we see the significance and role of a person's good works. They are not able to save a person, but they call down upon him the mercy of God, who saves those who seek Him.

According to the Hebrew tradition, Abraham once decided to show his father Terah the worthlessness of his idolatry. He entered the shop where he sold idols. There he smashed all the idols except for the largest. Into his hand of clay he placed a large stick. Indignant, his father demanded an explanation from his son. Abraham replied: "I brought a bowl of food for the gods. But they began to fight among themselves, until the largest idol smashed all the smaller ones." The indignant Terah exclaimed, "What are you talking about? They cannot eat, or drink, or fight!" Then Abraham answered, "Then why do you consider them to be gods?"

After this Abraham set fire to the temple of the idols to show the impotence of the false gods. The indignant Chaldeans brought him to the king (most likely to Rimush of Akkad, son of Sargon), who demanded that he worship any one of the gods. Then Abraham inquired as to which one in particular.

The king replied, "The moon."

"But the moon retreats before the face of the sun."

"The sun, then."

"But the clouds conceal the sun."

"Then the clouds."

"But the wind disperses the clouds."

["The wind, then."]

"But the sun commands the winds."

Then the king commanded that he worship the king himself. But Abraham said that he could not worship a mortal. In a fury the tyrant commanded that Abraham be thrown into the fire, but the latter remained unharmed. Then the Chaldeans drove him and his father from the city. As Achior the Ammonite relates, "This people are descended of the Chaldeans: and they sojourned heretofore in Mesopotamia, because they would not follow the gods of their fathers, which were in the land of Chaldea. For they left the way of their ancestors, and worshipped the God of heaven, the God whom they knew: so they cast them out from the face of their gods, and they fled into Mesopotamia, and sojourned there many days" (Judith 5:6-7).

As for King Rumish, he outdid himself, bathing all Sumeria in blood. In his inscriptions he boasted that he once killed 54,000 men, and another time over 20,000. The walls of Ur, Umma, and several other cities were razed. But his reign came to an inglori-

ous end: he was beaten to death with stone seals by Sumerians whom he had taken hostage.

When the homeland of the preacher of monotheism resolved to send him into exile, "the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell" (Acts 7:2-4). So spake the protomartyr and archdeacon Stephen.

These are remarkable words. He is commanded to depart to a place that he knows not. And there is but one basis for this: God so wills! Abraham showed the faithfulness of his heart: he arose and went. Out of love for his son, his father, who had already renounced the abomination of idolatry, decided to share his path. "And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran" (Gen. 11:31-32).

We see that inner desires are not enough for one to reach the promised land. This requires an unshakable faith. And so it is that in Haran, with its hive-shaped houses and enormous ziggurat of the moon, Terah died. Abraham's brother Nachor came from Ur for his burial, and he stayed on there to live, although he remained an idolater.

Here Abraham again hears the mysterious summons from beyond this world: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3).

Thus, God requires unquestioning obedience. He exhorts us to renounce every earthly thing that is dear to us, and in exchange

He offers only His blessing. But this blessing outweighs both feelings of patriotism and all force of habit. Such is the force of heaven's pull!

In exchange for his earthly homeland God promised to make Abraham a blessing. What is this "blessing of God"? What God desires immediately takes place. The "blessing" means that Abraham becomes a special vehicle of the providential might of the Lord, a sort of channel for divine ideas and volition, in active co-operation with the Creator, and hence he is at once blessed and himself a blessing.

Furthermore, God promises to make his name great. That is, his very name will be glorified through the union of its bearer with the Most High. For a man of the East, the greatness of a man's name is also the glory of his descendants. And naturally few people could compare with the greatness that the descendants of Abraham received. After the flesh he produced the Hebrews and many Arabs, Idumeans, and Spartans, as well as a number of the nations of northern Syria. This name is still more greatly magnified in that all Christians are children of Abraham according to their faith. When we pray to God, therefore, we say to Him sincerely: "O God of our fathers, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," for all these patriarchs are our spiritual ancestors. But the name of Abraham was given its greatest glory by our Lord, Who became a son of Abraham according to the flesh (Mt. 1:1).

The natural result of the union between God and Abraham is that both parties to the Covenant acquire common enemies and friends. As St. Philaret says so well, God "wants to be for him not only a merciful Master, but also an unfailing ally. ... Those who do not bless or who curse Abraham are unbelievers; consequently, those who estrange themselves from the blessing offered to faith thereby necessarily remain under the curse."

Finally, God's greatest promise is the prophecy: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Here the All-Merciful One explicitly foretells that from the descendants of Abraham will be born the One Who will destroy the global curse of Adam (Gal. 3:14-16). Thus, from the very beginning God shows that the covenant with Abraham cannot possibly serve as grounds for

nationalism, for it is intended not for a small tribe, but for the restoration of all mankind.

“So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south” (Gen. 12:4–9).

As St. John Chrysostom rightly notes, although aged in body Abraham demonstrated a youthful energy of soul. Not for nothing is it said, “Thy youth shall be renewed as the eagle’s” (Ps. 102). Indeed, neither age, nor attachment to a familiar place, nor the tomb of his father hindered him from abandoning his homeland and following the voice of the Creator.

Chapter 4

Abraham in Egypt

“**W**hen they were few in number, very few and sojourners therein, and they went from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another people, He allowed no man to wrong them; and He reproveth kings for their sake, saying: Touch not Mine anointed ones, and to My prophets do no evil” (Ps. 104:12–15). So says the king and prophet David concerning the patriarchs. His words pertain directly to Abraham, who immediately after receiving the promise was tested by the Lord, so that after withstanding

the test he might become, in the words of St. John Chrysostom, “a teacher not only for the Egyptians, but for all those living along the road in Palestine.”

“And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land” [Gen. 12:10]. Egypt was not only located “below” in a territorial sense, but was also in a spiritual abyss still greater than that of Canaan. In it lay the highly developed civilization of the ancient kingdom, pyramids were built, priests studied the nuances of mythology, but all this was a great abomination before God. For the zenith of a culture, both then as now, is frequently accompanied by moral collapse. And indeed, excavations uncover descriptions of ritual cannibalism and bestiality, inseparably linked with magic and service to the powers of evil. The pyramid itself was a symbol of the eternal presence of a great sorcerer, an incarnate pharaoh god, who keeps watch over Egypt. Into this abyss of sin God sends His righteous one, that he might testify to the power of Him Whom the descendants of Mizraim had forgotten, and the traditions concerning Whom comprised the greatest mystery of the priests.

When he approached Egypt, he said to Sarai, his wife, “Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee” [Gen. 12:13].

“Abraham said this as a man,” writes the venerable Ephraim, “and Sarai was led away into the house of kings, that her love for her husband might be revealed, when in captivity she did not exchange her husband for a king, and so that the daughters of Sarai might see in her an instructive example—namely, that as Sarai was not enticed by the Egyptian kingdom, so also they must not cleave to Egyptian idols, to garlic and onion; and as the whole house of the pharaohs was subjected to plagues for the deliverance of Sarai, so also at the deliverance of her children all Egypt would be smitten.” And, as Chrysostom adds, Abraham said this while in the grip of the fear of death, which at that time was still in full force. “Yes, the face of death was still fearsome:

the gates of bronze had not yet been broken, nor had its sting yet been blunted.” Incidentally, Abraham’s fear for his life was not unwarranted. A description of one story of the ancient kingdom has been discovered, in which a beautiful woman was brought to Pharaoh, and he commanded that her husband be executed. It is my opinion that Abraham knew this story and rightly feared the lustfulness of the Egyptians.

“And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s house. And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels” [Gen. 12:14–16].

The pharaoh to whom Abraham came was Pepi (sixth dynasty). This was the last ruler of the Old Kingdom era, who died when Sodom perished. At the excavation of Byblos, which perished together with the accursed cities from the terrible earthquake and fire, amid the layers of ash there lie items bearing the name of Pepi. One independent proof is a legend that mentions the name of this ruler. “Josephus calls him in one place Nechaoh, and in another Pharaohes; other Jewish authorities call him Rikaion or Rakaion, adding that he came from Sinear, and obtained the royal dignity by force and fraud. Malala gives him the name of Naracho.”¹³⁷

The throne name of Pepi was similar (Neferkare). This king took the throne at the age of 16 and ruled for over 90 years in Memphis. He was the longest-lived ruler of Egypt. From childhood the pharaoh pursued a policy of conquest directed toward Sudan and Palestine.

The word “princes” mentioned in the sacred text (*sarei*) apparently signifies the rulers of the nomes (ancient provinces of Egypt), which during the sixth dynasty achieved considerable influence.

We should note that paganism was inseparably linked with fornication, and despite his advanced age the pharaoh was a “connoisseur” of the sin, for which he was punished. The Lord

¹³⁷ William J. Deane, *Abraham: His Life and Times*.

struck heavy blows against the pharaoh and his house because of Sarai, the wife of Abraham. According to Flavius Josephus, the pharaoh's illness consisted of leprosy and the upsetting of his affairs (impotence). Philo asserts that when the pharaoh desired to know Sarai he fell senseless, then began to suffer from melancholy, and only after prolonged efforts on the part of the physicians did he cease to experience agonizing pain throughout his body. For the Egyptian monarch this was a terrible blow. He, who had considered himself a god and the incarnation of the supreme Ra, found himself deprived of everything, and thereby he understood that he too was a man, under the power of the Almighty.

The venerable Ephraim writes: "The members of Pharaoh's household were punished because they had praised Sarai's beauty and aroused in the king a desire to take her; while Pharaoh himself was punished because he had carried her off by force and compelled her to be his wife against her will. For, had Sarai not feared that both she and her husband would be slain, she would not have given herself to Pharaoh."

When Pharaoh offered a sacrifice of purification to turn away the wrath of God, the priests declared to him that this misfortune had befallen him because of his desire to rape the wife of a foreigner. As St. Demetrius of Rostov writes concerning this event, the grace of God forced the demons to speak the truth against their will.

"And Pharaoh called Abram and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way. And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had [and Lot with him]. And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (cf. Gen. 12:10–13:2).

According to tradition, Abraham did not merely take refuge from famine in this country, but also came to test the faith of the Egyptians. Upon becoming convinced of their mindlessness, he showed them the Truth, and many were converted to God the Savior. This was especially facilitated by the miracle that befell

Pharaoh and all his household. Scripture calls them the “men-servants and maidservants” of Abraham, since one who submits to the truth becomes a servant of God, Who is wondrous in His saints. One such maidservant was Hagar, who was an Egyptian princess. All these new converts comprised the first Church from among the gentiles, which joined the religious community of Abraham. Later their descendants returned together with Israel back to their homeland, and came out of it again on the night of the Passover. As St. John Chrysostom writes, “The Lord made it so that he became an instructor not only for those who lived in Palestine, but also for the Egyptians, and so that he revealed the light of his virtue unto all. Like a lamp, kept secret and hidden in the land of Chaldea, God raised him up from thence, so as to guide those who sat in darkness to the way of truth.”

According to Flavius Josephus, Pharaoh made Abraham a member of the college of priests, and he taught them not only the true knowledge of God, but also mathematics and astronomy, which were formerly unknown to them. Abraham’s influence on Egypt was not limited to the time that he spent there. For even the rite of circumcision was adopted by the Egyptians, and was specifically considered an attribute of the priestly caste, which had been the most strongly influenced by this first missionary. And small wonder. For later Hagar desired to flee to her homeland in Egypt; consequently, contact between them had been maintained.

By this journey God signified that the seed of the promise that would come forth from Abraham would serve for the disappearance of paganism and the healing of all nations, on the one hand. On the other hand, in the person of His prophet God was evaluating this civilization, the apex of which was Egypt at the time of the building of the pyramids, and He showed that it was unable to produce any true thing. It was no coincidence that a few years after Abraham’s sojourn in Egypt the monarchy there crumbled: the country collapsed into multiple nomes, then plunged into a prolonged chaos. The Lord Himself destroyed the harsh system of rule that gave the chief place to the government, while turning a person into a thing. This occurred not by coincidence, but because only one who has ceased to think himself a cog in an enormous machine can come to know the Creator.

Chapter 5

Melchizedek

Abraham freed Lot and received a blessing from Melchizedek (Gen. 14; Heb. 7).

At this time Sodom, in which Lot settled, came under the rule of the kings of Sumer (modern Iraq). But then its inhabitants revolted. Then the kings of Sumer and Elam (modern Iran) conducted a retaliatory raid, routed the inhabitants of Sodom, and took Lot prisoner.

Upon learning of this, Abraham took his servants, of whom there were only 318, and set off in pursuit of the warriors. At night he bravely fell upon the army of the kings, routed it, pursued it to Damascus, and liberated his nephew and his servants.

When he returned victorious, he was met by Melchizedek, king of Salem, who was a priest of the Most High God, and who brought out to him bread and wine. And Melchizedek blessed him:

“Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand” [Gen. 14:19–20].

Abraham gave him a tenth of his spoils, thereby acknowledging his superiority.

Scripture tells us nothing of the origins of Melchizedek, or of his death. His very name means “king of truth,” and the word *Salem* means “peace.” Thus, this mysterious figure prefigures the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose begetting of the Father is incomprehensible and Whose existence is eternal: He is the true King of truth and peace, for in Himself He reconciled gentiles with Jews, men with angels, and—most importantly—mankind with the Creator. Like Melchizedek, Christ is both King, as having liberated His creation from the hands of the tyrant Satan, and High Priest, having offered Himself in sacrifice. To this day He performs His sacred ministry, imparting to us His Body and Blood in the form of bread and wine. For this reason Abraham, being a prophet, acknowl-

edged the greatness of Melchizedek and offered him a tithe as an image of Christ the Savior, Who is called a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Chapter 6

The Covenant with Abraham

After all these events God appeared to Abraham in a vision by night.

“Fear not, Abram,” the Creator said to him. “I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward!” (Gen. 15:1). Thus, for everyone who is faithful to God as was Abraham, the Lord Himself becomes his defense. But Abraham did not rejoice at this promise of the Lord, because he had no children, and the steward of his house, Eliezer, was to become his heir. The Lord however promised Abraham that his heir would be his own son.

After this, God led the righteous one out of the tent and said to him: “Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. ... So shall thy seed be” [Gen. 15:5].

Abraham believed God, and this was counted unto him for righteousness. After all, he was a decrepit old man, but his faith told him that nothing was too hard for the Creator. And indeed, the countless righteous ones who adopted the faith of Abraham shine like the stars in the heavens.

Then, fulfilling the command of God, in sacrifice to Him Abraham slew a heifer and a ram three years of age, as well as a turtle dove and a young pigeon. He cut them in half and placed the pieces against each other, but he did not halve the birds. Birds of prey flew down upon the offering, but Abraham drove them away. This sacrifice was a sign of the eternal covenant concluded between God and Abraham. The three year-old animals were offered in sacrifice to signify the three generations that would live after the migration in Egypt. They were cut in half as a sign of the Hebrews’ sufferings in slavery. The turtle dove indicates the generation that emerged from slavery and dwelt in the desert, and

the pigeon—the generation of the conquerors of Canaan. The birds of prey symbolized the evil spirits and the foes whom they governed that attacked the descendants of Abraham, but whom the prayer of the righteous one drove away. And indeed, on many occasions God saved the Hebrews for the sake of His promise given to Abraham.

At the setting of the sun Abraham was in a deep sleep, and horror and great darkness came upon him.

Then God said: “Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go forth from hence in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces” [Gen. 15:13–17], as a sign that God was one with Abraham, just as the bodies of the animals had been a single whole while they were alive. And the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, promising to give him the whole land of Canaan. God’s appearance at the setting of the sun symbolized the incarnation of the Only-begotten Son at the onset of the end of time. For with the coming of Christ the twilight of the world began.

Despite the promise of God, Abraham’s wife Sarah remained barren. Then she herself gave him Hagar the Egyptian to wife. The latter became pregnant and began to disdain Sarai, who in turn began to oppress her. Abused, Hagar fled into the desert, where she was met by the Eternal Messenger of God the Father, Who commanded her to go back. He promised to multiply her descendants, and that the son born of her would “be a wild donkey

of a man" [Gen. 16:12 NIV]. He would fight against everyone, and everyone would fight against him.

"You are the God who sees me," Hagar exclaimed. "I have now seen the One who sees me" [Gen. 16:13 NIV.]

She returned to Sarai, and as God had foretold she bore a son, Ishmael, the forebear of many Arab tribes. His descendant was the false prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam, in whom was fulfilled God's prophecy of the universal war that the Ishmaelites would wage against the spiritual children of Abraham—the Christians.

When Abraham was 99 years old, the Lord again appeared to him and said, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect" [Gen. 17:1].

Abraham fell down and worshiped God. Then God renewed the covenant with him and changed his name as a sign of the change in his fate:

"Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram"—father of height—"but thy name shall be Abraham"—father of many—"for a father of many nations have I made thee. And ... kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and ... thy seed ... for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed" [Gen. 17:5–7].

As a sign of the covenant God commanded Abraham and all those of his household to circumcise the foreskin of their flesh, which he immediately did. Each of his descendants had to be circumcised on the eighth day. Circumcision was a symbol of faith that Christ, the promised Seed of Abraham, would come. He would lead the faithful into the eternal eighth day of His kingdom, through spiritual circumcision—baptism. In baptism it is not a part of the body that is cut off, but the growth of sin upon the soul.

In addition to changing Abraham's name, God also changed the name of Sarai. Henceforth she is no longer Sarai ("my mistress"—that is, of Abraham alone), but Sarah ("the mistress" of all spiritual descendants of her husband). After this God promised that Abraham's heir would be Sarah's son, Isaac ("laughter"), with whom He would conclude an everlasting covenant, while from Ishmael God promised to bring forth a great nation.

Chapter 7

The Appearance of God to Abraham in the Form of Three Travelers

One day Abraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the earth. Suddenly he saw three strangers. He was very hospitable, and so he immediately ran to meet the travelers and bowed down to the ground before them. Abraham asked them to be his guests and to take food to strengthen themselves.

The three travelers came in, and Abraham himself washed their feet and ran to slay a fatted calf and to prepare a meal for them. When They had eaten, One of Them said to him, "I will return to you again at this same time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

Sarah was standing behind, at the entrance to the tent, and laughed within herself, because she was very old (she was then 89 years of age). But the Lord (for He it was) said, "Wherefore did Sarah laugh? ... Is any thing too hard for the Lord?"

Sarah was frightened and began to deny it, but God said, "Nay, but thou didst laugh."

These Strangers arose and went toward Sodom. Abraham went to see them off, and God said that He had come to judge the inhabitants of Sodom:

"I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. ... Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me."

Here we see that grave sins cry out in the spiritual world, invoking God's justice upon the lawless. Abraham knew of the impiety of the Sodomites, and he wished to save them from certain destruction. He said, "Lord, wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Perhaps in the city there are fifty righteous men? Will the Judge of all the earth act unjustly?"

The Lord answered, “If I find fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place.”

Abraham replied, “Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes; suppose there shall lack five of the fifty righteous?”

God answered, “I will not destroy it even if there are forty-five.”

Abraham continued to ask and entreat that the city be spared for the sake of forty, and God promised. Thus, gradually decreasing the number, Abraham asked for mercy for the sake of thirty, twenty, and even ten. And the Lord promised to spare the city even for the sake of ten. And the Lord went to Sodom, while Abraham returned to his own dwelling. In this way God revealed His nature to the righteous one. He showed that He is the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to Whom is due a single glory and worship.

Chapter 8

The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

“**A**nd the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know” (Gen. 18:20).

The wrath of God that was loosed upon this place of iniquity formed a gigantic rift 8,000 kilometers long, destroying this formerly paradisaical place. Today over the site of this fertile plain there stretches the leaden expanse of a salt lake—the Dead Sea, in which no life is possible. Truly silent as the grave is this terrible body of water, its shores covered with salt and pieces of brimstone, treacherous bituminous wells, and the treacherous poison trees of sin. This is the landscape that meets the traveler to Sodom, of which only heaps of ash remain. This is a memorial

to the wrath of God, which was poured out upon those who practiced the sin of sodomy.

We see that homosexuality and the oppression of strangers, like the shedding of human blood, cry out to heaven, and this cry, like the trumpets of Jericho, destroys cities. God, of course, has no need to descend specially, as though He were not omnipresent, but by His appearance He discloses what concealed itself in the hearts of sinners, and thereby He shows the impending visitation to be fully just.

“And the men having departed thence, came to Sodom; and Abraam was still standing before the Lord.” We see that for the angels the distance between the Oak of Mamre and Sodom was virtually nonexistent. The moment they left Abraham, they immediately reached the accursed city. “And Abraam drew nigh and said, Wouldest thou destroy the righteous with the wicked, and shall the righteous be as the wicked? Should there be fifty righteous in the city, wilt thou destroy them? wilt thou not spare the whole place for the sake of the fifty righteous, if they be in it? By no means shalt thou do as this thing is so as to destroy the righteous with the wicked, so the righteous shall be as the wicked: by no means. Thou that judgest the whole earth, shalt thou not do right?” [Gen. 18:22–25 LXX].

Abraham probably knew from the revelation that had been given to Adam that the Lord would judge the universe. Here he asks not that the Creator annul the punishment, but that He try the case, in which Abraham is acting as the defense. The holy patriarch knew perfectly well that judgment is a sign of the greatest blessing for the universe, which was disintegrating due to the violence of sin. Even the Lord’s retribution is a blessing. It places a limit upon the unrestrained outpouring of evil, and thereby preserves the evildoers themselves from self-destruction.

“And the Lord said, If there should be in Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole city, and the whole place for their sakes. And Abraam answered and said, Now I have begun to speak to my Lord, and I am earth and ashes. But if the fifty righteous should be diminished to forty-five, wilt thou destroy the whole city because of the five wanting? And he said, I will not destroy it, if I should find there forty-five. And he continued to speak to him still, and said, But if there should be found there

forty? And he said, I will not destroy it for the forty's sake. And he said, Will there be anything against me, Lord, if I shall speak? but if there be found there thirty? And he said, I will not destroy it for the thirty's sake. And he said, Since I am able to speak to the Lord, what if there should be found there twenty? And he said, I will not destroy it, if I should find there twenty. And he said, Will there be anything against me, Lord, if I speak yet once? but if there should be found there ten? And he said, I will not destroy it for the ten's sake. And the Lord departed, when he left off speaking to Abraam, and Abraam returned to his place. And the two angels came to Sodom at evening. And Lot sat by the gate of Sodom" [Gen. 18:26–19:1 LXX].

The nephew imitated his pious uncle in the work of ministering to strangers, whom he deliberately sought out at the city gates, thereby saving them from death at the hands of the impious Sodomites. The latter, according to tradition, liked to give strangers money bearing their own name, for which no one would sell them anything. When the guest died of hunger, the owner would take his own money back again from the hands of the dead man. St. Lot however delivered them from this, not only when it was convenient for him, but even awaiting them in the evening.

Archaeological studies give us an idea of how the gates in ancient Palestine were constructed. Near the entrance to the city, at the very wall, there stood benches carved from stone, upon which sat people who wished to hear the latest news or to conduct their own commercial or social affairs.

"Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; and he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat. But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: and they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us,

that we may know them. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him.” This meant that Lot was prepared to sacrifice himself for the sake of his guests. For by shutting the door behind him he cut off his own retreat. “And [he] said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof. And they said, Stand back”—that is, from the doors of the house. “And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door” [Gen. 19:1–9].

In excavating settlements of the era, archaeologists have discovered traces of massive walls and enormous doors. In one of the houses a very large door bolt was found, from which one could judge just how solidly doors were constructed in the time of Lot. Curiously, in strata corresponding to the era of the kings of Israel almost no traces of door bolts have been found, attesting to greater safety at that time compared to the era of Abraham and Lot. Once again, archaeology confirms the accuracy of Scripture.

“But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door” (of the house). Note the power of the celestial visitors, for whom the door, bolted from the outside, presented no obstacle. “And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door. And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

"And while he lingered, the men¹³⁸ laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city." Lot knew that upon his departure the city would perish, and thought to delay the hour of reckoning. For this reason the angels took him out from among the impious, whom he had been unable to convert. "And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

"And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord: Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live."¹³⁹ Seeing that he had failed to save Sodom, Lot hoped to save at least one small city from destruction. "And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither." We see that here God renders favor to Lot, showing that the greatest manifestation of the kingdom of God is mercy.

"Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar" (that is, "little"). "The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground" [Gen. 19:10–25]. A terrible morning began, though the inhabitants of the city had expected nothing terrible. "They drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Lk. 17:28–30).

¹³⁸ In the Septuagint translation cited in the source, "the angels." –*Trans.*

¹³⁹ The Septuagint translation cited in the source adds "because of thee." –*Trans.*

Terrible rivers of fire poured down from the heavens. A horrific earthquake shook not only the environs of the accursed cities, but half the planet as well. Cities were literally swallowed up by the earth. The impious ones, who only a few hours before had fought against their Creator, ran from city to city seeking shelter, but it was too late. The time of repentance had ended, and they reaped the fruits of their works. As all had participated in the mad debauchery, from the old to the young, the retribution of the Almighty overtook them all, sparing neither age nor sex (the more so since their abominable sin had erased the difference between sexes and ages).

Instead of a beautiful plain, the site of the city was inundated with the leaden waters of the Dead Sea, in which nothing lives. Any fish that the Jordan carries into this lake dies if it does not return in time. To this day a terrible silence reigns on its banks, like the silence of the grave. Around it there are no plants or animals. Snow-white pieces of salt and islets of tar are all that is to be seen. The shores are covered with the same salt, with a yellow tinge of brimstone, as well as frightful bituminous wells that are deadly to any person who falls into them. The apostle Jude tells us what significance this punishment from God has for us: "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities" (Jude 7–8). One who reviles the body—that beautiful creation of the Almighty—and rejects the sacred hierarchy would do well to remember these words. Remarkably, nothing has changed since apostolic times. The same people who are Manichaeans with regard to matter are also pseudo-zealots, and incessantly seek grounds to wage war against the episcopacy. The terrible punishment of the flame of Sodom awaits such as these.

"But [Lot's] wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt" [Gen. 19:26].

To this day the pillar of salt into which she was transformed is pointed out. Interestingly, when this pillar was subjected to X-ray testing in 1998 it proved to contain accumulations that perfectly replicated a human skeleton down to the last bone. We ourselves

have had occasion to see this fearful monument to divine judgment. It towers a full three meters high. At its peak the features of a woman's face turned toward Sodom as it perished may be fairly clearly distinguished.

Its authenticity is also attested by the saints, such as the hieromartyr Clement, pope of Rome, in the eleventh chapter of his epistle to the Corinthians, and the blessed Jerome. Christ says the following regarding this incident: "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it" (Lk. 17:30-32).

We too, gazing at the outline of Lot's wife, must fear to return to this world, which is doomed to be burned. Alas, how often we attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable: service to the Lord and to the spirit of the time. How often we hear words such as these: "Yes, we're Orthodox, but we're not fanatics. We don't have to reject the achievements of this world. Culture and faith can coexist. One need not hinder the other. Leave us alone and let us be both friends of this world and Christians." It is the inadmissibility of this to which the pillar of salt attests. There can be no compromise between God and the devil, between the Church and the world which lies in wickedness. One who does attempt to reconcile this is doomed to the petrification of his own soul.

So it is that King Solomon says that the wisdom of the Father—Christ—"delivered the righteous man, who fled from the fire which fell down upon the five cities. Of whose wickedness even to this day the waste land that smoketh is a testimony, and plants bearing fruit that never come to ripeness: and a standing pillar of salt is a monument of an unbelieving soul. For regarding not wisdom, they gat not only this hurt, that they knew not the things which were good; but also left behind them to the world a memorial of their foolishness: so that in the things wherein they offended they could not so much as be hid" (Wisd. 10:7-9).

"And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord: and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and,

lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace" [Gen. 19:27–28]. The patriarch Abraham went out early in the morning so as to serve the morning service, of which he is the founder.

"And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt" [Gen. 19:29].

In the southern part of the Dead Sea a group of these five cities has been discovered. They were noticed by Hebrew pilots during the Six-Day War. These five cities are mentioned several times on the tablets of the city of Ebla. One of the kings of these cities was named Birsha (cf. Gen. 14:2). In 1998 a Japanese expedition conducted an ultrasonic scan of the Dead Sea floor and discovered a city of the Canaanite era, located at a depth of 68 meters opposite Ein Gedi (in the main part of the basin). At the center of the edifice discovered, the remains of a shrine and the palace of a ruler may be observed. This find is a striking testimony to the fact that the occurrence of the Jordan Rift dates back not three million years, but to the time of Lot and Abraham. And yet the Olduvai Gorge in which remains of *Australopithecus* were found is part of this rift.

The destruction of Sodom corresponds to the end of the early Bronze Age in Palestine. At this same time, Biblos perished in a gigantic conflagration. The city of Ghassul in the Jordan Valley was turned to ashes. In the vicinity of Bab Edh Dhra, where apparently the shrine of the inhabitants of Sodom was located, the cultural tradition was abruptly cut off about the year 2,000 [BC]. In Jordania likewise, judging by excavations conducted by Nelson Glueck, the cultural tradition terminated suddenly at this same time (here, incidentally, the aforementioned invasion of the kings of Mesopotamia also played a role). Terrible cataclysms occurred, resulting in an enormous rift in the earth's crust, beginning near Ararat and ending in South Africa in the region of Lake Chad.

The destruction of Biblos occurred under the Egyptian pharaoh Pepi II. During this catastrophe Galilee acquired its name, which incidentally was also symbolic in meaning. "Know also that 'Galilee' means 'cast down,'" writes the blessed Theophylact. "Thus, the Lord came into the downcast country of the whole world or of human nature and, as the Lover of mankind, looked

upon us as we were beneath the fig tree, that is, beneath sin, which delights for a time, but which is linked to no small acridity due to repentance and the punishments there, and chose for himself those who acknowledge him as the Son of God and King of Israel Who beholds God.”

As a result of this catastrophe the Ancient Kingdom perished and a number of nomes were inundated, so that one of the pharaohs of the First Transitional Period noted among his achievements the drainage of the nome of Heliopolis. So terrible was this catastrophe that the son of Pepi II (who, as we recall, was the pharaoh whom Abraham met) was forced to bury his mother in a storehouse. Khenku, nomarch of one of the nomes of Middle Egypt, related that he populated the destroyed cities with cattle and people from other nomes. At the same time a catastrophe befell ancient Sumer, where power shifted from the Hamite Sumerians to the descendants of Seth, and in this way the ancient prophecy of the patriarch Noah began to come to pass. Archaeology confirms the sudden desertification of the territory around the future Dead Sea.

There are also extrabiblical testimonies to this grand manifestation of the Lord's justice. Cornelius Tacitus writes, “Not far from those places there stretches a plain, which is said to have once been fertile and covered with numerous cities, but later was consumed by fire from heaven. It is said that the remains of these cities may be seen to this day: since that time the earth has become as though forever charred and cannot bear fruit. Every plant, whether planted by the hand of man or sprouted up on its own, whether with slender stalk and pale blossoms or whether, on the contrary, it at first seems hale and hearty, eventually wilts, blackens, and crumbles to dust.” The Phoenecian historian and priest Sanchuniathon, who lived in the middle of the second millennium BC, wrote in his *Ancient History*: “The valley of Siddimus sunk and became a lake, which continually smokes and is completely devoid of life, presenting a picture of the punishment and death that befall sinners.” Strabo and Pliny have left us similar accounts.

“And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar” [Gen. 19:30].

According to one tradition, Lot was afraid when he came to Zoar, for he found it empty, since the earth had swallowed up its inhabitants, but leaving all their property, including a considerable quantity of wine, which he then abused out of sorrow over the fate of the city and his wife. It was frightful to live in an empty city, and Lot and his family left that terrible blazing plain and withdrew into the mountains near his petrified wife.

“And he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters” [Gen. 19:30].

This cave remains to this day. It is located south of the Dead Sea by the pillar of salt. Beside it stand the ruins of a basilica built by the patriarch Modestus in 607. We have had occasion to visit it. It is a cave that descends deep into the mountain, and is covered by saline streaks. In 1996 a detailed archaeological excavation was conducted there. It turned out that it was inhabited at the very time described in the book of Genesis.

It should be noted that cave dwelling as such does not indicate a person's lack of culture or primitive state, but is rather an indication of some global catastrophe that destroyed the preceding civilization. To this day, in times of war many people hide in caves, and even the Lord promises that at the end of time men will retreat into caves from the face of God when He arises to destroy the earth (Is. 2:19).

“And the elder said to the younger, Our father is old, and there is no one on the earth who shall come in to us, as it is fit in all the earth. Come and let us make our father drink wine, and let us sleep with him, and let us raise up seed from our father. So they made their father drink wine in that night, and the elder went in and lay with her father that night, and he knew not when he slept and when he rose up. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the elder said to the younger, Behold, I slept yesternight with our father, let us make him drink wine in this night also, and do thou go in and sleep with him, and let us raise up seed of our father. So they made their father drink wine in that night also, and the younger went in and slept with her father, and he knew not when he slept, nor when he arose. And the two daughters of Lot conceived by their father. And the elder bore a son and called his name Moab, saying, He is of my father. This is the father of the Moabites to this present day. And the younger also bore a son, and called his name Amman, saying, The son

of my family. This is the father of the Ammanites to this present day" [Gen. 19:31–38 LXX].

The explanation for this act on the part of Lot's daughters is that they thought the fiery catastrophe had destroyed the whole world, and that they were the only people left alive. This fear was the more justified in that they knew of the ancient prophecy of Adam concerning the flood of fire that awaits the universe. This they mistakenly equated with the tragedy they had witnessed. The venerable John of the Ladder likewise reminds us that Lot's guilt lay in drunkenness, which caused him to commit incest. But the root of all his misfortunes was self-will (his attempt to preach the word of God without God having commanded it) and lack of faith, manifested in his removal from Zoar. In any case, Origen was right when he said, "I fear lest this incest have been more pure than the purity of many." And Saint John Chrysostom said that it is impermissible to condemn this righteous man for an act for which the word of God does not condemn him.

The excavations previously mentioned have confirmed the account of the word of God on this point as well. In Lot's cave two cups for wine were found, dating precisely to the late third millennium BC.

Ancient tradition asserts that Lot himself was gravely troubled by his fall, and that at the Lord's direction by way of penance for his involuntary sin he planted three trees not far from Jerusalem—a cedar, a pine, and a cypress. Today on this site there stands the Monastery of the Holy Cross, beneath the chief altar of which the stump of this tree may be seen. A cherub gave its seeds to Seth, whom Adam had sent to the gates of paradise as he lay dying: he asked that the angel give him of the fruits of Eden, that he might be healed of his terminal illness. The angel brought these three seeds and gave them to Seth, saying that through them Adam would be delivered from eternal death. But when he returned, Adam the first man had already died, and these seeds were handed down from one patriarch to the next. Noah preserved them from the flood, and after the flood they went to Seth, and from his descendants to Lot.

These seeds sprouted and grew into a tree consisting of three parts, which was hewn down by King Solomon to build

the temple. But by divine providence they were not found fit for construction, and they were thrown into the pool at Bethesda. The tree spent many years in this place, from which the Jews ultimately pulled it so as to make from it the Lord's cross. They wished to increase the sufferings of Christ by forcing Him to carry the heavy, water-logged tree, but in so doing they involuntarily fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious" (Is. 60:13). And so it was that, crucified upon this Tree, the Lord of Glory redeemed the sin of the righteous Lot and healed Adam the First-created of the sickness of eternal death. After His life-giving death, Christ drew forth the soul of Lot from the abyss and led it into that paradise from whose fruits he had planted the Tree of immortality. Today, all Orthodox Christians glorify the memory of the righteous Lot on the same day as his uncle—October 9. Holy righteous Lot, pray to God for us! You show us, who dwell in places like unto Sodom, how we ought to act. As the apostle Peter writes, "For if God ... turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Pet. 2:4, 6–9).

Chapter 9

The Birth of Isaac

Early in the morning Abraham arose to pray (he was the first to establish the worship service called matins), went out to the place where he had seen God, and saw smoke rising as

from a furnace above the sunken area where Sodom had stood. The terrible catastrophe of the destruction of the accursed cities forced Abraham to migrate closer to the Mediterranean Sea. There once again Sarah was nearly carried off by King Gerar, but God appeared to him and commanded him to restore Sarah to her husband. And the Lord said, "He is a prophet, and if he prays for you, I will forgive you."

So it happened, and after Abraham had prayed the punishment was lifted from King Gerar. This is an example for us, that in difficult situations we should resort to the prayers of the saints and through them receive divine aid.

A year after the appearance of God the Trinity at the Oak of Mamre, Sarah indeed bore a son, she being 90 years of age, and her husband 100. On the eighth day the infant was circumcised, and they gave him the name Isaac, because Sarah said, "God hath made me to laugh. ... Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck?"

When the child had grown, Ishmael began to abuse Isaac, and Sarah indignantly demanded that Hagar and her son be driven out, for the slave does not inherit together with the freeman.

Abraham was grieved, but God commanded him to heed his wife, "for in Isaac shall thy Seed be called." As for Ishmael, God promised that because he was a son of Abraham He would bring forth from him a great nation. Then Abraham outfitted Hagar and Ishmael and sent them away. Hagar became lost in the desert and wept, not wishing to see the death of her child. Then the angel of God showed her a spring of water, and thus they were saved from death. And God was with Ishmael, and from him there came forth twelve princes.

In explaining why Ishmael was driven out, the apostle Paul calls this story an allegory symbolizing the two covenants between God and men. The first Covenant, concluded on Sinai, is Hagar, because all its children are in slavery; while the New Covenant is Sarah, an image of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all. And we Christians are children of God's promise by Isaac. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" to the Jewish laws (Gal. 4:24-5:1).

Chapter 10

The Sacrifice of Isaac

After this God decided to test Abraham to see how much more he valued fidelity to the Creator than feelings of kinship.

“Abraham!” He said.

“Here I am,” the righteous one replied.

“Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.”

Abraham arose early in the morning, chopped wood, took Isaac and two servants with him, and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and beheld the mountain. He then said to his servants, “Remain here; my son and I will go there to worship and will return.”

Abraham took the wood and laid it upon Isaac’s shoulders, then took the fire and a knife in his hands, and they left. Along the way Isaac asked his father, “Here are the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”

The latter replied, “God will provide a lamb for a burnt offering.”

And they came to the place of which God had told Abraham. And he built an altar, laid the wood upon it, then bound his son and laid him upon it. Then Abraham reached out to take the knife in order to slay Isaac.

But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven:

“Abraham, Abraham! Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.”

Lifting up his eyes, behind him Abraham saw a ram that had become caught by its horns in the bushes. And he offered the ram

as a whole-burnt offering in place of his son, and he called that place Jehovahjireh (“He That Is will provide”).

And again the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven and said:

“By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy Seed”—that is, Christ—“as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore”—the Church as the fulfillment of Christ—“and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed”—for thy Descendant will be the Savior of the whole world—“because thou hast obeyed my voice.”

And Abraham returned and dwelt in Beersheba. Upon the mountain where Abraham was to have offered Isaac in sacrifice, the temple of Solomon was later built. The ram became caught by the horns in a thicket near Golgotha, where God the Father offered His Son in sacrifice for the sins of men.

This event foretold the Lord’s death upon the cross. Here the father does not spare his son for the sake of God; there God does not spare His Son for the sake of men. Isaac humbly obeyed Abraham; Jesus Christ humbly obeyed the Father to the point of death, even a shameful death upon the cross (Phil. 2:8). Isaac himself carried the wood for his sacrifice; Christ bore His own cross upon His shoulders. Abraham foretold that God would provide Himself a Lamb for the burnt offering, and He provided Jesus—the Lamb of God Who takes upon Himself the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29)! On the third day Abraham saw the mountain of God, and on the third day Christ saved us by His resurrection, and for this reason the Lord Jesus Himself said:

“Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad” (Jn. 8:56).

He saw it at the very moment when he took his son down alive from the altar and realized that God had provided another Sacrifice. In this way the Creator rewarded the faith of Abraham, who knew that God was able to raise him up even from the dead.

This account is read in the church on the eve of Pascha.

Chapter 11

The Marriage of Isaac

Soon after this trial of Abraham's faith, his wife Sarah died. She was then 127 years of age. At that time Abraham lived near Hebron. He appealed to the inhabitants of the city, asking them to sell him a cave in which to bury Sarah. The inhabitants proposed that he take the cave of Machpelah that he had selected, because they had seen the spiritual greatness of the righteous man. But he said he would only take the field and the cave for silver, so that none should doubt Abraham's rights to that place. Then the owner of the field sold the cave and the field for 400 shekels (3.6 kg) of silver. And so it was that the patriarch first acquired property in the Holy Land. There he buried his spouse, and there he himself was buried. To this day the bodies of the patriarchs rest in peace in Hebron, awaiting the day of resurrection so as to enter into the true Promised Land.

After this Abraham decided to arrange a marriage for his heir, Isaac, who was already 40 years of age. He did not wish for his son to enter into marriage with the inhabitants of that land, because he feared perversion through the pagan beliefs and customs that are so easily transmitted through the spouse. In order to accomplish his desire, Abraham called to himself his faithful servant Eleazer, and said to him:

"Swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, but only from the country of my kindred."

The man swore, and the righteous one said that if the woman should refuse, his servant would be free of his oath, but that even then he must not return Isaac to his homeland. Abraham said that God would send His angel, who would help him.

Eleazer took ten camels with treasures of every kind and departed for Mesopotamia. When he approached the city toward evening, mentally he addressed these words to God:

“Send to meet me today her who is to become the wife of Isaac. Let this be a sign unto me: that she give both me and my camels to drink.”

Hardly had he finished his prayer when Rebekah, who was Abraham’s niece, emerged from the city. She was exceedingly beautiful and maidenly. When she had descended to the well, then come back up with a full pitcher, the servant ran up to her and said, “Give me to drink.”

“Drink, my lord,” she replied; “I will draw water for thy camels also.”

The man gazed at her in silent wonder, desiring to learn whether or not the Lord had blessed his path. When the camels had ceased to drink, Eleazer took a gold earring weighing half a shekel (4.5 g) and two bracelets weighing ten shekels (90 g) and asked who she was. She replied that she was the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor, and she invited him to lodge with them. Then the servant worshiped the Lord and said:

“Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master’s brethren.”

In the meantime Rebekah ran and told her mother of this. Her brother, Laban, ran out to the well to meet the man and led him into the house. He was invited to eat, but he replied:

“I will not eat until I have told my errand. I am Abraham’s servant. The Lord hath raised him up, and he commanded me to find a wife for his son Isaac, whom God gave to Abraham in his old age. I asked the Lord, and immediately He fulfilled my desire: Rebekah came to the well and gave not only me but also my camels to drink. I saw that God watches over Abraham. And so I now ask you to tell me: do you intend to deal kindly with me and to let your daughter go to marry the son of my lord?”

Then Rebekah’s father Bethuel and her brother Laban replied:

“This thing hath come from the Lord. We can say nothing against it, whether good or bad.”

When Abraham’s servant heard this, he worshiped the Lord. He gave gifts to Rebekah and her relations, then asked that they immediately allow him to return home. They then called Rebekah herself and asked whether she were willing. She replied that she was.

Then they let her go, blessing her:

“Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.”

Then Rebekah arose together with her handmaiden, and she departed with Abraham’s servant.

As evening fell Isaac went out into a field to pray (it was he who established evening worship), and God sent his future wife to meet him. Seeing him, Rebekah descended from the camel and veiled herself, adorning herself with the virtue of modesty. And Isaac took her to wife, and loved her, and was comforted in his grief over his mother Sarah.

Christians likewise must avoid unions with unbelievers when they marry. The 72nd canon of the Fifth–Sixth Ecumenical Council declares marriages in which Christians wed non-Christians to be invalid. For Christ cannot be united to Belial, nor a sheep to a wolf. In order to find a good wife one must be guided not by the voice of lust, but by the word of God and prayer. For then, as He did to Eleazer, God will send us His angel and will make our path straight.

After Abraham had seen the Lord’s help, he died at the age of 175 and was gathered to his fathers. He was buried together with his wife in the cave of Machpelah in Hebron. So greatly did the Lord love that righteous man that even centuries later He continued to call Himself the God of Abraham (Ex. 3:6), promising to lead that patriarch into His eternity, while Scripture calls the place of blessedness for souls that are saved “Abraham’s bosom” (Lk. 16:22).

Chapter 12

Jacob and Esau

Like his father’s wife, for a long time Isaac’s own wife was barren. Twenty years passed before finally, through the prayers of Isaac, Rebekah became pregnant. Her sons began to fight in her

womb, and she went to ask the Lord concerning this. God answered her:

“Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.”

When the time came for her to give birth, she was found to be expecting twins. The first infant to emerge was red all over and covered with hair. They therefore named him Esau (“hairy”). His brother was born holding on to Esau’s heel, and they called him Jacob (“supplanter”). The birth of the twins manifested a prefiguration of the life of two worlds. Esau is an image of this world, in which people live for the sake of flesh and blood, while Jacob is an image of the world to come, the universe where righteousness dwells. Mystically it is beginning even now, as though holding onto the heel of the former, but although it is the younger the future belongs to it.

When the brothers grew up, they proved different in character: Esau was a man of the fields and a skilled hunter, while Jacob was a meek man who lived in the tents. Jacob loved Esau, because his game suited his taste, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Once Jacob was cooking food for himself, and Esau came in hungry from the hunt, and said to him, “Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint.”

“Sell me this day thy birthright,” answered Jacob, knowing that the Savior was to come forth from the firstborn.

“Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?” answered Esau, and with an oath he sold his birthright to Jacob.

Then Jacob gave him bread and lentil pottage. Esau ate, drank, and left, and he disregarded his birthright. People often exchange their spiritual merits for material goods, and then God rejects them as He rejected Esau. Soon he married daughters of the Canaanites, and this was grievous for his parents.

Later there was again a famine in Palestine, and Isaac relocated to the land of the Philistines. There his wife was nearly taken from him, but God preserved him and gave him great wealth and a rich harvest, showing that prosperity depends not on where one is, but on being united with the Creator.

The Philistines began to envy Isaac and to fill in his wells. King Abimelech demanded that Isaac leave, and so he migrated to another place. But there too envy pursued him, until God appeared to him in Beersheba:

“I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and I will multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham’s sake.”

Then Isaac built an altar to God and offered sacrifice to Him. There Abimelech, king of the Philistines, came to him with his courtiers and made an alliance with him. And so we see that if a man honors the Creator, He reconciles even his enemies with him.

When Isaac grew old, he called Esau to him and said:

“I am old, I know not the day of my death: now therefore take thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; and make me savoury meat, such as I love, that my soul may bless thee.”

Hearing this, Rebekah called Jacob to her and commanded him to bring her two kids, so that his father might bless Jacob and not Esau. Jacob did not wish to do so, but his mother persuaded him. She dressed Jacob in the fine clothing of Esau, gave him savoury meat and bread, put skins upon his smooth neck and arms, and sent him to his father.

Isaac was surprised that Esau had taken the game so soon, and Jacob’s voice also betrayed him. But when he had felt him and smelt the scent of his clothing, like the aroma of paradise, he blessed him:

“See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed: therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother’s sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.”

When Jacob had gone out from his father, Esau came in. Isaac was horrified, but he refused to take away the blessing from Jacob, because he saw in this the will of God. Then Esau entreated him with tears to at least bless him in some way. And Jacob said:

“Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; and by thy sword shalt thou live,

and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.”

After this Esau began to hate his brother and said, “Soon my father will die, and then I will kill my brother.”

Then Rebekah feared for the lives of her children and decided to send Jacob to her brother. Isaac supported her decision.

Chapter 13

Jacob in Haran

Submitting to the decision of his parents, Jacob departed for Haran. At their parting, Isaac blessed his son and commanded him to take one of the daughters of Laban to wife.

While traveling from Beersheba to Haran, he stopped in a certain place. There night overtook him, and he slept. That night God showed him a vision of a ladder leading up to heaven, and the angels were ascending and descending upon it.

At its top stood God, Who promised to return Jacob to the Holy Land and always to be with him. He promised to preserve him in every place, and that his Seed would be blessed in all the nations of the earth.

The ladder symbolized the Theotokos, through whom God became man. (For this reason this excerpt is read on the eve of feasts in honor of the Mother of God.) The Seed of Jacob is Christ, in whom all men receive eternal happiness.

Awakening from sleep, Jacob exclaimed: “Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. How dreadful is this place! This is the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

Jacob took the stone upon which his head had lain, and set it as a monument, and poured out olive oil upon it as a sacrifice. He then called that place Bethel (“House of God”), and promised that if God would return him to the Holy Land, he would give him a tenth part of all that he had.

The stone was an image of Jesus Christ, who appeared to Jacob at the top of the ladder. The oil with which the stone

was anointed was a symbol of the Holy Spirit Who anointed Jesus. And Jacob's promise established the pious custom of giving a tenth part of one's income to God.

Encouraged by the vision, Jacob came to Mesopotamia. There at a well he met Rachel, the daughter of his uncle. With his own two hands he rolled away the stone cover of the well, which only all the shepherds together were able to remove, so that she could water her flocks. Then he kissed her. Coming to her father Laban, he asked that she be given to him in marriage, but the latter demanded that he work seven years to obtain her. Jacob loved Rachel very much, so he agreed to this. And the years seemed to him as a single day.

When the time had ended, Jacob asked that the wedding be held. But after the feast, instead of Rachel Laban brought him Leah, her elder sister. Thus was Jacob punished for deceiving his brother.

When Jacob became indignant, Laban said he would give him Rachel also when he had labored another seven years for her. Laban had given him Leah because it was not the custom to give the younger daughter in marriage before the elder. Jacob married Rachel a week later, and loved her more than Leah. And he labored another seven years for her.

The Lord saw that Leah was unloved, and He gave her four sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah. Rachel envied her sister, and demanded that Jacob give her children through her handmaid Bilhah. He consented, and Bilhah bore Rachel two sons: Dan and Naphtali.

Then Leah also demanded that Jacob give her children from her handmaid Zilpah. Zilpah bore Gad and Asher. After this Leah bore two more sons, Issachar and Zebulun, and a daughter, Dinah.

Rachel attempted to conceive using mandrakes, but was unsuccessful until God took pity on her and gave her a son, whom she named Joseph.

After his birth Jacob went to Laban and asked him to allow them to return to his own country. But his father-in-law did not wish to release him, because he saw that the blessing of God abode upon the house where he was. To retain Jacob, Laban invited him to stay on and work for hire. He agreed, and asked that

all the speckled and spotted small stock be allotted to him, and all those of a solid color to Laban. Laban consented, but to keep Jacob from becoming over-rich they agreed that the speckled and spotted animals be separated from those of solid color and be shepherded in the care of Laban's sons. Thus the father-in-law thought that God's blessing would be upon the flocks, and not upon his son-in-law.

God, however, determined otherwise. An angel taught Jacob what to do. He took rods of poplar, hazel, and chestnut and placed them in sight of the strong sheep and goats when they conceived, but placed none before the weaker animals. The stronger animals went to Jacob, and the weaker to Laban. So it was that Jacob became quite wealthy, and the sons of Laban envied him and wished to do him ill.

Twenty years passed from the day of Jacob's arrival in Haran. And then the Lord appeared to him at night and commanded him to depart for Canaan in secret. Jacob took council with his wives, and taking his property he left Laban. Rachel stole the house idols of her father, not wanting him to worship creation instead of the Creator.

Laban caught up with his son-in-law only at the border of the Holy Land, wishing to punish him for the theft of his idols. But at night God appeared to him and forbade him to do Jacob any harm. Laban searched Jacob's entire camp, but did not find the idols, for Rachel had sat upon them, saying that impurity was upon her. Then Jacob made an alliance with Laban, and they promised that they would not come to each other with evil intent, and that Jacob would take no other wives. As a sign of their reconciliation they piled a heap of stones and a monument as a witness to their agreement.

Laban returned to his own land, and Jacob went home and beheld two regiments of the angels of God, come to guard him. He then received news that Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred warriors. Being very frightened, he divided his caravan into two parts, saying that if Esau attacked the first group the second would be able to escape. Then he prayed to God and asked His help:

"I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, for I passed over the Jordan with nothing but my staff; and now I have two

caravans. Deliver me, I pray thee, from my brother, for I fear him, lest he kill me and the mothers with the children.”

After this Jacob sent before him many cattle as a gift to Esau in order to win his favor. He then crossed the border river of Jab-bok. That night God appeared to Jacob and wrestled with him all night, in order to teach him courage in the knowledge of God. When the sun rose, He touched Jacob’s thigh, so that he might know that he could not contend with the Creator. But Jacob did not wish to let Him go until He had blessed him.

God said, “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel”—that is, “God-seer” or “Contender with God”—“for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.”

Then Jacob wished to learn the name of the One who had wrestled with him, but He said, “Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? It is wondrous.”

Thus God showed that His essence is unfathomable for man and that there is no one name that could describe Him precisely.

The sun rose, and the Wrestler left Jacob, but the latter became lame in his right hip in memory of that contest. Thus the Lord gave a special mission and rights to Jacob and his descendants, who since that time have borne the name Israel (or the Hebrews). This nation was faced with two paths: either to be a people of God-seers or to be a nation of God’s foes. The spiritual Israel is also the Orthodox Church, whose children learn to see God.

Jacob saw Esau approaching him with his troops. Going on before his caravans, he ran and bowed down to his brother seven times. His brother embraced him and wept, showing that he had reconciled with him. We must learn to be reconciled with our adversaries, abandoning arrogance and giving them gifts. Then God will help us, healing both our hearts and theirs.

Esau then invited Jacob to visit him on Mount Seir, but Jacob politely declined. Esau returned to his home, where he became king of Edom and the progenitor of the new nation of the Idumeans. God gave him Mount Seir for his domain, and he drove out the giants that dwelt there.

Upon returning from Mesopotamia, Jacob settled in Shechem, where he purchased part of a field and erected an altar to God upon it. In that place a trial awaited him. The son of the king of Shechem raped Dinah, Jacob's daughter, then asked for her hand. The brothers of Dinah, Simeon and Levi, resolved to avenge her. They demanded that all the inhabitants of Shechem be circumcised, and when they had done so the brothers fell upon the city and slaughtered its menfolk. Jacob condemned them for their sacrilegious use of the sacred rite, and for turning all the Canaanites against him.

Then God commanded Jacob to go to Bethel and to erect an altar there in fulfillment of the promise he had made to the Lord. Then he commanded all to be cleansed of all idols and to cleanse themselves of all impurity. In Shechem Jacob buried all the idols beneath an oak, so as not to bring down the wrath of God upon his family.

When Jacob came to Bethel he fulfilled his vow, and the Lord brought fear upon all the Canaanites, and they did not pursue him. God appeared to him again in Bethel and affirmed the promises he had given to Abraham and Isaac:

"I am God Almighty. Thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; and I will give thee this land, as I promised thy fathers."

God went up from him, and at the site of God's appearance Jacob erected a pillar as a memorial to the Creator. In the same way Christian erect temples in commemoration of great acts of God.

From there Jacob went to the tower of Edar. Along the way, near Bethlehem, his beloved Rachel died while giving birth to a son, Benjamin. To this day the tomb of Rachel, where an inconsolable Jacob lamented her, lies near Bethlehem.

Soon after, Jacob's elder son Reuben lost his birthright through fornicating with Bilhah, the handmaid of Rachel.

Finally Jacob returned to his father Isaac, who dwelt in Hebron, and Isaac died in the arms of Jacob and Esau. His body rests together with Abraham and Rebekah.

Chapter 14

Joseph the Comely

Jacob's favorite son was Joseph. He was seventeen years of age, and he herded sheep together with his brothers, and bore tales of them to his father. Jacob distinguished Joseph by making him a present of a many-colored garment. Then his brothers envied him and were unable to speak calmly with him.

Their hatred increased especially after Joseph dreamed prophetic dreams. The first dream was this: Joseph and his brothers were harvesting a field. Suddenly his sheaf stood upright, and the sheaves of his brothers bowed down to it. In the second dream Joseph saw the sun, the moon, and eleven stars bow down to him. Then his brothers became indignant and said, "Shall you really rule over us?" And their vexation increased.

The brothers went to Shechem to herd the flocks, while Joseph remained with his father. Then Jacob sent him to see whether his children were well. As he was going, a guardian angel met him and showed him the path to his brothers in Dothan.

Seeing him, they said to each other, "Here comes the lord of dreams. Let us kill him; then we will see whether his dreams will come true. We will say that a wild beast devoured Joseph."

But Reuben, secretly wishing to save him, said, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness."

This they did. They tore the many-colored coat from Joseph and cast him into a waterless pit. Then they sat down to eat, and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites carrying spices to Egypt. On Judah's advice, the brothers sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver.

Reuben returned to the pit to retrieve Joseph, but he found the pit empty. He was in despair, and asked what he would say to his father. But the brothers decided to smear the coat with the blood of a kid and give it Jacob. The latter tore his garments and wept many days over his son, saying, "A wild beast hath de-

voured Joseph, and I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning.”

In the meantime, Joseph was brought to Egypt and sold to Potiphar, a eunuch of Pharaoh and the captain of his bodyguards.

The story of Joseph was a prefiguration of the life of a Christian, in which another life, that of the Spirit, gradually originates, rousing the envy of men of the flesh, and the economy of the Lord.

Joseph was the firstborn of the beloved Rachel, while Christ is the Son of the grace-filled Mary according to the flesh.

Joseph was the beloved son of Jacob, while Jesus is the beloved Son of the Heavenly Father (Mt. 3:17).

Joseph's father sends him to his brothers and their sheep, while the Father sends the Lord to the sheep of the lost house of Israel (Mt. 15:24).

The brothers did not receive Joseph, and Christ's own did not receive Him (Jn. 1:11).

Joseph suffers from envy, just as Christ did (Mt 27:18).

Joseph is cast into a pit, and Christ descends into hades.

Joseph is sold for twenty pieces of silver to men of a strange tribe, while Jesus is sold for thirty pieces of silver (Mt 26:15) and given over to the gentiles.

At that time Judah married a Canaanite woman and begat three children of her. His eldest son Er married Tamar, but he did not please God, and he died childless. In accordance with the law, his second brother, Onan, married Tamar, but he did not wish for his son to bear his brother's name, and so he committed the sin of onanism, which is named after him. This did not please God, and He slew Onan. Learning of his death, Judah refused to marry his third son to Tamar, but she wished to obtain the blessing that rested upon the Israelites. For this purpose she dressed as a "sacred" harlot, and unrecognized she seduced Judah, taking security from him. When Tamar was found to be pregnant, Judah wanted to burn her for fornication, but she sent him his security. Judah said that she was in the right, and he acknowledged his children. She was found to be carrying twins. During the birth the hand of one, Zarah, appeared first, and a red thread was tied to it; but it was the second who emerged: Pharez, the ancestor of Christ. The firstborn proved to be secondary. The fathers of the Church see

in this a prefiguration of the Old and New Testaments. The New Testament was promised first, but the Old Testament came first. Only then did the New Testament emerge from the mind of God, with the sign of the red thread—the blood of Christ.

In Egypt God showed Joseph such benefactions that the house of Potiphar was filled with the blessing of the Lord. Seeing this, his master entrusted all his affairs to his management, placing him over his whole house.

Seeing the comeliness of Joseph, the wife of Potiphar desired to commit adultery with him, but he refused. Once she wanted to force him, but he tore himself free, leaving his garment in her hands. Then the wife of Potiphar slandered Joseph to him, and he was cast into the royal prison.

But here too the Lord did not forsake his servant. He gave him favor in the eyes of the keeper of the prison, and he was made the prison steward.

At that time Pharaoh imprisoned two of his noblemen—his baker and his butler. Once they both had dreams, and Joseph interpreted their meaning for them.

The dream of the butler was as follows: he saw a grape vine with three branches on which grapes were growing, and he gathered them and placed them into the hands of the king. Joseph told him this meant that in three days the butler would be vindicated and would once again stand in the presence of Pharaoh. Joseph asked him to remember him to the king, because he had done nothing wrong.

The dream of the butler was different: he was carrying three baskets of baked goods upon his head, and birds flew down and pecked the bread. Joseph told him: “The three baskets are three days, after which you will be hanged, and the birds will peck at your corpse.”

The interpretation proved correct. Three days later it was the birthday of Pharaoh. The butler was vindicated and restored to his post, while the baker was hanged. But the butler forgot his promise to Joseph, for the latter ought to have relied not on men, but on God.

Two years passed, and Pharaoh dreamed dreams that no one could interpret for him. His dreams were these: he saw that he was standing on the shore of the Nile, out of which there came

seven fat cows, followed by seven lean cows. And the latter devoured the former. The second dream was similar: seven full ears of corn grew upon a single stalk, followed by seven thin and wind-blasted ears. But the thin ears devoured the full ears.

None of the wise men could correctly interpret the dream for Pharaoh. Only then did the butler remember Joseph, and he was brought before Pharaoh.

Joseph said that the dreams both meant the same thing. Seven years of plenty were coming, followed by seven years of famine, sent by God. It was therefore necessary to collect grain and place it in storehouses in order to feed the people during the years of famine.

Then Pharaoh gave him his ring and promoted Joseph, placing him in his own chariot and setting him over the whole kingdom of Egypt, so that all might bow down to him. Joseph was then thirty years of age. The seven years of plenty came, during which he set aside stores of grain. At that time he married Asenath and begat two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

After this the years of famine ensued throughout the land, but in Egypt there was bread. People began coming from the countries all around to buy grain.

In this part of Joseph's story we see a prefiguration of Christ. Joseph is unjustly cast into prison, and Christ is condemned by Pilate, although the latter found no fault in him (Jn. 18:38).

Joseph spent three years in prison, while the Lord spent three days in hades.

In prison Joseph proclaimed freedom to one captive, but destruction to another. Jesus proclaimed salvation to one of the thieves and descended into hades, proclaiming liberation to those that desired it, but condemning Satan and his accomplices.

Joseph left the prison and became king of Egypt, clothed in bright garments, mounted upon a chariot and receiving genuflection. The Lord rose from the tomb and received from His Father all power in heaven and on earth (Mt. 28:18). The body of Christ is glorified, and His name is borne upon the apostles as upon horses throughout the earth. And all tribes bow down before it (Phil. 2:10), both Jews and gentiles.

Joseph feeds the whole earth with bread, making all Egypt the servants of Pharaoh. By feeding the Church with His Body,

the Bread of Life (Jn. 51), Jesus Christ subjects all things to God the Father.

St. Joseph the Comely is commemorated on Monday of Holy Week.

Chapter 15

The Story of the Righteous Job

At the time when Israel was in Egypt, in Syria there lived one of the greatest saints of old, a descendant of Abraham by Esau of the fifth generation, named Job. He was righteous and blameless in the eyes of God. And the Creator endowed him with great wealth, seven sons and three daughters, for whom he offered sacrifices each week. He was a king and a priest among his people.

Once the angels presented themselves before God, and with them Satan came also. Then the Lord asked the fallen angel, “Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?”

Then Satan answered, “Doth Job fear God for nought? Is it not Thou who guardest him and hast given him riches? But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. But touch his property, and will he bless Thee then?”

Then God permitted all that Job had to be taken away. Satan took all his cattle, and with the might of a hurricane he brought his house down upon the heads of his children, so that Job was left destitute and childless.

Then the righteous man rent his clothes and said, “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

In this way Job overcame the first temptation—the lust of the flesh, temptation of possessions and love for one’s children—and remained faithful to God. But his misfortunes were not over.

Again the devil presented himself before God, and the Lord said to him, "Still Job holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause."

"Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life," replied the enemy.

"Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life," the Lord answered Satan, desiring that a mortal man might vanquish the immortal spirit, and thereby foretell the destruction of his dominion.

Then Satan brought a terrible disease upon Job—leprosy, which rots a person alive. He sat outside the city upon ashes and scraped his sores with a potsherd. The lowlifes of the city abused him, spat on him, and mocked him.

Then his wife said, "How long will you remain faithful to God? Curse him and die."

But Job replied, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women. Shall we receive good at the hand of God, but not evil?"

Thus Job once again proved righteous in the sight of God. He overcame the temptation to rebel against God, and thus he overcame pridefulness.

Then Satan launched a particularly crafty attack against him. Three friends of Job came to him and attempted to convince him that since he was suffering he must be guilty, and he ought therefore to ask God for forgiveness. They said that the world is good in its present state, and that evil is an integral part of human nature. Job ought to reconcile himself to this and not attempt to know the Creator. They cited revelation (Christians recognize that in this they were prompted by Satan), the tradition of his forebears, and common sense.

But the righteous one refused to reconcile himself to evil. He cursed the day of his birth that had brought him into a world permeated with death and corruption. Job saw the terrible injustice reigning in the universe, and he passionately desired to learn from God why the righteous suffer while sinners prosper, and for what he himself was punished. He recognized the might of the Lord and His authority, but he doubted the justice of how the world was ordered. Job desired to enter into judgment with God, not acknowledging his punishment to be deserved, although he

knew of both the sins of his youth and the ancient defilement of original sin. With all his heart he desired to meet the Lord, understanding that only the Creator Himself was able to satisfy his heart. He contended with God, desiring to compel the Uncompellable One to reveal Himself. Job wished for a Mediator Who could unite him with God.

"I know that my redeemer liveth," he cried, "and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth,¹⁴⁰ and in my flesh shall I see God. Mine eyes shall behold Him, and not the eyes of another."

The friends could not break the righteous one. Then Elihu corrected Job, pointing out to him that he had forgotten the unfathomable and creative power of God, without which the answers to his questions were impossible. The Lord teaches a man, striving to divert him from destruction, and sufferings frequently serve for men's instruction.

Then the Creator Himself suddenly intervened in the debate. He accepted Job's conditions, and appearing in a whirlwind He called Job to answer the question that He would put to him. God asked the righteous one: did he know how the universe was established, and did he understand how the world's elements serve Him, meting out retribution upon the ungodly? Could he crush the evil of the world, governing the heavens and establishing the preeminence of His laws upon the earth? Then the Lord showed how He delights in the freedom of the animals that have come forth from His hands. In this way the Lord revealed that He rules the inanimate world in one way, but living creatures in another. Finally the Almighty showed Job the true culprit of his sufferings—Satan, whom He described in the form of two monsters: a hippopotamus and a leviathan. It is the unrestrained mindlessness of the rebellious angel and the people enamored of him that spawn the whirlwind of death that so greatly troubles Job. But this state will not last forever. God Himself will intervene in this great battle and will crush Satan and all his hosts for all time.

¹⁴⁰ In the Septuagint text, reflected in the source, "I know that he ... is about ... to raise up upon the earth my skin that endures these sufferings."
—*Trans.*

In exultation Job laid his hand upon his mouth and repented in dust and ashes, crying out, "I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. I have uttered that which I understood not. Before I had only heard of thee, but now mine eye seeth thee."

Then God addressed the friends of Job, telling them that He was angry with them for not having spoken of him so rightly as did Job. Only a sacrifice offered by the latter saved them from death. After this God restored to Job twice his former wealth and favored him with children.

The example of the righteous Job serves for us as a striking example of patience, by virtue of which we must be able to see God even through pain and suffering, remembering that the Lord Himself became united with us in our grief also, going to the death of the cross. Job himself is a prefiguration of Christ, who like our Lord descended from the heights of power to terrible abasement through the machinations of the devil. Like Christ, Job suffered outside the walls, spat upon and humiliated by his own, accused of blasphemy, and forgotten (or so he thought) by God Himself. But the Lord justified the righteous one and restored his possessions to him, just as Jesus Christ rose from the dead and received the nations from the Father for His inheritance.

Chapter 16

The Migration of the Hebrews into Egypt

The seven years of plenty passed, and the famine that Joseph had foretold began. It smote not only Egypt, but the whole earth. Then Jacob sent ten of his sons into Egypt to buy themselves grain. But he kept Benjamin with himself.

Then the brothers were brought before Joseph, and they bowed down to the ground before him. Joseph recognized them, but they did not know him.

Then Joseph said to them, "Ye are spies; ye are come to learn the weak areas of this land."

"Nay, my lord," his brothers replied. "We are not spies, but the sons of one man. There were twelve of us; one remained with our father, and one is not."

Then Joseph said, "Ye are spies: ye shall prove otherwise if ye bring your youngest brother hither. Then shall we believe you. Until then ye shall be under arrest. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother." And he put them all together under guard for three days.

Then he said to them, "I fear God, and so you will go home; but let one of you remain here. But bring your brother; otherwise you will die."

The brothers said to each other, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, and we would not hear him."

Hearing this, Joseph went out and wept. Returning, he gave orders that Simeon be bound, then gave them grain. In so doing he secretly placed their silver into the bags containing the grain. The brothers were very amazed when they learned that their silver had returned to them. They told their father what had occurred, but he refused to let Benjamin go, because he was the son of Rachel.

A year later the famine increased, and Jacob was obliged to allow all the brothers to go. Judah vouched for Benjamin, taking responsibility for his life.

When the brothers came to Egypt, they were brought into the house of Joseph, and he held a feast for them. Seeing Benjamin, Joseph went out into an inner room, for he could not hold back his tears. Regaining his composure, he returned to them and sent food to each, but Benjamin received five times as much. The next day their sacks were filled with grain, and by Joseph's order their silver was secretly placed in the sacks as well, but in Benjamin's sack a silver cup for divination was placed. In this manner Joseph desired to test his brothers as to whether they oppressed their brother.

When they had departed, Joseph sent the steward of his house after them. When he caught up with them, he said, "Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Why have ye stolen the cup of my lord?"

The brothers became indignant and demanded to be searched. Naturally, the cup was found in the sack of Benjamin. Then they all returned to Joseph. Judah interceded for his brother and asked that he himself be punished in place of Benjamin, to spare his father. Then Joseph saw that his brothers had changed and had repented of their evil deed, and he revealed himself to them.

"I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold," he cried. "Now therefore be not grieved, for God did send me here to preserve life."

They were troubled, but Joseph comforted them. He sent them to their father, saying for him to come to live in Egypt, where he would feed the whole people of Israel. Pharaoh also was glad, and asked that the kinsmen of Joseph come to Egypt to live. The brothers rejoiced and went back to Jacob, laden with gifts from their brother. Joseph sent chariots with them to bring them to Egypt. Upon learning of this, the spirit of Jacob was revived, and he said, "It is enough for me that my son Joseph is yet alive."

But the will of God still had to be determined. Jacob departed for Beersheba and offered a sacrifice to the Lord. And in a nocturnal vision the God of Israel said:

"Jacob, Jacob. I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes."

Then Jacob and seventy men with him took their belongings and removed into Egypt. There Joseph met him after seventeen years apart, and he fell upon his father's neck.

Jacob said, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face."

Then Joseph presented his father and his brothers to Pharaoh. His brothers were entrusted with tending the cattle in the land of Goshen. Upon meeting Pharaoh, Jacob blessed him. And they settled in Egypt, and Joseph fed them with bread until the end of the famine.

The silver in Egypt came to an end, and Joseph bought up all the land of Egypt in exchange for grain. All the Egyptians became servants of Pharaoh, and were obliged to pay him a fifth part of their harvest. The Egyptians themselves were quite pleased with this, and said that he had saved their lives.

When seventeen years had passed, Jacob called Joseph to himself and made him swear that he would bury him with his fathers in Hebron. When he had sworn, Jacob bowed his head upon his staff, thereby giving honor to Christ who was to come.

Chapter 17

The Last Days of Jacob and His Blessing

After this Jacob became ill and called Joseph to himself. Joseph brought to him his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Jacob said to Joseph:

“God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, and promised to make me fruitful and to give the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. And now thy two sons which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt are mine, as are Reuben and Simeon. And the children, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.”

Then Joseph brought Manasseh and Ephraim to Jacob, and he kissed and embraced them.

“I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed,” said Jacob.

After this he laid his hands crosswise on Ephraim and Manasseh, placing his right hand on the younger and his left on the elder. Invoking the Holy Trinity, he said:

“God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.”

Joseph wanted to switch his hands, but his father did not permit him to do so, saying that the younger would be greater than the elder. Jacob did this not by accident, but because he wished to indicate the mystery of salvation accomplished through the cross.

After a time, Jacob became ill unto death and called all his sons to himself. To each of his sons the patriarch foretold the future of his descendants. He appointed Judah as his firstborn, for Reuben had sinned by incest, and Simeon and Levi by their savage cruelty at the seizure of Shechem. To Judah Jacob foretold that Christ would be born of him:

“Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father’s children shall bow down before thee. Judah, a lion’s whelp, is gone up from the prey: he couched as a lion; who shall rouse him up? But the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass’s colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: his eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.”

These words foretold that the tribe of Judah would grow from a lion cub (during the conquest of Canaan) into a Lion (under Kings David and Solomon), until Israel ceased to reign. Then Christ the Reconciler (Shiloh) would come, to whom all the gentile nations would be subject. The sign of his appearance would be that the King would tie His foal to the sacred vine (a golden vine hung in the temple at Jerusalem), which occurred when Jesus entered Jerusalem before His sufferings. These sufferings themselves are signified by the fact that the Messiah would wash his clothes in the blood of grapes (the comparison with grapes is linked both to the virginal birth of the Lord and to the fact that at the Last Supper He would make the wine to be His Blood). But after His sufferings, victory and the eternal banquet of the Kingdom await him.

To Dan it was foretold that from him the antichrist would descend (“an adder in the path”). To Joseph an abundance of earthly blessings was promised, which indeed came to pass when his descendant, Joshua the son of Nun, conquered Palestine. To the other sons the fate of their descendants was also foretold.

After Joseph had blessed his children, he commanded that he be buried in the double cave of Machpelah together with Abraham, Isaac, and Leah. And Jacob, who was called Israel, died at the age of 147, and Joseph and his brothers, accompanied by an escort of Egyptians, buried their father near Hebron.

After the death of their father the brothers feared that Joseph would take revenge on them, but he said:

“Fear not: for am I in the place of God? God has turned your evil unto good. Thus the Lord hath preserved you alive. I will nourish you, and your little ones.”

At the age of 110 Joseph died, having given instructions that they take his bones with them when they should depart from Egypt.

Chapter 18

Archaeological Confirmation of the Story of Joseph

The story of Joseph the Comely is almost universally known. We all remember the young man who was the favorite of his father Jacob, and who had the gift of beholding prophetic dreams. His envious brothers sold him into Egypt: there he was tempted by the wife of his master, and after his imprisonment he became a ruler of Egypt and saved it from famine. But now we must examine the historical veracity of this colorful biblical narrative.

It is commonly believed that nothing to corroborate this narrative survives in the historical records of Egypt. The explanation for this, it is held, is that Joseph allegedly lived under the Hyksos rulers, who hated the Egyptians for their outrageous cruelty, and for this reason all accounts of their rule were destroyed by the liberating Theban pharaohs. We have already seen (and will subsequently provide more detailed evidence) that the Hyksos ruled after the Hebrew exodus from Egypt and could not have been contemporaries of Joseph. Based on the text of the book of Genesis, we also cannot conclude that the Egyptians abhorred Joseph's rule as much as they did the rule of the Hyksos, according to all surviving historical data and archaeological findings. The opposite conclusions are more probable. Based on this, the more radical historians have concluded that there is no histori-

cal data to support this narrative. There are however a number of facts proving that as far as daily life was concerned, the narrative concerning Joseph is fully in keeping with egyptological data. For example, the ritual of elevation to a post is described precisely, and court posts and the prison where Joseph was held are accurately named (of this we will speak in greater detail below). It is unthinkable that this narrative could have been compiled during the Babylonian captivity (as radical critics like to claim), for at that time no one could have given such a detailed description of the realities of Egypt, which was then in a state of advanced decline.

But let us examine the text of the book of Genesis and compare it to the historical data, not forgetting its eternal spiritual significance.

Part IX

THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH UNDER THE LAW



Chapter 1

Egyptian Bondage

The history of the people of God in both Old and New Testaments resembles the wanderings of an invisible man. No one is able to harm him as long as he remains undefiled by filth. But the moment people cleave to this world, immediately the elements of the fallen universe attempt to grind them to powder. And so it was with the Hebrew nation. They lost their desire to produce righteous men. The book of Exodus says: “And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them” (Ex. 1:6–7)—that is, all the efforts of the people were directed toward animal proliferation. The Hebrew original uses the same words regarding them—“and the land was swarming with them”—that in the first chapter of Genesis pertain to the multiplying of the creeping things of the sea. And such was the will of the Lord. Nevertheless, a decline in the spiritual life of the people became obvious, when after the intense spiritual life that had existed in the time of the patriarchs all information regarding the keeping of the original covenant was reduced to the existence of theophorous names (that is, those in which the name of God formed a part). Scripture does not mention a single righteous man until the time of Moses. The natural consequence of this is a loss of potential for spiritual resistance to the pagan world. Israel did not undertake to illumine the Egyptians with the light

of Revelation. And the backlash was immediate: "Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land" (Ex. 1:8–10).

What is this expression, that Pharaoh "knew not" Joseph? It is sometimes thought that this refers to casting off the Hyksos yoke, resulting in the loss of the state archives. But this actually refers rather to a change of dynasties, as Flavius Josephus also wrote.

Interestingly, archaeological confirmation of this fear of the Hebrews has been found. Pottery fragments have been found bearing a curse upon the tribe of Zebulun along with other foes of Egypt, both domestic and foreign. This text is dated to the mid-Middle Kingdom, under Amenemhet III.

"And he set over them task-masters, who should afflict them in their works; and they built strong cities for Pharaoh, both Pitho, and Ramesses, and On, which is Heliopolis. But as they humbled them, by so much they multiplied, and grew exceedingly strong; and the Egyptians greatly abhorred the children of Israel. And the Egyptians tyrannised over the children of Israel by force. And they embittered their life by hard labours, in the clay and in brick-making, and all the works in the plains, according to all the works, wherein they caused them to serve with violence" (Ex. 1:11–14).

In the words of Flavius Josephus, "They assigned them to divert the Nile river into various channels and to erect walls and dams at the city walls, so that the river waters might not penetrate into the city and turn the soil into a swamp. In the same way they roused the people to build pyramids, to study every possible trade, and to become accustomed to hard labor."

All these labors correspond precisely to the realities of the second half of Egypt's Middle Kingdom. For example, Amenemhet III organized grandiose irrigation efforts in the Faiyum Oasis. He also erected a grandiose stone edifice—the Labyrinth, which so enthralled the Greeks. The Hebrews were involved in the building of these structures. Furthermore, the use of Semites for field labor (irrigation) is typical of this period, while for

other eras it is not. Before this the Hebrews were used for occasional work. The last pyramids were in fact built by the kings of the twelfth dynasty. The aforementioned Amenemhet III actually built two, near Dahshur and at Hawara in Faiyum. Consequently, the account of the enslavement of the Hebrews is confirmed by Egyptian sources. Furthermore, at this same time archaeologists establish that over 50% of the servants of Egyptian officials had western Semitic (and even biblical) names.

A more complex issue is the cities which the Hebrews built. The cities mentioned in the Bible—Pitho, On, and Ramesses—have indeed been found. But the strata unearthed pertain to the New Kingdom period—in other words, they are later than the era which we are examining. Interestingly, in Ramesses, the construction of which was attributed to Ramesses II, it turned out that many buildings were built far earlier, but this pharaoh ascribed them to himself, placing his marks upon them. For example, it is possible that certain of the grain storage buildings were built by the Hebrews during their enslavement. Hebrew tradition however states that the cities which they built were swallowed up by the earth in the time of the exodus. The very name of the city is linked to the cult of Ra, the sun god, which existed on a particularly large scale during the Middle Kingdom.

In general, according to these traditions the construction was by no means intended to erect strategic facilities (which Egypt could well have used at the time, in view of internal opposition movements), but were a form of genocide. It is said that the Hebrew infants who were frequently born were either sealed up in the walls alive or dashed against stones. It was these cruelties that led to the ten plagues.

In addition to exhausting labors, Pharaoh stooped to even greater cruelty. He first commanded the midwives to kill all newborn boys; then, when they refused to take part in this lawlessness, citing the robustness of the Hebrew women, he commanded that all Egyptians become executioners of the Hebrew children: “And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Whatever male child shall be born to the Hebrews, cast into the river; and every female, save it alive” (Ex. 1:22).

People often ask how it is that two midwives could have cared for the entire nation. In actuality, they headed a midwifery guild,

as was customary in Egypt. And it was they who were obliged to relay Pharaoh's order to their subordinates.

What need was there to pass such tyrannical laws? The answer may lie in an ancient tradition which Josephus relates. The fact is that the wise men and priests had foretold to Pharaoh that soon a hero was to be born who would bring misfortunes upon Egypt and would free the Hebrews. And so Pharaoh, like Herod after him, decided to kill all in order to eliminate one. But like that other, he failed. For no one can oppose the will of the Creator.

People often ask why God permits such iniquities. The answer is that the slain infants themselves suffered no injury to their souls. Pharaoh's freedom was not limited, but he cannot say that he did not know that God was on the side of the Hebrews. For he saw that a mighty power was preserving this nation. Why then did he have to kick against the pricks? The wrath of God had been gathering over him for a long time, and his final edict presented an opportunity for it to manifest itself to all the Egyptians likewise. It turned out that all of them were breathing hatred and bloodshed. All of them had openly stained themselves with innocent blood. For what harm had the innocent newborns done to them? And so it was that Egypt signed its own writ of execution.

Chapter 2

The Birth of Moses

“And in those days after a length of time, the king of Egypt died; and the children of Israel groaned because of their tasks, and cried, and their cry because of their tasks went up to God. And God heard their groanings, and God remembered his covenant made with Abraam and Isaac and Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and was made known to them” (Ex. 2:23–25 LXX).

The Hebrew nation had multiplied in Egypt with extraordinary speed, being blessed by God. But the Hebrews then began to forget the Creator and to mingle with the pagans. And so it was

that when Joseph and his brothers died, a pharaoh came to power who had forgotten the benefactions of Joseph. He feared that the Hebrews might side with enemies of the state, and to prevent this he gave orders to begin oppressing the people. They were declared slaves and were forced to build cities to hold stores, and they were also worn down by field labor. But God multiplied His people still more greatly.

Then Pharaoh ordered the midwives to kill all newborn boys, but they feared God and did not commit this iniquity. They told the king that the Hebrew women were stronger than those of the Egyptians and gave birth before they arrived. Then Pharaoh gave orders for the Egyptians themselves to kill all newborn boys, in order to destroy the people in this way. Then a certain descendant of Levi, Amram by name, married Jochebed, and she bore him a son after the law had already been passed. The child was born very fair to behold, and his parents hid him three months. When they could no longer conceal him, they placed the infant in a basket coated with pitch, and placed it in a bend in the river among the bulrushes. His sister hid nearby, to see what would become of him.

At that time Pharaoh's daughter came to the river (the place is located in Cairo) to bathe, and she saw the basket containing the crying infant. The princess pitied him and said, "This is one of the Hebrew children."

His sister offered to bring her a wet nurse. She consented, and even paid his mother (for the wet nurse was in fact she). When he grew up, Pharaoh's daughter took him to herself as her son and gave him the name Moses, meaning "taken from the water." He received an excellent education and lived in the palace. But once, when he was forty years old, Moses saw an overseer abusing a Hebrew. In a fury he killed the sadist and buried him in the sand. The next day Moses attempted to separate two Hebrews, but the aggressor said, "Who placed you in charge here? Or do you wish to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?"

And so Moses learned that the Hebrew he had delivered had already reported him. Then he was forced to flee from Egypt, where Pharaoh had ordered his execution. He came to the Sinai peninsula, and there at a well he defended the daughters of the priest of that place, Raguel Jothor. The latter took him in

and gave him his daughter Sepphora in marriage. And Moses lived forty years in the desert. During this time, overshadowed by the power of the Holy Spirit, he wrote the book of Genesis.

Chapter 3

The Burning Bush

Moses tended the sheep of his father-in-law. One day, moved by an invisible power, he drove the flock far away to the edge of the desert, where he came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the Messenger of God, God the Word, appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a thorn bush. Moses beheld a frightful vision: the bush was burning, but was not consumed. In wonder he decided to go closer and examine this great phenomenon. Then God called out to him from the midst of the fire: “Moses, draw not nigh hither: loose thy sandals from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

Moses hid his face, because he had been vouchsafed to look into the eyes of God. He took off his sandals, so that no dead thing separated him from the Original Life. As for the burning bush that was not consumed, it was a prefiguration of the Theotokos, who received the Creator and was not burned.

God said to Moses, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people, and I have heard their cry. I know their affliction. And I have come down to deliver them from slavery and to bring them into a good land flowing with milk and honey. Go; I will send thee to Pharaoh, and thou shalt lead the Hebrews out from slavery.”

Moses began to refuse, but the Lord promised to be with him. Then Moses said to God, “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 me, What is his name?” God answered: “I Am That I Am [Yahweh]. Thus shalt thou say: I Am hath sent me unto you. This is my name for ever, and my memorial to generations of generations. The Hebrews will believe you,

but Pharaoh's heart will be hardened until I show forth upon him my power, and then he will let you go."

This name, which is used in the worship of the Church to this day, means that God is outside time and nature. He has within Himself the source of His being. He alone truly exists, independent of any outward cause, and all that exists has its being only in accordance with His will.

So that the people might believe Moses, God showed him wonders to confirm his mission. His staff was changed into a serpent, but when he took it by the tail it again became a staff. Thus the power of the devil is shown to be insignificant before God's prophet. Another wonder consisted of Moses placing his hand into his bosom, and it became covered with the sores of leprosy. He then placed it there again, and it was made whole. This signified that God has power to heal the life of a man stricken with the leprosy of sin. The third wonder was the transformation of water into blood, in rebuke of the murder perpetrated by the Egyptians.

Moses however continued to refuse God's commission, citing his slowness of tongue. But God promised to be at his lips, so that he would become a god for Pharaoh, and his brother Aaron would be for him a prophet. Then Moses consented and went to Egypt. Along the way God nearly gave Moses over to death for having failed to circumcise his son. Only the fact that his wife Sephora circumcised him according to the law saved him from destruction. Here we see that no circumstances justify a man who does not fulfill the commandment of God. Moses was the messenger of the Lord, but even he was obliged to do His will.

Chapter 4

The Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture

"Thou wast filled exceedingly with ineffable knowledge, O God-seer, and the Holy Spirit, through an angel, manifestly gave thee a knowledge of events of the past." (Service to the prophet Moses, September 4, ode 3 of the canon.)

After fleeing from Egypt “and exercising in the contemplation of Him That Is,” in the desert Moses cleansed his heart and by the power of the Holy Spirit penetrated into the contemplation of the beginning of time. “This man,” Basil the Great writes of him, “who was vouchsafed to behold the face of God on a level with the angels, relates to us something of what he heard from God.” And so, tending the sheep of Jothor, his father-in-law, the holy God-seer, led by the power of the Comforter, wrote the book of Genesis. For this reason I think it appropriate here to examine the following questions: what is the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture? How does the Orthodox Church understand this expression? What is the Bible for us, the first book of which was written by Moses in the Sinai desert?

This brief doctrine is expounded in the Epistle of the Eastern Patriarchs to the bishops of Britain in 1723. There we literally find the following: “We believe that the divine and sacred Scripture is inspired by God; we must therefore believe it without question, and not as we ourselves see fit, but specifically as the Catholic Church has explained and conveyed it. For even the vain wisdom of the heretics accepts the divine Scriptures, but it interprets it perversely, employing allegorical and other similar expressions and machinations of human wisdom, mingling that which cannot be mingled and making child’s play of subjects that are not to be trifled with. Otherwise, if every person daily undertook to explain Scripture as he saw fit, the Catholic Church would not remain to this day by the grace of Christ a Church which, being of one mind in the faith, always believes unanimously and unshakably, but would have separated into countless parts, falling prey to heresies, and at the same time would have ceased to be a holy Church, the pillar and foundation of the truth, and would have become a church of the wicked—that is, as we must indubitably suppose, a church of heretics, who are not ashamed to learn from the Church and then to lawlessly reject her. For this reason we believe that the witness of the Catholic Church is of no lesser power than the divine Scriptures. Inasmuch as the Cause of both is one and the same Holy Spirit, it matters not whether one learns from Scripture or from the Ecumenical Church. A person who speaks on his own authority may err, deceive, and be deceived; but the Ecumenical Church, since she has not spoken

and continues not to speak on her own authority, but on behalf of the Spirit of God (Whom she continually has and will have as her Teacher unto the ages) can never err, deceive, or be deceived; but like divine Scripture she is infallible and has continual importance." Thus, for the Church "divine inspiration" is a synonym for "infallibility," "an inability to err, deceive, or to be deceived," "having continual importance," because the Cause of Scripture is the Holy Spirit.

The question now arises: in what sense is the Spirit the cause or Author of Scripture? Here the opinions of the modernists and the holy fathers diverge. If we turn to the very roots of theology, we will see a fully developed doctrine of divine inspiration. Here, for example, is how Athenagoras presents it: "It is foolish to reject faith in the Spirit of God, which moved the lips of the prophets as instruments, and to turn to the opinions of men. ... You ... are not ignorant of the writings of Moses, or of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the other prophets, who in the ecstasy of their minds, moved by the Spirit of God, proclaimed that which was suggested to them, for the Spirit used them as a musician blows upon a flute." The holy martyr Justin the Philosopher gives a similar explanation of how the Spirit acted upon the prophets: "[The prophets] taught us nothing of their own invention, nor did they contend among themselves or try to refute the opinions of each other; but without any debate and discord they accepted the knowledge from God and conveyed it to us. For it is not possible for men to know such exalted and divine truths either by nature or through the activity of the human mind, but only by means of that gift which came down from above upon holy men alone. They needed neither skill in wording nor knowledge of argument and debate. They needed only to present themselves pure for the action of the Holy Spirit, that He, like a plectrum descended from heaven, might play upon those righteous men as upon a zither or lyre, revealing to us through them the knowledge of things heavenly and divine. For this reason with such fidelity to themselves, with such accord with each other, as though with one tongue they teach us of God, of the creation of the world, of the creation of man and the immortality of the human soul, of the future judgment after this life, and of all that is necessary for us to know, and their teaching is invariably and mutually concordant. Furthermore, they con-

veyed this divine teaching to us although they lived in different places and at different times.”

In reading these words attentively, we see that for the early fathers of the Church the source of Scripture is the Holy Spirit Himself, who employs a man’s natural abilities in order to correctly convey His words (much as a musician who performs melodies relies upon an instrument). Here we ought not to think that God does violence to His creation, forcing a man to do what he does not wish. Just as a performer by no means contends with or breaks his instrument, but enables it to function properly, so also the intervention of the Lord discloses a man’s natural abilities, which would otherwise have gone unrealized. But the content of revelation is not the product of the mind of the prophets. They did not formulate it either from myths or from literary sources, but only conveyed that which was revealed to them from above. According to the venerable Silouan the Athonite, the perfect “say nothing on their own authority. ... They say only that which is given them by the Spirit.” The process of inspiration by the Holy Spirit is described in detail by two great men—Macarios and Basil. The first writes: “The Spirit which [the soul] has received into itself sings a new hymn to God with the timbrel, which is the body, and the psaltery, which is the soul, upon its rational strings—the subtlest of thoughts—with the plectrum of the grace of God, and sends up praises to Christ the Enlivener. For as the wind passing through an organ produces a voice, so also the Holy Spirit sings and prays to God in the pure heart of holy and Spirit-bearing men.” Those who have not experienced the action of the Spirit think that this diminishes a person’s freedom, and they accuse the Orthodox of denying the merit of human creativity; but initiates of the mysteries know that it is only through being seized by the Spirit that a man can truly become a man. It is often claimed that the concept of prophecy as the action of the Spirit who uses the prophet as a musician uses an instrument was typical only of the early centuries. But the liturgical tradition of the Church maintains this very perspective to this day. For example, in the service to the prophets we sing, “Having cleansed mind and thought, O right wondrous Isaiah, as a right pleasing harp of the Spirit, ever sounded by His action and inspiration” (May 9, service to the prophet Isaiah, sticheron at “Lord, I Have Cried”).

“A divine instrument wast thou shown to be, plucked by the hand of the Comforter, proclaiming voices from the heavens” (May 1, ode 7 of the canon). “Recognizing thee as an instrument played by the Spirit, a divinely inspired flute, we call upon thee as our helper” (December 1, service to the prophet Nahum, ode 7 of the canon). “... thou wast shown to be the divinely inspired mouth of the Spirit. Proclaiming the things shown to thee by Him...” (December 3, service to the prophet Zephaniah, sticheron at “Lord, I Have Cried”).

Rejecting the thinking of the modernists, St. Basil describes the state of prophecy as follows: “In what manner did pure or enlightened souls prophesy? Having become as it were a mirror of the action of God, they showed in themselves a clear, unconfused image that was not darkened by carnal passions. For the Holy Spirit abides in all, but He manifests his own power in those who are pure of the passions, and not in those in whom the masterful element of the soul is darkened with carnal impurities. ...

“When the soul, having devoted itself to every labor of virtue, through strong love for God continually preserves in itself the remembrance of God impressed upon it and thereby makes God as though to dwell within itself, then, having become divinely inspired through this strong aspiration and ineffable love for God, it is made worthy of the gift of prophecy; for God gives it divine power and opens the eyes of the soul to understand those visions which He is pleased to communicate. ...

“Some say that they prophesied in ecstasy, so that the mind of man was eclipsed by the Spirit. But it is contrary to God’s promise of overshadowing to make the divinely inspired one ecstatic (that is, deprived of his mind –*Auth.*), so that when filled with divine edifying words he took leave of his own reason, and so that when benefiting others he received no benefit from his own words. And in general, is it in any way befitting reason for the Spirit of wisdom to make a man like one robbed of his mind, and for the Spirit of knowledge to destroy his intellectual capacity? But light does not produce blindness; on the contrary, it arouses the power of sight bestowed by nature. Nor does the Spirit work darkness in souls; on the contrary, it rouses the mind, cleansed of sinful defilements, to the contemplation of the noetic. ... If because Isaac was horrified when his son came (Gen. 27:23), and David spoke

in his ecstasy (Ps. 115:2), some imagine the mind of the saints to have been eclipsed, let them know that amazement is also called ecstasy.”

Such is the primordial teaching of the Church concerning divine inspiration. It rejects neither the power of God nor the abilities and freedom of man. Scripture is indeed the Word of God, the pure Word. And the law of the Lord is truth. We have been taught this not by a man or through a man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:1). In Scripture there is not one word that was not revealed by God. The Bible is not a collection of myths of the Near East, retold in a missionary spirit. Scripture contains not one verse of which one could say, “There! This is from men!” As St. Cyril of Jerusalem said so well, “As a man who before was in darkness, but then suddenly beheld the sun, is enlightened in his bodily gaze, and what before he saw not he now sees clearly, so also one who has been vouchsafed to receive the Holy Spirit is illumined in soul, and he perceives what he had not known, and what is above man. His body is on earth, but his soul contemplates the heavens. ... An insignificant person sees the beginning of the world, the world’s end, and all the time that passes in between; he learns the succession of kings, which he has not studied, because in him there abides the true Enlightener. A man is enclosed within walls, but the power of his knowledge extends far, and he sees what is wrought by others.” Here a man’s own abilities do not disappear, but rather flourish, as a flute bursts into song in the hands of a brilliant musician. The Spirit first cleanses a man, healing his passions, making him to be a pure mirror, and only then does it reflect in him His own sacred brilliance, which he receives with his whole mind and conveys undistorted to others. In the words of St. John Chrysostom, “The Holy Spirit, as a good provider and benefactor, leaves conscious those who receive Him and opens to their mind the meaning of His words. ... As the work of a smith is to make a pickaxe, and the work of a builder is to build a house, and the work of a shipbuilder is to construct a ship, so also the work of a prophet is to compose a prophecy.”

We must not think that God places the text of the revelation into the mouth of a man verbatim. Although every word in Scripture is divinely inspired, it is not the mere letter that is revealed, but a supercelestial reality, which through the Spirit is infalli-

bly translated into words by the purified mind of man. Here the prophet employs the power of speech that is given to every man. "We may most easily understand prophetic inspiration," writes St. Basil the Great, "through the impressions that occur during sleep. As in dreams, due to the fact that the masterful aspect of our soul retains impressions of images, we become viewers of cities and countries of distinctive majesty and beauty, or of supernatural animals, and frequently we retain in our memory certain words that astound the ear; yet in the composition in us of such unusual sights and sounds in reality we see and hear nothing with our bodily senses; so also the mind of divine and blessed men retaining the impression of images, sometimes in a waking state and sometimes during sleep, is filled with divine words and visions; yet the images of visible objects are not imparted to it through the eyes, and it does not receive with the ears the vibrations in the air produced by the instruments that sound. For the high and exalted throne and He that sat upon it, whom Isaiah saw (Is. 6:1) were not something from without and subject to the sight. So also the being described by Ezekiel, like amber from the loins up and like fire from the loins down, had not the likeness of a man (Ezek. 8:2). But the mind of the prophets contemplated these things by a higher power, while the Spirit showed them the divine nature in divinations."

Sometimes God Himself condescends to human weakness and speaks to men. But this is not done by God speaking certain words, but rather by His forming them in our consciousness. St. Gregory of Nyssa writes, "As one who speaks with a deaf mute by means of visible gestures cannot be called a deaf mute, so also one cannot ascribe human words to God on the basis that He has used them out of economy." Here we see the patristic response to the objection of the skeptics, who point to the difference in style of the prophets and apostles and claim that this attests to the human origin of these texts.

The patristic view of divine inspiration does not suit the modernists, for if they were to accept this view they would be compelled to renounce their cherished goal—the subjection of the Church to the spirit of the times. For this reason they advanced a new understanding of the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture, which they hold to be the only one that corresponds to the dog-

ma of Chalcedon. A. Kartashev, one of the foremost ideologists of this heresy, expresses it as follows: "One cannot cite the second verse of Psalm 44—'my tongue is the pen of a swiftly writing scribe'—as proof of 'dictation from heaven' and the automaticity of the biblical writers, for this was said poetically. It is conventional metaphorical language, like that of the poets of today, who figuratively describe the psychology of creative elements in the form of perceiving the voice of muses and gods. This self-characterization of the poets is of interest to us in that it indicates the place and role in natural creativity that the action of the Spirit of God can occupy for the writer of a sacred book, in no way truncating or suppressing his normal psyche. All that is human in it is fully functional, and is merely enriched by a weightless, spiritually transfiguring addition. The idea of dictation from heaven is absurd, if for no other reason than that too frequently the infirm, defective traits of human literature stand out in the biblical text. For example, no less than a third of the Bible is written in verse, often quite bad verse in our opinion, with ornate acrostic wordplay. Many authors took semi-fantastic stories as the basis for their books (Esther, Judith, the addendae to Daniel, moralistic novels, the account of Ahikar in the book of Tobit). At the very least, it is foolish to elevate all these human traits and materials to the status of inspirations of the Holy Spirit. ... The personal peculiarities in the manner of understanding and conceptualization of the writers and editors of the sacred books comprise that purely human principle, with its limitations and the possibility for every kind of outward shortcomings and errors (unrelated to the essence of the dogmas), which organically become part of Holy Scripture as 'theanthropic' words, as the revelation of God, incorporated in the nature of human literary creativity, and hence worthily and rightly measured and studied by us according to the laws and methods of historic and philological science." Analogous blasphemies are found in the writings of Archpriest Alexander Men, Archpriest Alexey Knyazev, and Priest Georgy Kochetkov, but they all merely repeat the ideas of this particular miscreant.

We must however examine all the theses of this false teacher. The first thing that we note is that the adepts of this false teaching themselves are clearly discussing something of which they know nothing. The Holy Spirit has never revealed Himself to

them, and so all their words are merely the product of their own imagination, and have no objective value. I do not think that the manifestation of God is quite so mundane an affair that the imaginings of an unenlightened man could provide any information that could better one's understanding. No science or erudition are of any help in this regard. Consequently, the claim that the words of the psalmist are a metaphor are a groundless fiction. Contrary to the opinion of A. Kartashev, St. John Chrysostom says, "Since that which he thus spake was not of man, but rather he began to proclaim things heavenly and spiritual, not of his own invention, but of divine action, he expresses it with the word 'to pour fourth.' We 'pour forth' or belch not when we wish. We speak words when we wish, speaking or withholding them; but with belching such is not the case. Therefore, wishing to show that that which he speaks proceeds not from human effort, but from the divine inspiration that moved him, he called his prophecy a pouring forth. As a belch depends on the nature of one's food, so it is with spiritual teaching: that of which the prophet has partaken is what he belches forth."

If we examine the juxtaposition of literary works and divine inspiration that Kartashev advances, we will agree that there is a certain resemblance. But its essence by no means lies in the fact that the poets simply call the product of their subconscious the action of the gods. The fact is that the muses and gods who inspired the poets are not mere metaphors, but actual spiritual entities, fallen angels, who inspire those who have fallen under their sway. Such was the opinion of St. Gregory Palamas (*Triads* 1.1), and remarkably the poets themselves affirm this. For example, Alexander Blok wrote in the margins of the *Philokalia*, opposite a description of the effect of the spirit of despondency: "Without this spirit no poetry is possible." Even Plato said that a man who has not become possessed cannot become a skilled poet. It is no coincidence that people call those who have achieved this mastery "geniuses"—that is, possessed by genies. This word originally meant a spirit—a protector of the race. In both instances the spiritual world interferes in everyday life, but since this interference is worked by various spirits, the result of their actions also varies. The interference itself also occurs differently. The Holy Spirit enlightens the mind and reveals hidden mysteries, but the demon

brings a man to the point of ecstasy and deprives him of his mind, transforming him into an automaton. It is no accident that the fathers of the Church all contrasted the pagan poets to the divinely inspired prophets (Justin the Philosopher, Tatian, Tertullian, Theophilus, Athanasius the Great, Gregory the Theologian, Cyril of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, Gregory Palamas). Furthermore, the state of those through whom they act is fundamentally different. It is no coincidence that the Fathers wrote so much concerning the immorality of the philosophers and poets of antiquity as proof of the faultiness of their teachings, but bolstered the preaching of the prophets with their pure and excellent lives. For the Spirit to act the heart must be pure—something that would be completely superfluous if this referred merely to using a person to relay certain information that supplemented his errors. The fact is, according to St. Maximus the Confessor, the very possibility of falling into error is by no means natural to man, but is one product of the fall into sin. It is for this reason that the Comforter only enters a purified heart in order to relay the fullness of the truth in inviolate form. Thus we see that the idea that “human equals erroneous” is incorrect.

Still more outrageous is the assertion that the action of the Spirit is a “weightless addition” to full-fledged erring human literature. If we turn to the fathers, who were not unfamiliar with the actions of the Spirit, we will see that they emphasized the complete absence of the human element in Scripture. For example, St. John Chrysostom says of the Gospel: “Let us give heed not to the fisherman, not to the son of Zebedee, but to Him Who knows the depths of God—that is, to the Spirit Who moves this lyre. He will tell us nothing that is human, but rather all that he says will be from the depth of the Spirit, from the mysteries which even the angels did not know before they were accomplished. Even the angels learned what we have come to know together with us through the voice of John.” St. Gregory the Theologian says similar words: “In our Scriptures the body is both luminous itself (this refers to its literal meaning —*Auth.*) and clothes with itself the soul that is divine in form. This is a double garment—a purple through which a silvery sheen is seen. But we have nothing shameful that would conceal God. I am ashamed to employ fables to aid the Divinity.” Yet the modernists consider the word of God

itself to be a fable and a legend! Where could one find any greater blasphemy? In our own time also the holy fathers adhered to this same teaching. The holy righteous John of Kronstadt (who knew from experience the power of God, as witnessed by the miracles which he performed) writes the following: "When you doubt the veracity of any person or event described in Holy Scripture, remember that all of Holy Scripture is divinely inspired (2 Tim. 3:16), as says the apostle. Consequently, it is true, and it contains no invented persons, fables, or fairy tales, although there are parables (not the narrative itself) where anyone may see that what is said is a parable. The entire word of God is a single truth, whole and undivided, and if you declare any account, saying, or word to be false, you will be sinning against the truth of all of Holy Scripture; and the original truth is God Himself. I am the truth (Jn. 14:6), says the Lord; Thy word is truth (Jn. 17:17), says Jesus Christ to God the Father. Thus, hold all of Holy Scripture to be the truth: as any thing is said, so it was or is."

Contrary to the opinion of Archpriest Knyazev, we teach in accordance with the Symbol of Faith, as we have always taught, that the Author of the Bible is God. Even the Catechism, of which the modernists display a catastrophic ignorance, states this directly:

"Question: What is called Holy Scripture?

"Answer: The books written by the Spirit of God through men sanctified by God, called prophets and apostles. ...

"Question: Why does the Creed say that the Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets?

"Answer: This is said as a rebuke against certain false teachers who have said that the books of the Old Testament were not written by the Holy Spirit."

Still more foolish is the assertion that if the modernists are not happy with the style of certain books of the Bible, they are declared to contain human distortions. As we recall, only Muhammad put forward a similar argument, when he tried to prove that the Koran was divinely inspired based on its literary excellence. To set one's own taste as an infallible criterion of Scripture is not merely militant madness, but constitutes a blatant hubris that is truly terrifying. It is a shame that Mr. Kartashev was not raised in Russian society and did not know its proverbs. If he had,

perhaps it would have occurred to him that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Even the blessed Jerome thought certain prophets to have written poorly, but he repented of this and strove to master himself and cast off the vestiges of his pagan education. But to make the Holy Spirit dependent on my own literary predilections is simply to be an atheist. It is no accident that the apostle Paul deliberately emphasized that “my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Cor. 2:4–5).

Certain authors claim: “The testimony of Scripture can be exclusively religious, that is, it can pertain solely to a field that can be known solely through revelation from above. ... It is by no means called to witness to scientific truths.”¹⁴¹ These same authors note errors in Scripture. But we recall that St. Cyril of Jerusalem considered the sphere in which science functions likewise to be the action of the Spirit: “A small man sees the world’s beginning, and the world’s end, and the entire duration of time in between; he learns the succession of kings which he has not studied; because in him there abides the true Enlightener.” Clearly, the words highlighted pertain to the sphere of the study of history. But for the fathers it too is the domain of God. As for the so-called errors of Scripture, they change from one age to the next, and the alleged error of yesterday becomes the indubitable truth of today. And in this lies the true greatness of the Bible. It has withstood despite the attacks of rebellious intellect. Indeed, we may consider all of Scripture to be divinely inspired and infallible. This is what history teaches us. If the devil has been unable to destroy Revelation for three and a half millennia, he will be unable to do so today. For this reason faithful Christians must trust God, not science, and their faith will not fail them.

Finally, let us listen with our hearts to the exhortation of the venerable John of Damascus: “Let us knock at the wondrous paradise of the Scriptures, fragrant, most sweet, most beauteous, which surrounds our ears with every possible melody of the rational God-bearing birds, which touches our heart and comforts

¹⁴¹ A. Knyazev, *O bogovdokhnovenosti Svyashchennogo Pisaniya* [*On the Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture*].

it amid sorrow, which soothes amid anger and fills with eternal joy; which places our mind upon the most luminous shoulders of the divine dove, which are radiant with gold, and which upon its magnificent wings raises us upward to the only-begotten Son and heir of the Planter of the noumenal vineyard, and through Him leads us to the Father of lights! But let us knock not carelessly, but on the contrary with zeal and with patience; nor let us tire of knocking! For then the door will be opened to us. If we read once, then twice, and do not discern what we read, let us not despond, but let us persevere, let us talk with others, let us inquire! For, as the Scripture says, 'Ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee' (Deut. 32:7). For not all have knowledge. Let us draw from this paradisaical wellspring the most pure waters which never dry up, which flow into life eternal! Let us find sweetness in this, and let us slake our thirst insatiably! For the grace in the Scriptures is inexhaustible."

Chapter 5

Did Moses Write the Law? or: A Few Words about Biblical Criticism

"It is my belief that it is this that proves the truth of Christianity, all these attacks, the negative criticism, the malicious analysis of sacred fact presented by the Bible and the Church... As a man with eyes stricken by color blindness confuses colors, so also one stricken with blindness of the soul (the passions) is a sectarian, an opponent of religion, a man without God. And as the first confuses red with green (imagine a driver of this sort!), so also the latter confuses all things and finds contradictions in every line of the Bible and the Gospel. And as we say of the former that he is a sick man and we are not troubled by him, so also ought we to say of the latter. We ought merely to pity him."¹⁴²

¹⁴² Bishop Varnava (Belyaev), *Po Volge ... k Tsarstvu Nebesnomu* [Along the Volga ... to the Kingdom of Heaven].

One of the chief obstacles for a savage tribe in accepting the true faith is the acceptance of so-called “advanced biblical criticism,” which is presented as the last word in science. According to concepts adopted among godless scientists, it is considered a proven fact that nearly all the biblical books were not written by those authors to whom they are ascribed. For example, the book of the prophet Isaiah was actually written by two or three authors, and the Gospel was written in the second or third century. Nearly all the epistles of the apostle Paul allegedly were not authored by him. Nor did David author his own psalms. The book of the prophet Daniel was written in 165 BC. But this entire campaign against Holy Scripture began with an attempt to prove that the Pentateuch was not written by the prophet and God-seer Moses, but was created by a group of authors (from two to five; some count up to thirty), fully five hundred years after the date affixed by the Bible.

The system by which this opinion is argued is based on prejudice, a presumption of guilt, and double standards. As Bishop Varnava (Belyaev) aptly observed, “No man seeks to prove that what is not immediately understandable or familiar is nonsense: on the contrary, he tries to discover what the author meant by his words. But when it comes to the Bible, all rules and customs are forgotten. Each blames the biblical authors for his own ignorance, lack of understanding, and inability to make sense of data from the era of the latter.”¹⁴³ Indeed, to prove that a given book of the Bible was not written by its author it is usually claimed that the author could not have written as he did, since he could not have known the future, and therefore he wrote only after the event took place (this, for example, is the argument given for the inauthenticity of chapters 40–66 of the prophet Isaiah and the book of the prophet Daniel). But this is merely a proclamation of the wholly groundless dogmas of materialism. For if there is a God Who is outside of time, then both prophecies and His own intervention in history are possible. No one has ever yet proven that He does not exist. Thus there unfolds before us a perfectly ordinary pseudo-scientific demagogue under the guise of false philosophy.

¹⁴³ Bishop Varnava (Belyaev), *Po Volge ... k Tsarstvu Nebesnomu* [Along the Volga ... to the Kingdom of Heaven].

As another proof of the inauthenticity and heterogeny of the sacred text, stylistic differences are cited, and it is alleged that in ancient times there was no concept of authorship in the traditional sense of the word. G.K. Chesterton gives a precise, albeit caricaturesque depiction of the methods of biblical criticism, showing how “scientists” explain the miracle in Cana of Galilee (Jn. 2): “Authorities as final as Pink and Toscher,’ wrote the Professor, ‘have now shown with an emphasis that no emancipated mind is entitled to question, that the Aqua-Vinic thaumaturgy at Cana is wholly inconsistent with the psychology of the “master of the feast” ... and indeed with the whole Judaeo-Aramaic psychology at that stage of its development, as well as being painfully incongruous with the elevated ideals of the ethical teacher in question. ... This principle has, of course, been mainly expounded by Huscher in the sense that the whole episode is unhistorical, while the alternative theory, that the wine was non-alcoholic and was naturally infused into the water, can claim on its side the impressive name of Minnis. It is clear that if we apply the same alternative to the so-called Miraculous Draught of Fishes we must either hold with Gilp, that the fishes were stuffed representations of fishes artificially placed in the lake (see the Rev. Y. Wyse’s “Christo-Vegetarianism as a World-System,” where this position is forcibly set forth), or we must, on the Huscherian hypothesis, deprive the Piscatorial narrative of all claim to historicity whatever. It is urged by Pooke ... that according to Huscher’s theory a metaphorical but at least noticeable remark, such as, “I will make you fishers of men,” was expanded into a realistic chronicle of events which contains no mention, even in the passages evidently interpolated, of any men actually found in the nets when they were hauled up out of the sea; or, more properly, lagoon.”’¹⁴⁴

Anyone who has read even a few pages of Bauer, Bultmann, Wellhausen, or Harnack will be convinced that such indeed are the ridiculous constructs that are passed off as discoveries of modern science. In the nearly three centuries of its existence, biblical criticism has not produced a single hypothesis that archaeology has confirmed. Furthermore, there is not even a single con-

¹⁴⁴ G.K. Chesterton, *The Flying Inn* (New York: John Lane Company, 1914), pp. 107–108.

nected theory of the origin of the Old Testament in general and the Pentateuch in particular. At the same time, dozens of scholars advance hundreds of mutually exclusive hypotheses, which their ecstatic disciples present as the supreme authority on the matter and which are then disproven a few days after their publication. All of them are figments of their authors' imaginations, and in reading these works one's chief regret is that so much paper was wasted. Most interesting of all, however, is what takes place after any given atheistic theory of the origin of Scripture is disproven. Despite the fact that the premises upon which the theory is based have been disproven, the conclusions drawn from these erroneous views continue to be advanced as indisputable scientific reasoning. Consequently, all who read these writings (if they really have the time to spend researching such foolishness) must follow the advice of the renowned modern biblical scholar Dr. Risto Santala: "A researcher must extend his critical views to critical studies, as well."

Indeed, the very pathos of the critics of the Bible is the most vivid proof of its authenticity. For the devil, who is clearly working through them, knows where to attack. No such savagery is directed against the Koran, or the Veda, or the Tripitaka, although adherents of the religions who hold these books as sacred texts are no fewer in number than Christians. The best testimony is the testimony of a foe. It should be noted that this is true not only of the Bible, but also of patristic theology, where scholars strive furiously to dethrone the holy fathers.

The chief objections against the authenticity of the Pentateuch will be examined later on. For the moment we wish to touch on a dangerous tendency observed in contemporary Orthodox theology. A number of authors, such as Archpriest Alexander Men, A. Kartashev, G. Fedotov, Archpriest Alexei Knyazev, Archpriest Nikolai Sokolov, and others, have declared their solidarity with the assertion of atheist theologians that the books of the prophet Moses were written not by him, but by several (usually five) authors, beginning in the 10th–5th centuries BC. Similar conclusions have already infiltrated the theological education system and are held to be self-evident. Archpriest Alexander Men writes that "the question of the authorship of the sacred books is a scholarly and historical question exclusively, which has no direct bear-

ing on the creedal aspect of Scripture. Its resolution one way or the other can change nothing with regard to dogma or morality. At the same time, by more precisely determining the history of how a given book was written, we can more easily see its place in the historical context of the era. This in turn will render an invaluable service to scriptural exegesis.”¹⁴⁵ These authors have no proper scientific arguments that are discernible from the postulates of the atheists. Nor do they cite any patristic arguments in confirmation of their position (since these arguments are wholly nonexistent). Thus, we see before us the wall of the Church being clearly breached by blasphemous teachings—teachings that claim to help the Church to better understand the revelation of which she is the custodian. And yet it is believed that nothing threatens Christian dogma and morality! Let us examine whether this is so.

First let us touch on the dogmatic consciousness of the Church. We believe not in a God of philosophers and scholars, but in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is not an unknowable, extra-historical monad, but the Lord of history. We believe not blindly, but based on the testimony of revelation. And as such the evidence of these testimonies can be (and is) subject to testing. It is for this reason, incidentally, that Orthodox Christianity is true (based on modern concepts of the possibility of refutation as an essential condition for accurate verification), because it allows for the possibility of verification. Below we will see that the Pentateuch passes this test with flying colors. But the very approach of the “Orthodox theologians” in question shows that they do not believe in the God of revelation. For if the biblical text asserts that Moses authored the Pentateuch, there are only two possibilities: either this is true (in which case all biblical criticism is false), or it is false (in which case this text is by no means the revelation of the true God, Who cannot lie). *Tertium non datur*.¹⁴⁶ All other attempts to combine the two approaches merely show their authors to be devoid of elementary logical thought.

Furthermore, faith in the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ also depends on acknowledging the authorship of Moses. For if Jesus

¹⁴⁵ Archpriest Alexander Men, *Istoriya religii* [*The History of Religion*], vol. 2.

¹⁴⁶ No third option is given (Latin).

is the omniscient Son of the living God, the fundamental Truth, He cannot err and pass off falsehood for the truth. Yet He Himself said that Moses gave the law to the Jews (Jn. 7:19), that His own ministry is affirmed by the witness of Moses (Jn. 5:46), and that Moses showed faith in the resurrection at the burning bush (Lk. 20:37). In general, the Gospels repeatedly ascribe the Pentateuch to Moses (Mt. 8:4, 19:7–8, 22:24, 23:2; Mk. 7:10, 12:19; Lk. 2:22, 16:29–31, 24:27; Jn. 1:17–45, 5:45–46, 6:32, 7:22–23, 8:5, 9:28–29). Consequently, either the Lord Jesus was mistaken, in which case He is not God, but the greatest of deceivers (only then it is unclear how He could have risen from the dead); or else He was right, in which case the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy were not written by a college of Yahweists, Elohist, and other editors, but by the holy prophet Moses.

The same was believed by the prophets and the holy apostles (Acts 13:33, 15:5, 28:23; 1 Cor. 9:9; 2 Cor. 3:15; Heb. 10:28, etc.) and all the holy fathers. Their voice is especially audible when reading the canons of the holy apostles, ratified by the Ecumenical Councils in which the Old Testament canon is affirmed. For example, Canon 85 of the holy apostles states, “The books of Moses are five: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.” St. Cyril of Jerusalem wrote similar words: “The books of the law are the first five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.” As St. Philaret of Moscow writes in the Catechism, which upon its approval by the Holy Synod became the creedal book of the Russian Orthodox Church, “What books are regulatory? The five books written by Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Jesus Christ Himself gives these books the common name of the Law of Moses.” This same faith is maintained to this day by the Catholic Church, which declares anathema all those who do not believe that Scripture is the revelation of the Holy Spirit, given to the holy prophets and apostles (see the rite on the Sunday of Orthodoxy).

Furthermore, we have striking proof that it was Moses who wrote the law. It was he whom God Himself sent to interpret the words of the book of Leviticus for St. Anthony. Concerning this the following is related in *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*: “Certain brethren came to Abba Anthony and offered to him words from the book of Leviticus. The elder withdrew into the desert,

and Abba Ammon, who knew his custom, secretly followed him. The elder withdrew to a great distance, began to pray, and cried out with a loud voice: 'O God, send Moses, that he might explain to me these words!' And a voice came to him and spoke with him. Abba Ammon said of himself that although he heard the voice that spoke with Anthony, he did not understand the import of the words."

Furthermore, the Church has long since condemned as a heresy the teaching that the books of Moses were not written by him. As the venerable John of Damascus writes, the heretics "teach that the books of the Pentateuch are not the writings of Moses"; consequently, those who make this claim cannot be Orthodox, and if they are members of the clergy they must be stripped of their rank.

We must now analyze the actual arguments of those who believe that Moses did not write the Pentateuch. To begin with, employing the legal standard of "presumed innocence," let us listen to the statement of the author of the Torah (the Pentateuch) himself. If we take an unbiased approach the document in question, we will see that to the eyes of an ordinary reader it is written by a single author. A single theme may be discerned throughout all five books. No sharp change or break in the language, style, or approach to delivering the material is in evidence. As excavations at Ras Shamra, Egypt, and Mesopotamia have shown, the author was familiar with life in the fertile crescent in the mid-second millennium BC to a degree of detail that could hardly have been learned several centuries later. The author was thoroughly acquainted with Egyptian life and culture. He accurately describes the customs of that nation (the house of Potiphar, the custom of appointment to a post, the presence of a priest in On [Heliopolis], the method of brick production, territorial matters). The Egyptian names cited in the text correspond exactly to those of Egyptians. The first two books of the Pentateuch contain more than half of the Egyptian words found in the entire Bible. The author was well aware of the meteorological and geographical conditions, and the flora and fauna correspond to those of Egypt and the Sinai wilderness and have no direct equivalents among those of Palestine (although the author does possess information about Palestine, apparently from ancestors and scouts—this informa-

tion is considerable in the book of Genesis and in Deuteronomy, but it is practically absent in Exodus, Leviticus, and the greater part of Numbers). The language of the Pentateuch abounds with archaisms which disappear as time passes.

Furthermore, the author describes the procedure of the writing of the Torah. The original block of text (the book of Genesis and the book of Exodus up to and including the plagues of Egypt) describes events prior to the battle with Amalek (Ex. 17:14); the account of the events that followed and the Lord's words on Mount Sinai were written immediately after the enacting of the Covenant (Ex. 24:4), after which God commands Moses to write down the Ten Commandments (Ex. 34:28), and then to describe the entire journey through the camps in the desert (Num. 33:2). The entire narrative block was written in this manner, beginning with Sinai and continuing up until the division of the lands beyond Jordan (Ex. 24:4—Num. 33:2). Thereafter Moses wrote down the words of Deuteronomy and gave them to the Levites (Num. 35:1—Deut. 31:9). After this the song of Moses was added (Deut. 32:44) and "the words of this law" were written "in a book, until they were finished" (Deut. 31:24). The end of Deuteronomy (Moses' blessing before his death and the actual description of his death) were written in the book of the Torah either by Moses himself (who, being a prophet, knew the future) or by Joshua at his behest. Why did the alleged band of forgers require so complex a mechanism of recording? Furthermore, the text of the Torah contains internal references to the existence of the book of the law (Deut. 28:58, 61; 29:20, 27). If we hold that the alleged original authors (a Yahweist and a Elohist) did not consult with each other, this makes writing a book of internal integrity a very difficult task indeed.

Furthermore, the author claims that he is a prophet, foretelling the fate of the Hebrew nation during the Jewish War 70 years after the birth of Christ (Deut. 28), and his words are born out fifteen hundred years after his death (if we believe the date of the text itself). Here there can be no question of prophecy post factum, since we have copies of these predictions written 200–300 years prior to these events. The probability of their coming to pass by chance is equal to five multiplied by ten to the negative fifty-ninth power, which is essentially equal to zero. Would an eternal God really reveal Himself to a band of forgers?

Consequently, based on an unbiased reading of the Pentateuch, we arrive at the conclusion that its author was a Hebrew who received a good Egyptian education, and who lived in Egypt and on the Sinai peninsula in the mid-second millennium BC and possessed the gift of prophecy—in other words, Moses.

This assertion is born out not only factologically (as the entire book presented to the reader's attention is devoted to proving), but also by later testimonies, from authors both biblical (Josh. 8:31–32, 23:6; 1 Kg. 2:3; 2 Kg. 14:6, 23:25; 2 Chron. 17:9, 25:4; Esdras 3:2; Nehem. 8:1, 13:1; Dan. 9:13; Mt. 8:4, 19:7–8, 22:24, 23:2; Mk. 7:10, 12:19; Lk. 2:22, 16:29–31, 24:27; Jn. 1:17, 45; 5:45–46, 6:32, 7:22–23, 8:5, 9:28–29; Acts 13:33, 15:5, 28:23; 1 Cor. 9:9; 2 Cor. 3:15; Heb. 10:28) and extra-biblical (Flavius Josephus, Philo, Eupolis, the members of the Qumram community, the authors of the apocryphal books, the Talmud, Manetho, the early fathers of the Church).

According to the biblical testimonies, the Torah as an integral book written by Moses was known by Joshua, David, Solomon, Jehoiada, Amaziah, Josiah, Esdras, Nehemiah, the prophets Isaiah (5:24), Hosea (8:12), Amos (2:4), Jeremiah (9:12–13), Ezekiel (22:26), Daniel, and Malachi (4:4)—that is, there was no time when forgers could have operated, especially since the text of the law was universally known. This latter fact not only clearly follows from the aforementioned (and many other) passages of the Bible, but is affirmed by archaeological material. For example, the “Reaper's Complaint” (7th century BC) contains a reference to the statute of Ex. 22:25, which proves that the statutes of the Torah at that time were not declarations, but valid judicial laws. That ritual life was regulated by the laws of the Torah is also confirmed by the discovery of pomegranates of elephant ivory (mid-eighth century BC) bearing the inscription: “Belonging to the house of Yahweh, sacred, the priests” (cf. Ex. 28:34) and of two silver slabs found in Jerusalem dating to the seventh century BC, containing a blessing of God “Who preserves the covenant and mercy to those that love Him and keep His precepts” (cf. Ex. 20:6, 34:6–7). The same is attested by discoveries of gold slabs dating to the sixth century BC bearing the text of a blessing from the book of Numbers (6:24–26).

As will be stated later, the reports of the Torah are also born out by archaeology. For example, on Mount Ebal the stone altar has been found which Joshua commanded to be built before his

death (Deut. 27:1–8; Josh. 8:30–35). Furthermore, it perfectly matches the description in Deuteronomy. But most remarkable of all is that the supporters of biblical criticism were outraged, and declared that a discovery from the thirteenth century BC could not be explained based on text written in the seventh century. Consequently, the critics value their theory more than reality.

Now we must give the floor to the other side. What is the basis of the claims that the Pentateuch had several authors? It would be completely impossible to thoroughly analyze the numerous hypotheses surrounding this. The current state of biblical criticism can be found in the work by I.R. Tantlevsky, *Vvedenie v Pyatiknizhie [An Introduction to the Pentateuch]* (Moscow, 2000), which describes the history of the development of criticism, beginning with Porphyry, Celsus, and Julian the Apostate. The only thing that can be observed when reading the history of the development of this error is the unique staying power of an idea that has repeatedly been disproven, yet remains an indisputable truth in the minds of many. Hardly a single one of the arguments put forward against the authorship of Moses has held up, but the theory itself has a life of its own, fanned by the breath of hades.

The chief arguments against the traditional view are the following:

1. The Torah employs two names for God—Yahweh and Elohim—which suggests that we are dealing with two sources.
2. In the Pentateuch there are repeating themes—two histories of creation, repeat accounts of the flood and of the story of Joseph—which suggests multiple authors.
3. In Moses' time there was no written language; consequently he could not have written what is ascribed to him.
4. The Hebrew religion could not have comprised such pure monotheism in Moses' time, as this could only have arisen in the time of the kings.
5. In the text we encounter Aramaisms, which could only have entered the text beginning from the time of the Babylonian captivity, and anachronisms that would have been impossible for Moses (Ex. 13:17; Gen. 14:14; Deut. 34:1; Gen. 40:15).
6. Moses could not have spoken of himself in the third person, described his own virtues (Num. 12:3), and written of his death (Deut. 34).

7. Up until the time of King Josiah, no one knew of the law of Deuteronomy centralizing the cult (the people offered sacrifices in high places), and the very discovery of the book of the law (2 Kg. 22:8–13) was the time when Deuteronomy was written.

The best known point of view in Russia (which however encounters more and more objections in the West) gives the following dating. From the time of Moses a series of oral traditions are given (such as the Decalogue), which are dated by a Yahweist (from Judea) to about 850 BC, then by an Elohist (from the Northern Kingdom) to about 750 BC. Under Hezekiah the two texts (or traditions, as they are more commonly termed today) were combined into one; under Josiah (622 BC) Deuteronomy was published; on the threshold of the captivity a series of laws in the book of Leviticus was compiled; during the captivity the editors continued working on the text; and the Torah acquired its final form through Esdras (444 BC). Such is the picture which the false theologians paint for us in order to strip us of our faith in the Word of God.

But let us examine all these arguments in order. To begin with let us observe that, though they study the same text, all the researchers arrive at very different conclusions. For some, the Yahweist wrote after the Elohist, since Yahweh is a later name for God than Elohim (El); yet in actuality we find the name Yahweh mentioned in documents of Ugarit and Ebla. Others say that the Elohist is dependent on the Yahweist, and therefore younger, etc. The Torah has been reduced to tiny shreds that have no meaning in and of themselves, and these pitiful researchers can make no sense of the sea of traditions, influences, and interpolations which they themselves have invented. They write of differences in style and genre, but cannot agree on where the pattern for this or that style or genre is to be found, due to a lack of criteria for verifying their assertions. One Western scholar writes, "It is unclear how modern Western critics dare to make judgments concerning differences in the style and lexicon of the Bible while not having any European written documents of that same era. They reject a sentence or simply compile it differently (wherever the text contradicts their typical 'Western' ideas of textual connections and style). They assert that they are improving the text of the Bible, replacing rare and seldom-used words of the Masoretic

text in it (that is, words they do not understand or did not expect to encounter) with others.”

Critics analyze the ancient text by criteria of which their author never dreamed, and then are surprised when they do not work. I think if we were to apply their methods to, say, Thomas Mann’s novel *Joseph and His Brothers*, we would find it to have no fewer than a dozen authors and editors. The actions of the biblical critics may be compared to the attempts of a microbiologist to study the starry skies using a microscope, or to a desire to evaluate Beethoven’s genius by analyzing the chemical makeup of his score.

Furthermore, all these efforts are based on the silence of any source material that would confirm any of these versions (except for the authorship of Moses). There is not the slightest trace of the Yahweist, or the Elohist, or the Deuteronomist, or any other supposed proto-source either in the archaeological materials or in the references of the ancient authors. There is nothing that offers the slightest confirmation of their theory! On the contrary, all the most ancient surviving texts of the Torah already exist in their current form and bear no trace of their supposed sources.

These works lack a comprehensive approach based on uncovering the harmony and coherence of the text. Contrary to the judicial principle of presumed innocence, the critics are quite positive that this work is self-contradictory and spurious, and they pursue their writings on this premise, based on which one may prove anything whatsoever.

It is now time to examine the various accusations against Moses one at a time.

1. The difference in names employed cannot of course in any way prove that there were multiple authors. After all, if we examine the Koran, in it we will find an equally wide variety of usages of the name of God, which nevertheless does not prove that it was written by several authors, and not by Muhammad alone. Furthermore, upon analyzing the *Five Theological Orations* of St. Gregory the Theologian, we will be obliged (given this approach) to acknowledge that it involved several dozen authors.

This primary objection to Moses’ authorship was answered long ago in the early nineteenth century by St. Philaret of Moscow: “Perhaps it was the intent of the narrator to instill through

this [initial usage of the name Jehovah –*Auth.*] particularly the fact that God, the Creator of the world and man, is the same Who revealed Himself to Israel as the Performer of the promises of grace (Ex. 3:15). Certain modern researchers of the sacred books observe something completely different here. Observing that up until this passage in the book of Genesis the name Elohim was continually employed in it, and that from here to the end of the third chapter the name Jehovah Elohim is used, from this they conclude that this part of the book was written by a completely different writer. But (a) in this very part, Elohim alone is also used (3:5); which then of the two ostensible writers wrote these verses? (b) Even in a single verse, first Jehovah Elohim is written, then Elohim (3:1). Was even this one verse then written by two writers? (c) In the fourth chapter, Jehovah alone is used repeatedly: is a third writer really needed for this? (d) Chapter 5 begins with an inscription that is quite like the present one (2:4), aside from the fact that there we find Elohim written. How many more writers must be invented to explain this difference in wording? Incidentally, (e) the scholars who defend this bold conjecture themselves provide us ample grounds to dispute with them when one (Eichhorn) ascribes greater antiquity to this part of the book of Genesis compared to the preceding part, based on its unrefined and unscholarly phraseology, while another (Heinrichs) finds greater refinement of words here and greater indications of scholarship.”¹⁴⁷

Indeed, it should be noted that aside from the internal contradiction of the critics’ positions, their constructs are in no way born out either by the text (the Yahweist texts contain the word *Elohim*—see Gen. 3:1–5; 33:5, 11; while the Elohist has *Yahweh*—see Gen. 21:33; 22:11, 14; 28:17–22) or, more importantly, by the use of the words *God* and *Lord* in the Septuagint, which many exegetes consider more accurate.

2. The repeated themes found in the Pentateuch either mutually supplement each other (two accounts of creation, the story of the flood, the story of Joseph), or are merely the invention of critics (for example, the threefold confirmation of God’s promise to

¹⁴⁷ Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, *On the Book of Genesis* (Moscow: 1867), part 1, pp. 35–36.

Abraham—Gen. 17:17, 18:12, 21:6—pertains to three different events, and not to one; the same is true of many other such examples). Everything attests to the single design and authorship of the Torah rather than the reverse.

3. The following assertion brought by one of the former against the authenticity of the Torah does not withstand the slightest criticism. Contrary to the opinion of the first “debunkers” of the Pentateuch, in Moses’ time written language not only existed, but had over a thousand years of history behind it. In Egypt, texts from the time of the Ancient Kingdom and even the Predynastic Period have been found. In Mesopotamia, cuneiform writing was known since the time of Sumer and Accad. The excavations of Ebla showed that even in the second half of the third millennium BC written language was a universally widespread phenomenon in Syria (furthermore, these texts mention Eber, Terah, Abraham, Nahor, and other patriarchs). In the very place where tradition states that the Pentateuch was written, on the Sinai peninsula, historical records of an ancient alphabet have been found (the Proto-Sinaitic alphabet), which was intended for recording a Semetic language of the same period as the period of Exodus (this alphabet is dated to the first half of the second millennium BC). It is possible that the inventor of alphabetic writing was Moses himself, who was taught all the wisdom of Egypt, as the ancient Hebrew historian Eupolis says concerning this (second century BC). From it the Phoenecians took their alphabet, and from them the Greeks in their turn, from whose alphabet all European alphabets descended.

4. The fourth objection against this authorship is simply a materialistic assertion based on Tylor’s already disproven theory of the origin of religion, upon which Wellhausen constructed his own theory. We have already had occasion to cite criticism of this teaching above. Here we need only note that serious scholars in the West have long since discounted this ideology, which has been disproven by both anthropologists and historians. Traces of monotheism are found dating back to the most ancient times (for example, they are found in the Ebla tablets), and belief in the existence of one Creator of the universe is in no way linked to social environment or economic structure. All such versions are in no way born out by the facts, and are pure propaganda. In general,

an attempt to construct a schematic of the evolution of religion without possessing any data to confirm it, while rejecting all facts that disprove it, is not a very scholarly approach.

5. The fifth objection against the authenticity of the Torah is more serious. Aramaisms may indeed be found in the text, but it is not known when they found their way into the Hebrew language. After all, the patriarchs themselves lived in Syria. Furthermore, frequently excavations end up proving these ostensible Aramaisms to be purely Hebrew words, meaning that this argument is rendered invalid. The anachronisms, which allegedly would have been impossible for Moses, are not actually anachronisms at all: the land of the Philistines (Ex. 13:17) could well have existed during the period of Exodus; the Dan described in the battle of the kings (Gen. 14:14; Deut. 34:1) is most likely not the city of Dan that arose during the time of the judges (Judg. 18:29), but one of the sources of the Jordan, which could have borne this name long before Moses' time, the more so since a place by this name is mentioned in the texts of Mari and Egypt in the eighteenth century BC; the "land of the Hebrews" (Gen. 40:15) is a perfectly accurate description of Palestine, both because it was promised to the Hebrews and because this implies not the entire territory of this country, "but rather that part of it in which the patriarchs dwelt. They dwelt particularly near Hebron, and migrated near Sechem." Consequently, we have no indisputable evidence that the books of Moses were written after his death.

6. Moses could not have spoken of himself in the third person, described his own virtues (Num. 12:3), and written of his death (Deut. 34). So say the critics, but these objections likewise are based on a misunderstanding. The fact is, throughout the entire Bible the message is that only He Who Is can say "I Am," and before His face all others are like shadows. Our own self is but a faint reflection of the brilliance of Yahweh. It is no wonder therefore that Moses writes of himself in the third person. For in all his books the protagonist is God, while Moses is no more than His witness. Furthermore, if we turn to the ancient texts we see that this device was typical of ancient literature. "For example, in his *Commentaries on the Gallic Wars* and *Commentaries on the Civil War* Guy Julius Caesar (100–44 BC) invariably speaks of himself in the third person, emphasizing the objectivity and sincerity

of his account. Formerly this same device was employed by the Greek historian, philosopher, and didactician Xenophon of Athens (430/425–after 335 BC) in his renowned work *Anabasis* (in seven books). In the opinion of Plutarch (around AD 46–after AD 119), Xenophon did this particularly because he placed the glory of being a protagonist in the events described higher than the glory of being the author of the work in question, and also to instill complete trust in his account.”

Concerning his virtues Moses could indeed have written himself, for he knew that humility and modesty do not mean mere self-flagellation, but contemplation of one’s objective state, and for this reason he could relay to his descendants that, according to the word of God, he was the meekest of men (Num. 12:3). He was also able to describe his death ahead of time, for God revealed to many saints the time and circumstances of their repose in advance. If we acknowledge the existence of an omniscient God, the fact that Moses could have described his death in advance presents no problem whatsoever. There also exists an opinion that the description of the death of the great prophet was written by his successor, Joshua the son of Nun.

7. The assertion that up until the time of King Josiah no one knew of the law of Deuteronomy centralizing the cult (the people offered sacrifices in high places), and that the very discovery of the book of the law (2 Kg. 22:8–13) was the time when Deuteronomy was written, is completely baseless. The entire books of 1 and 2 Kings are permeated with indignation at the fact that the people and the kings were offering sacrifices in high places (1 Kg. 15:14, 22:43; 2 Kg. 12:3, 15:35, 16:4), which would have been impossible if this had been a provision of law. Yes, naturally, a manifestation of God or a revelation from Him was sufficient grounds for the provision of law to cease, but from such instances (such as the sacrificial offerings of Gideon or Elijah) it by no means follows that the provision itself did not exist. Furthermore, we have direct evidence that the provisions of Deuteronomy were in effect long before Josiah. King Amaziah did not execute the children of murderers, observing the provision of this book of the law of Moses (2 Kg. 14:6; cf. Deut. 24:16). That the book of the law of Moses was discovered after the restoration of the temple (this refers to the original text) should not be an occasion to doubt its authenticity. Similar in-

stances occur even today. For example, in 1975, while working in St. Catherine's Monastery on Sinai, workers discovered a secret cache containing around 3,000 ancient manuscripts, including a number of missing pages from the Sinai codex (fourth century). Thus, the argumentation of the opponents of the authenticity of the Pentateuch does not withstand criticism and must be discarded. It should be stated that it never merited any attention from the very beginning, as it was not based on any archaeological or historical discoveries. As Archpriest Sergiy Antiminsov rightly noted, "All these 'scholarly findings' were made at a writing desk, with the text of the Bible in hand. Every 'scholar' held that he had the authority to interpret the sacred text however he pleased. And indeed, if the authority of the Church is rejected, it could not have been otherwise: each then has his own 'faith,' which leads to complete unbelief."

Chapter 6

The Biblical Canon

Now that we have spoken of biblical criticism and the authorship of the Pentateuch, the time has come to answer the question of what is canonical and what is not for Orthodox Christians. Unfortunately, this question remains undeveloped in Orthodox theology. It is regulated solely by a few lines in the Catechism and a number of holy canons. The absence of clear criteria leaves a wide field for speculation, and for the emergence of various theories that contradict Orthodox liturgical theology.

Let us proceed to examine the question of which books of the Old Testament are canonical and which are not. To begin with we must specify the sources upon which the Church relies when selecting sacred texts. These include a number of sacred canons—namely, Canon 85 of the holy apostles, Canon 60 of the Council of Laodicea, Canon 33 of the Council of Carthage, the 39th festal epistle of St. Athanasius the Great, and the verses of St. Gregory the Theologian and St. Amphilochius of Iconium. In addition, the canon of Scripture is set forth by texts that are highly author-

itative for the Orthodox: the *Catechetical Lectures* of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, the *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* by St. John of Damascus, the “Longer Catechism” of St. Philaret of Moscow, and the “Decree of Damasus,” or resolution of the Council of Rome in 382.

We will start by compiling a list of books which all authorities recognize as canonical. These are the five books written by the holy God-seer Moses:

1. Genesis.
2. Exodus.
3. Leviticus.
4. Numbers.
5. Deuteronomy.

These are followed by the historical books:

6. Joshua.
7. Judges.
8. Ruth (the last two books are traditionally ascribed to the holy prophet Samuel).
9. The two books of Samuel and the two books of Kings (the first two are ascribed to Samuel, while the latter two were written by the prophets, then homogenized by the prophet Jeremiah).
10. The two books of Chronicles (based on the chronicles of the prophets, last edited by St. Esdras).
11. 1 Esdras.
12. Nehemiah (frequently called 2 Esdras in the canons).

Next follow the didactic books:

13. Job (a very ancient book of the Bible, written by St. Job himself, but edited by St. Solomon).
14. The Psalter of the holy King David.
15. The Proverbs of Solomon.
16. Solomon’s Ecclesiastes.
17. Solomon’s Song of Songs.

The Old Testament canon then concludes with the prophetic books:

18. The book of the prophet Isaiah.
19. Jeremiah.
20. Ezekiel.
21. Daniel.
22. Hosea.
23. Joel.

24. Amos.
25. Obadiah.
26. Jonah.
27. Micah.
28. Nahum.
29. Habakkuk.
30. Sophonias.
30. Haggai.
32. Zechariah.
33. Malachi.

The authority of these sacred books is acknowledged by all canonical texts. In the words of St. Athanasius, they are “the sources of the truth. Let no one add aught to these, nor let any one take aught away from them.” In these sacred books there is not one word that does not belong; it is the text which the Church accepted (in the translation of the Seventy), divinely inspired and infallible.

In addition, St. Athanasius recognizes the following books as canonical:

1. The Lamentations of Jeremiah.
2. The book of the prophet Baruch.
3. The Letter of Jeremiah.

He holds the following texts to be intended for reading by catechumens:

1. The Wisdom of Solomon.
2. The Wisdom of Sirach.
3. Esther.
4. Judith.
5. Tobit.

St. Amphilocheus of Iconium considers the book of Esther canonical.

The Council of Carthage included the following with the canonical books: the Wisdom of Solomon, Tobit, Esther, and Judith. The Council of Hippo (393), the decrees of which formed the basis of this canon, also considers the Wisdom of Sirach and the books of the Maccabees canonical.

The Council of Laodicea considers the following canonical: Esther, Baruch, the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and the Letter of Jeremiah. And Canon 85 of the holy apostles calls the follow-

ing honorable and sacred along with the canonical books: Esther and three books of the Maccabees; and it instructs young people to read the Wisdom of Sirach.

In addition to the customary books, the Council of Rome in 382, over which the holy Pope Damasus presided and in which St. Ambrose of Milan likewise took part, considers the following books to be Holy Scripture: the Lamentation of Jeremiah, the Wisdom of Solomon, the Wisdom of Sirach, Tobit, Esther, Judith, and two books of the Maccabees.

The venerable John of Damascus likewise considers the book of Esther canonical. As for the Wisdom of Solomon and the Wisdom of Sirach, he says that "although they are excellent and wonderful, they are not among the number (of the canonical books) and did not lie in the Ark."

St. Cyril of Jerusalem includes Esther, Baruch, and the Lamentation and the Letter of Jeremiah in the canon. He also emphasizes that the translation of the Seventy is divinely inspired.

In his Catechism, St. Philaret, metropolitan of Moscow, includes the book of Esther as canonical.

The Synod of Jassy in 1640 recognized the non-canonical books of the Old Testament to be equally divinely inspired and canonical.

Consequently, before us we have the following picture. In addition to the universally accepted list, the majority of authoritative definitions recognize the following books as part of the canon: Esther, Baruch, and the Lamentation and Letter of Jeremiah. We see that for the majority of the holy fathers the canon of the synagogue is not definitive. For by the time when the definitions of the Hebrew originals were compiled, certain of these no longer existed, yet this did not prevent their authority from being acknowledged. Not one of the texts determining the dignity of these books separates them in any way from those universally accepted. For example, the fathers of the Council of Carthage explicitly call them "canonical," the holy apostles call them "honorable and holy," the fathers of Laodicea call them books of the Old Testament, and St. Athanasius calls three of them divine and divinely inspired. Consequently, out of the eleven books usually termed non-canonical, the majority of the canons acknowledge three to be the same as the other books of Scripture.

If we examine these canons, the books that may nominally be called non-canonical include: the Wisdom of Joshua Ben Sirach and (of similar authority) the Wisdom of Solomon, Judith, and Tobit, and two books of the Maccabees, although their significance is greater than that of the Wisdom of Sirach. The third book of Maccabees is mentioned in only one canon, in which it enjoys canonical status. These sacred texts are wonderful and exceptional. But according to St. John they were not in the Ark, and hence they are intended for those joining the Church. It should be noted that 2 and 3 Esdras are not mentioned in a single canon, and hence do not possess sacred authority.

According to tradition, the biblical canon was formed as follows. A prophet would receive a revelation from the Lord and present it to the people of God. Then, after the fullness of the Old Testament Church had acknowledged the book that had been written to be authentic, it was placed before the Lord. Above we have already described how this took place in the time of Moses. The same continued in later times. For example, Moses' successor Joshua "wrote these words in the book of the law of God" (Josh. 24:26). The prophet Samuel expounded "the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord" (1 Sam. 10:25). Ultimately the formulation of the canon is linked to the work of "the Great Synagogue," which included the prophet Daniel. Consequently, those texts that were created after this date in the time of the so-called "silence of the prophets" (this term denotes the period from the prophet Malachi to John the Baptist) had a lesser status for the holy fathers than those that were written previously. This was why, for example, the book of the prophet Baruch and the epistle of Jeremiah were acknowledged as canonical practically by all, while the Wisdom of Sirach was of controversial status, despite the existence of the Hebrew original (which has been rediscovered among the Qumran scrolls).

The book of Judith was most likely written only after the end of the era of the prophets, while the book of Tobit, although written around 612 BC, most likely failed to enter into usage due to the break between the descendants of the ten tribes and the Judeans (its Hebrew text exists, but in far worse condition than that of the Greek).

The dispute over the authority of the book of Esther reflects the dissensions in the Hebrew community regarding its merit. The text that the synagogue adopted does not contain the name of God, and this raised doubts as to its status as divinely inspired. Conversely, the Greek text, which includes a number of prayers and a religious conceptualization of events, gives no grounds for such doubts.

The most controversial of the so-called "deuterocanonical" books is the Wisdom of Solomon. By number of passages included in Orthodox worship, this book ranks among the highest. The majority of the holy fathers recognized it as a sacred book (St. Cyprian of Carthage, St. Dionysius the Areopagite, the hieromartyr Clement of Rome, and others) and as authored by King Solomon. But its Hebrew text has not survived, and a number of canons hold it to be intended for those joining the Church. No serious arguments exist in favor of its later origin. Ideas that were formerly thought to belong to the Epicureans and the Stoics proved typical of the ancient world, as well. For example, the Babylonian discourse of a slave with his master and the Egyptian "Discourse of a Disappointed Man with his Soul" quite accurately reproduce the worldview of Solomon's opponents. The ritual cannibalism of the Canaanites has been archaeologically confirmed (see the findings of excavations of ancient Gezer). Consequently, to this day this book may be the authentic creation of the most-wise king, although its place in the canon remains undetermined.

It should be noted that the church canons know of no so-called non-canonical parts of the canonical texts. For this reason the song of the three youths and the stories of Susannah, the dragon, and Bel in the book of the prophet Daniel, as well as the prayer of Manesseh, king of Judea, in 2 Chronicles, were considered just as canonical as the rest of the text by all the holy fathers. For the Christian Church, from the very beginning the definitive version was not the Hebrew Masoretic text of Scripture (which, as the Qumram discoveries have shown, are by no means the most ancient), but the translation of the Seventy and the Hebrew original on which it was based. It is this text which the New Testament authors most frequently quote, all of patristic exegesis is based upon it, it was adopted into the liturgical life of the Church, and most interestingly it is this text which the most

ancient manuscripts from the Dead Sea caves replicate. As Barry Setterfield wrote, "There are 170 manuscripts from 11 Qumram caves and fragments from Masada—all dated before AD 100. The second group unites the manuscripts from the caves of Wadi Murabba'at and Nahal Tze'elim. These were concealed there soon after AD 100. These two groups contain two different types of texts. The one dated prior to AD 100 contains a text that coincides with quotes from Christ, the apostles, and the fathers of the early Church. The one dated after AD 100 contains a text identical to that translated in our own Old Testament [this refers to western translations from the Masoretic version—*Auth*]. Prof. S.H. Haury, archaeologist (*Ministry*, Nov. 1987, p. 5), says, 'The Qumram and Masada manuscripts presumably comprise examples of the texts of ancient Hebrew Scripture that were widespread in the time of Jesus and the apostles.' The watershed between the two texts became the Council of Jamnia, held around AD 100. The Talmud contains numerous references to this."

Consequently, adherence to the authority of the Hebrew canon, which was formed after the old Israel apostatized from God, cannot be considered obligatory for us, the more so since in a number of cases textual discrepancies with the Septuagint have been confirmed by archaeological discoveries. For example, the assertion in the book of Joshua that the stone knives were buried along with the body of Joshua himself, an assertion that was retained in the Septuagint, was born out by the discovery of a grave containing stone knives in the very place described by Scripture. Similarly, the account in 1 Kings concerning the marriage of Jeroboam to the princess Ano, daughter of Thekemina, the wife of Pharaoh (1 Kg. 12:24), is confirmed by the discovery of a pitcher from Kanop (located in the Metropolitan Museum in New York) bearing the name of this princess, who is called the daughter of Thutmose III.

Most important of all, however, is that the authority of the translation of the Seventy, and consequently of the canon of Scripture which it contains, was always recognized by the Church to be divinely inspired. The hieromartyr Irenaeus of Lyons says that through this translation "God was glorified, and the Scriptures were recognized to be truly divine ... and the gentiles understood that the Scriptures were translated by the inspiration of God." Furthermore, this most authoritative author, who studied

under the hieromartyr Polycarp and was the spiritual “grandson” of the apostle John, asserts that the adoption of the translation of the Seventy is part of apostolic Tradition. “The apostles, being more ancient than all these heretics, are in accord with the translation mentioned, and the translation is in accord with the tradition of the apostles. For Peter, John, Matthew, Paul, and the other apostles, together with their followers, proclaimed all the sayings of the prophets just as they are contained in the translation of the elders. One and the same Spirit of God, Who through the prophets proclaimed what the coming of the Lord should be, and by means of the elders interpreted well what was well spoken by the prophets.” After this we can hardly hold that the voice of an apostate synagogue and of impious Protestants is of greater import than the voice of the apostles and the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 7

The Plagues of Egypt

When Moses returned to Egypt, the Hebrew people recognized him as a messenger of God. Then he and his brother Aaron went to Pharaoh and demanded that he release the Hebrews for a feast of Him That Is in the wilderness; otherwise He would bring plagues upon Egypt. But Pharaoh replied: “I do not know the Lord and I will not let the people go.”

And Pharaoh ordered that the labors of the people be increased, because he said, “You are idle, idle, and this is why you wish to serve God.”

Then God said to Moses that the time had come to show forth His might upon Egypt. Moses and Aaron again came to Pharaoh, and Aaron cast down his rod before him. And the rod became a serpent. The magicians of Egypt then did the same. But the rod of Aaron devoured the rods of the Egyptians. The symbol of Pharaoh was a cobra, and the fact that it was miraculously devoured by the transfigured rod of Aaron showed that the power of the king was insignificant before God. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he refused to obey God.

Then the plagues began. In the morning Moses went out to meet Pharaoh as he was coming to the Nile, and he struck the water. The water immediately turned to blood, so that everything living in it died. The magicians of Egypt worked similar charms upon the water. Pharaoh refused to be brought to his senses by this miracle, although God showed that it is He Who is the lord of the waters, and that the Nile was not a god, as the Egyptians believed.

A week after the first miracle the Lord sent a second plague upon Egypt. Suddenly at Moses' command the earth was filled with frogs, which were in the food and in the beds of the Egyptians. Pharaoh asked for mercy, and all the frogs died, but he did not release the Hebrews.

Then at Moses' word Aaron struck the dust of the earth with his rod. Immediately a great many lice fell upon the Egyptians and their cattle. The magicians attempted to imitate the prophet in this also, but failed.

They said to Pharaoh, "It is the finger of God."

But Pharaoh, as God had foretold, hardened his heart and did not let the people go.

The next morning Moses met Pharaoh at the water and foretold a new plague—an invasion of flies (a large sort of gad-fly). And so it occurred. The next day numerous flies descended, and wild beasts came from the wilderness, but the land of Goshen, where the Hebrews lived, was unharmed. Pharaoh offered to let them sacrifice to God in Egypt, but Moses refused. At first Pharaoh agreed to let the people go, but when at the prophet's prayer the flies departed he refused to keep his promise.

Then the Lord brought a plague upon the cattle of the Egyptians, but none among the Hebrews died. Once again, Pharaoh refused to obey the Creator, though He had clearly shown that no animals (whether oxen or sheep) could be gods.

The time of the sixth plague arrived. Moses and Aaron took handfuls of dust and cast them toward heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. Immediately dust arose over Egypt, and inflamed boils appeared upon all the Egyptians and all their cattle. The magicians could no longer withstand Moses, for they were all covered with boils. But this plague too failed to recall Pharaoh to his senses, so great was his pride.

In the morning Moses relayed God's words to Pharaoh:

"I will send plagues upon your heart and upon your servants, that you might know that there is none like unto Me in all the earth. I could have destroyed you and your people from off the face of the earth. But I have preserved you, to show My might upon you, and so that My name might be glorified throughout the earth. Tomorrow morning I will send hail upon Egypt, such as has not been seen since time began."

Those who believed Moses gathered their flocks and servants into their houses, while those who did not turn to the Lord left everything in the fields. Then at the Lord's command Moses raised his rod to heaven, and hail mixed with fire fell upon Egypt. Terrible lightning struck the earth, and fire flowed, consuming everything, nor did the hail hinder it. All who were in the fields perished, the grass was burned up, and the trees were broken. Pharaoh was frightened, but when at Moses' command the hail ceased, he again disobeyed God. The king proposed that only the men go into the wilderness, but that the children remain as hostages in Egypt (to this day people often say that one must not force faith upon children—that they will choose for themselves when they grow up).

Then God sent locusts upon the land, who flew in with an east wind. They covered the whole earth and devoured everything that the hail had spared. Pharaoh hastily summoned the prophet and entreated him to save him from death. Then Moses prayed to God, and a west wind carried the away locusts and cast them into the Red Sea. Once again, the king broke his promise.

Then the ninth plague began. Moses stretched out his hands to heaven, and a palpable darkness from the abyss of hades came upon Egypt. For three days the Egyptians could not see each other, but for the Hebrews there was light.

Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and said, "Go, offer worship to God, only leave your belongings here."

But the prophet replied that they would take everything with them in order to sacrifice to God. Pharaoh was enraged and refused to let them go. He said to Moses and Aaron, "Do not come before my face again, or you will die."

"As you have said, so shall it be," answered Moses. "We shall see your face no more."

Chapter 8

The Exodus: The Passover of the Lord

The Lord told Moses that he would inflict a final, tenth plague upon Egypt, and that Pharaoh would let the people go. He commanded the Hebrews to offer a lamb as a sacrifice of redemption, that they might be saved from great vengeance. The lamb was to be perfect, from among the sheep or the goats, sufficient for the household. It was to be a year-old male. The lamb was to be chosen on the tenth day of the first month of spring, and it was to be slaughtered in the evening of the fourteenth day. Its blood was to be smeared upon the door posts, and its meat was to be roasted. That night it was to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. It was to be eaten whole, with the head, the legs, and the entrails, and all that was not eaten was to be burned with fire. It was not to be left until morning, nor were the bones to be broken. Those who partook of the sacrifice were to be dressed, girded, and holding their staffs. It was the Passover of the Lord.

The Israelites did as they had been commanded. They slew the lamb, smeared the door posts using hyssop (a particularly fragrant herb), and partook of the sacrifice. The dread night of the fourteenth day of the first month arrived. The Israelites gathered in their homes and partook of the sacred sacrifice. None was permitted to go outside until morning.

At midnight the Lord passed through Egypt, and before His face there went an angel of death. He passed over all the houses where he saw the sign of the blood upon the door posts. All the other houses the angel filled with death. He slew all the first-born, from the son of Pharaoh to the son of the prison inmate. For this reason this greatest of feasts is called Passover, or Pascha (from the Hebrew word *pesach*—"to pass over"), for none of the Hebrews perished, and not even the dogs made a sound. But in the houses of the Egyptians a terrible wailing and lamenting arose, for there was not a house in which none had died.

Immediately Pharaoh summoned Moses to him, and with his face veiled in mourning he commanded the Hebrews to depart from Egypt. And the Hebrews went forth, together with numerous others who had joined them, from the land of their slavery. This occurred on the same night when Abraham had departed from Harran 430 years before.

The deliverance of the Hebrews from death was a figure of our great Pascha—the deliverance from the bonds of Satan, the noetic Pharaoh.

According to Gregory the Theologian, Christ the paschal Lamb, “that great ... Victim ... was a purification, not for a part of the world, nor for a short time, but for the whole world and for all time. For this reason a Lamb was chosen [Ex. 12:5] for its innocence, and its clothing of the original nakedness. For such is the Victim, That was offered for us, Who is both in Name and fact the Garment of incorruption. And He was a perfect Victim not only on account of His Godhead, than which nothing is more perfect; but also on account of that which He assumed having been anointed with Deity, and having become one with That which anointed It, and I am bold to say, made equal with God. A Male, because offered for Adam; or rather the Stronger for the strong, when the first Man had fallen under sin; and chiefly because there is in Him nothing feminine, nothing unmanly; but He burst from the bonds of the Virgin-Mother’s womb with much power, and a Male was brought forth by the Prophetess, as Isaiah declares the good tidings [Is. 8:3]. And of a year old, because He is the Sun of Righteousness [Mal. 4:2], setting out from heaven, and circumscribed by His visible Nature, and returning unto Himself. And ‘The blessed crown of Goodness’ [Ps. 64:12]—being on every side equal to Himself and alike; and not only this, but also as giving life to all the circle of the virtues, gently commingled and intermixed with each other, according to the Law of Love and Order. And Immaculate and guileless, as being the Healer of faults, and of the defects and taints that come from sin. For though He both took on Him our sins and bare our diseases, yet He did not Himself suffer aught that needed healing. ... The First Month is introduced, or rather the beginning of months [Ex. 12:2], whether it was so among the Hebrews from the beginning, or was made so later on this account, and became the first in consequence of the Mystery;

and the tenth of the Month, for this is the most complete number, of units the first perfect unit, and the parent of perfection. And it is kept until the fifth day, perhaps because the Victim, of Whom I am speaking, purifies the five senses, from which comes falling into sin, and around which the war rages, inasmuch as they are open to the incitements to sin. And it was chosen, not only out of the lambs, but also out of the inferior species, which are placed on the left hand—the kids; because He is sacrificed not only for the righteous, but also for sinners; and perhaps even more for these, inasmuch as we have greater need of His mercy. And we need not be surprised that a lamb for a house should be required as the best course, but if that could not be, then one might be obtained by contributions (owing to poverty) for the houses of a family; because it is clearly best that each individual should suffice for his own perfecting, and should offer his own living sacrifice holy unto God Who called him, being consecrated at all times and in every respect. But if that cannot be, then that those who are akin in virtue and of like disposition should be made use of as helpers. For I think this provision means that we should communicate of the Sacrifice to those who are nearest, if there be need. Then comes the Sacred Night, the Anniversary of the confused darkness of the present life, into which the primæval darkness is dissolved, and all things come into life and rank and form, and that which was chaos is reduced to order. Then we flee from Egypt, that is from sullen persecuting sin; and from Pharaoh the unseen tyrant, and the bitter taskmasters, changing our quarters to the world above; and are delivered from the clay and the brick-making, and from the husks and dangers of this fleshly condition, which for most men is only not overpowered by mere husklike calculations. Then the Lamb is slain, and act and word are sealed with the Precious Blood; that is, habit and action, the sideposts of our doors; I mean, of course, of the movements of mind and opinion, which are rightly opened and closed by contemplation, since there is a limit even to thoughts. Then the last and gravest plague upon the persecutors, truly worthy of the night; and Egypt mourns the first-born of her own reasonings and actions. ... The whole air is full of the cry and clamour of the Egyptians; and then the Destroyer of them shall withdraw from us in reverence of the Unction. Then the removal of leaven; that is, of the old and sour

wickedness, not of that which is quickening and makes bread; for seven days, a number which is of all the most mystical, and is co-ordinate with this present world, that we may not lay in provision of any Egyptian dough, or relic of Pharisaic or ungodly teaching. Well, let them lament; we will feed on the Lamb toward evening—for Christ's Passion was in the completion of the ages; because too He communicated His Disciples in the evening with His Sacrament, destroying the darkness of sin; and not sodden, but roast [8, 9]—that our word may have in it nothing that is unconsidered or watery, or easily made away with; but may be entirely consistent and solid, and free from all that is impure and from all vanity. And let us be aided by the good coals, kindling and purifying our minds from Him That cometh to send fire on the earth [Lk. 12:49], that shall destroy all evil habits, and to hasten its kindling. Whatsoever then there be, of solid and nourishing in the Word, shall be eaten with the inward parts and hidden things of the mind, and shall be consumed and given up to spiritual digestion; aye, from head to foot, that is, from the first contemplations of Godhead to the very last thoughts about the Incarnation. Neither let us carry aught of it abroad, nor leave it till the morning [10]; because most of our Mysteries may not be carried out to them that are outside, nor is there beyond this night any further purification; and procrastination is not creditable to those who have a share in the Word. ... But whatever is of bony nature and not fit for food and hard for us even to understand, this must not be broken [10]; that is, badly divined and misconceived (I need not say that in the history not a bone of Jesus was broken, even though His death was hastened by His crucifiers on account of the Sabbath); nor must it be stripped off and thrown away, lest that which is holy should be given to the dogs, that is, to the evil hearers of the Word; just as the glorious pearl of the Word is not to be cast before swine; but it shall be consumed with the fire with which the burnt offerings also are consumed, being refined and preserved by the Spirit That searcheth and knoweth all things. ...

“Nor would it be right for us to pass over the manner of this eating either, for the Law does not do so, but carries its mystical labour even to this point in the literal enactment. Let us consume the Victim in haste, eating It with unleavened bread, with bitter herbs, and with our loins girded, and our shoes on our feet,

and leaning on staves like old men [11]; with haste, that we fall not into that fault which was forbidden to Lot by the commandment, that we look not around, nor stay in all that neighbourhood, but that we escape to the mountain, that we be not overtaken by the strange fire of Sodom [Gen. 19:17], nor be congealed into a pillar of salt in consequence of our turning back to wickedness; for this is the result of delay. With bitter herbs, for a life according to the Will of God is bitter and arduous, especially to beginners, and higher than pleasures. For although the new yoke is easy and the burden light, as you are told [Mt. 11:30], yet this is on account of the hope and the reward, which is far more abundant than the hardships of this life. ... Let that part of your being which is the seat of passion, and which neighs, as Holy Scripture calls it [Jer. 5:8], when sweeping away this shameful passion, be restrained by a girdle of continence, so that you may eat the Passover purely, having mortified your members which are upon the earth [Col. 3:5].”¹⁴⁸

Chapter 9

The Crossing of the Red Sea

Thus, late at night on the fourteenth day of the first month, the Hebrews and the Egyptians who had converted to the Creator and joined them left Egypt. This took place on the day when Abraham had left Haran 430 years previous. The flight was so sudden that even the leaven did not have time to ferment. When leaving, at the Lord’s command the Hebrews despoiled the Egyptians. In this way they took what they had earned over their years of slavery. Here the Church sees an indication that Christians must make use of both what is their own and everything good that pagan culture has created, for every good thing is from God. Remembering the command of Joseph, the Israelites took his bones with them as relics.

¹⁴⁸ Gregory the Theologian, Homily 45, “The Second Oration on Easter” (NPNF² 7:428–430).

The Lord Himself prepared a path for Israel. He went before them by day in the form of a cloud, and at night in the form of a pillar of fire. And so it continued throughout their sojourn in the wilderness. He did not lead them by the shortest path to Palestine, lest the people should be fearful of war, but led them to the Red Sea. When Pharaoh learned of this, he decided that the Hebrews had become lost, and his hard heart rebelled against God for the last time.

"Why did we let the Hebrews go," said Pharaoh, "that they should serve us no longer?"

Immediately he assembled all the chariots of Egypt and set out in pursuit of the Israelites. The army caught up with the people of God on the shore of the sea, when they had nowhere to flee. The Israelites became terribly afraid and cried out to Moses: "Were there not enough coffins in Egypt, that you have brought us forth to die in the wilderness?"

But Moses, praying in spirit, said to them, "Fear not; stand and you will see the salvation of the Lord, for thus you shall never see the Egyptians again."

In answer to the wordless entreaty of the prophet, God said to him, "Why do you cry out to Me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. Then strike the water with your rod, and the waters will be divided. I will show My glory upon Pharaoh and upon all his hosts."

The pillar of fire stood between the Egyptians and the Hebrews and did not allow them to draw closer throughout the night. Furthermore, it illumined the night for the latter, but was darkness for the former. Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and a hurricane drove the sea apart. The water stood like glass walls, to the right and to the left, and the Hebrews passed through the sea as on dry land. Seeing this, Pharaoh gave the order to attack, and the chariots of Egypt sped toward the people of God. Then the pillar of cloud inclined toward them, and God bound the axles of the chariots. The Egyptians were seized with panic. They decided to flee, but it was too late.

The Lord said to Moses, "Strike your rod upon the water in the opposite direction, and the sea will come together."

This he did, and the waters came crashing down upon the rebels. Not one of the Egyptians escaped. The Ipuwer Papyrus and the inscription of El Arish confirm this account of the Bible.

There it is said that the last pharaoh of Egypt's Middle Kingdom, Tiu-Tom, perished in a whirlpool while pursuing slaves who had rebelled. After this, the entire country was conquered by the Asiatic Hyksos.

In the morning the Israelites saw their enemies dead upon the shore. Thus they beheld the great might of the Lord. Then they sang to Him a song of thanksgiving (which to this day is chanted in the morning in the churches). And the sister of Moses together with the women danced to the music of the timbrel and sang hymns of salvation:

"Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

This great miracle of God foreshadowed our salvation in baptism. We too were pursued by a great foe—that is, by Satan. But Christ (of Whom Moses was a figure) sundered the waters for us. The Holy Spirit, who appeared then in the pillar of cloud, led us through them, and all the power of our foe perished in the sacred waters. Having received this ineffable gift, we too must spend our whole life glorifying the Savior.

After Pharaoh perished in the Red Sea, the people of God traveled along the shore of the Gulf of Suez to the south. And as Deuteronomy relates, the Lord "went in the way before you [the Hebrews], to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to shew you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day" (Deut. 1:33). Tradition adds that the cloud covered the camp of Israel like a tent throughout its sojourn.

Skeptics consider this miracle either a mere myth or an account of a torch intended for protection from predators and to orient the caravans, which in the East travel by night due to the heat. Contrary to this opinion, however, the aforementioned Egyptian witness to the plagues, Ipuwer, writes, "Behold, the fire has gone up on high, and its burning goes forth against the enemies of the land. Behold, things have been done which have not happened for a long time past; the king has been deposed by the rabble. Behold, he who was buried as a falcon [that is, the king] [is devoid] of biers, and what the pyramid concealed has become empty [that is, the tomb of the king]."¹⁴⁹ Before us we

¹⁴⁹ *The Admonitions of Ipuwer*, Andre Dollinger, trans., after R.O. Faulkner.

have the same phenomenon that is described in the Bible. The unusual destruction of a pharaoh who fought against the rabble, from whom a flame went up, clearly confirms the Scriptures.

The pillar of fire is not a fable or a torch, but a manifestation of the glory of God, a sign of His presence. Similar miracles occurred later, as well. A pillar of cloud stood above the tabernacle. The same pillar sanctified the temple of Solomon. The Holy Spirit appeared upon Tabor in the form of a light-bearing cloud. This same sign of God's presence accompanied the Savior's Ascension.

The next place of encampment after the crossing of the sea was in Marah (which means "bitterness"). There the prophet Moses made the water sweet by placing into it a tree which God had shown him, as a prefiguration of the live-giving cross, which sweetens the bitterness of our life. The location of Marah is pointed out in the Oyun Musa region, 32 km from Suez. Incidentally, there exists an opinion that this is most likely the place of the crossing, and that Marah is the 'Ain Hawarah spring, 60 km away from the northern edge of the Red Sea. This is a hot spring with saline and sulfuric water.

The next place of encampment is Elim, where there were 12 wells and 70 palm trees. Today Elim is the city of Tor, the capital of Egypt's South Sinai Governorate. Today only one of the salt water wells is accessible, and it has recently been turned into a health resort. There are now over 1,000 palms in Elim.

The next encampment locations are also easily identified. The wilderness of Sin is the plain of El Qaa. There for the first time manna fell from heaven, and in the morning the people were fed with quail.

Manna is of course not produced by the aphids that feed parasitically on the tamarisk, as skeptics claim. In actuality the properties of manna are unlike the properties of the sap of the tamarisk that is passed off as the "bread of angels." The Hebrews fed on the former for forty years, while the latter is suitable only as a side dish. The former fell in extraordinary fashion (on Friday enough fell for two days, while on Saturday none fell at all), and also rotted in extraordinary fashion if left until morning on a weekday, while on Saturday it did not spoil. The manna was miraculously stored in a vessel for grain (an omer) for many cen-

turies (Ex. 16:32). The vessel stood in the tabernacle, then in the temple, and the priests would periodically show it to the people, attesting to God's care for those who remain faithful to Him. It was a miracle that no matter how much of it the Hebrews gathered, all were found to have an equal amount (Ex. 16:18). Nothing of the sort occurs with tamarisk sap. It can go for months without spoiling if kept from ants. Finally, it could not possibly have been sufficient to feed two or three million Israelites. In the course of a year only a few hundredweight of this product is produced on the entire Sinai peninsula. Consequently, all attempts to equate the two foodstuffs must be abandoned.

We ought not to think that the entire history of this miraculous food, which was a prefiguration of the divine Eucharist (Jn. 6), is a mere fairy tale. Flavius Josephus said that the manna covered the earth like snow. And the Hebrew traditions relate that the manna fell from the clouds (cf. Ps. 77:23–24) in such quantities that not only the people but all the animals also fed on it (otherwise it would be perfectly impossible to explain how the animals could have survived in the wilderness for forty years).

These accounts could be considered the product of an over-active imagination, were it not for the numerous accounts preserved in the memories of many nations of the world, concerning how after a terrible catastrophe an extraordinary honeyed food fell upon the earth. For example, the Greeks and the Romans recall ambrosia—the food of the gods. Similar accounts are found in the texts of the Rigveda and the Egyptian Book of the Dead. Furthermore, not only folk tales but even historical accounts describe this extraordinary food. “The heavens poured forth oil, and the waters flowed with honey,” relates a text from Ugarit, and the Egyptians relate that for a time the waters of the Nile were half honey.

In the same way the migrations of the quail, which ordinarily take place in the spring (on the fifteenth day of the second month, or in late April to early May), but here coincided with this event (Ex. 16), are linked to the direct intervention of God, Who brought the birds so that Israel might be fed. According to ancient Arabic sources, a terrible wave that drained the shores of the Red Sea, and a catastrophic earthquake that destroyed the entire shore and central Arabia, led to the sudden migrations

of both men (the Amalekites who fled from Mecca following its destruction) and animals, who were joined by the quails in their hasty flight.

According to the Lord (Jn. 6), manna, the bread from heaven, was a prefiguration of the holy Eucharist, which preserves us in the wilderness of this life. Manna was created by God, while Communion unites us with the eternal Creator. Those who ate of the manna died, while those who eat of the Lord's Flesh will live eternally.

The next encampment was in Rephidim, where Moses brought forth water from a rock (Ex. 17:1–7). The place where this miracle occurred is located on the edge of the village of Santa Caterina. There stands a granite stone with twelve openings, which clearly gave forth water. It is well known that water will never flow from a granite cliff, no matter how much it is struck. Consequently, this clearly attests to the miracle wrought by the Lord.

The prophet Moses himself, addressing the eyewitnesses of the miracle, said that the Lord “brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint” (Deut. 8:15)—something that could not possibly have occurred naturally. The psalms likewise relate that the water flowed in a river (Ps. 104:40), so that a lake was formed (Ps. 113:8), which likewise would have been impossible for a small spring of water oozing forth from limestone. Nor could any ordinary spring have been sufficient to slake the thirst of two or three million people with their enormous herds.

The apostle Paul writes that this stone that brought forth water was a symbol of Christ, who through the blow of a wooden rod (a prefiguration of the cross) brought forth the water of the Holy Spirit. “All [did] drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10:4). From this phrase it follows that the apostle shared the traditional Hebrew belief that the rock not only brought forth water once, but that it followed the camp during their sojourn in the wilderness (is it not located close to Sinai to this day?). The statement that the rock “was Christ,” and not “a prefiguration of Christ,” is because the Lord God Himself, Who took on flesh and became Christ, stood above the rock.

In Rephidim the Israelites were attacked by the Amalekites, who slew all the weak and the stragglers. Moses commanded

Hoshea the son of Nun to give battle. That he might be victorious, Moses renamed him Joshua, thereby foretelling the name of the great Conqueror of the devil.

The prophet himself went up into a mountain and prayed with upraised arms. When his arms grew weary and sank down, the Amalekites prevailed, but when his arms were raised up to God the Hebrews prevailed. Seeing this, Aaron and Hur sat Moses upon a rock and upheld his arms, and the people of God emerged victorious. This event itself prefigured the crucifixion of Christ the Savior, Who stretched out His hands upon the cross and crushed the foe of men.

On this site an altar to God was erected, which was called Jehovahnissi—"The Lord is my standard."

And Moses wrote: "Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." Such is the testimony of the eternal conflict between God and the noetic Amalek, the devil, which will end on the day when God gathers all nations before Him on the Day of Judgment.

Chapter 10

The Appearance of God on Sinai

In the third month after the exodus, the people of Israel approached Mount Sinai and there made camp. God forewarned Moses that in three days He Himself would appear to the people and make his Covenant with them. The people were to sanctify themselves so as not to perish before the face of God. They were not to approach the holy mountain until the glory of God had departed from its peak. Anyone who touched it was to be slain by a stone or an arrow. Thus the Lord forbade all who refused to cleanse their mind of sin to approach the mysteries of the divine life.

Three days later (on the fiftieth day after the Passover) God descended in fire upon Mount Sinai. Thick clouds surrounded the mountain, and smoke rose from the mountain. The fire reached

up to the heavens, and the mountain shook greatly. Lightning flashed in all directions. The angels accompanying the Creator trumpeted, and the sound of the trumpets grew ever louder. Moses spoke, and God answered him with His voice. The people shook in terror, and they retreated in fear. Then God spoke the Ten Commandments:

The First Commandment: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

The Second Commandment: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

The Third Commandment: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

The Fourth Commandment: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

The Fifth Commandment: "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

The Sixth Commandment: "Thou shalt not kill."

The Seventh Commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

The Eighth Commandment: "Thou shalt not steal."

The Ninth Commandment: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

The Tenth Commandment: “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.”

After this God forbade worshiping idols and established several other laws governing behavior. He promised that if the people would keep their covenant with God, the angel of God would go before them and would lead them into the promised land.

When Moses proclaimed all the words of God to the people, all the people promised to obey the words of the Lord. Moses wrote down all the commandments of God and set up an altar at the foot of the mountain. There the firstborn youths offered sacrifice to God, and Moses sprinkled the altar with blood, and with half the blood he sprinkled the book of the covenant (the Bible) and the people, saying, “Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.”

Thus was the Old Covenant solemnly made between God and men, and sealed with the blood of sacrifice. This blood prefigured the redeeming blood of Christ.

After the law had been given, God commanded Moses, Aaron, and seventy elders to ascend Mount Sinai in order to worship God from afar. There they saw the place of God, like unto a cut sapphire: this was an image of the soul when it is freed from passions. And they ate and drank before the face of God, symbolizing the sacrament of Communion.

Chapter 11

The Significance of the Law

Why was the law necessary? According to the apostle Paul, it was given in order that men might diagnose themselves. They thought they were good, for they liked the manner of life which they were leading. But the Creator gave a law that showed their righteousness to be the fruit of self-deception. In actuality they had withdrawn far from the will of God.

The law became a schoolmaster to lead them to Christ. It did not permit men to destroy themselves through sin, and it prevented their self-destruction. Men's freedom was constrained, for they were still children, incapable of freely serving the Creator. All the commandments of Moses prevented the people from sliding into the swamp of satanization. And the animal sacrifices told them that the innocent blood of the Savior must be spilt, which is able to cleanse them from sin. Only then would true freedom enter a man, and the law of God would be written by the Holy Spirit upon the heart of every believer who like a son would do the will of his Heavenly Father. Then the need for outward observance of the Mosaic Law would fall away. But its inner substance would remain forever. And so it happened after the death of Jesus Christ, Whose Sacrifice supplanted all the sacrifices of the law, and Whose commandments revealed the meaning of the Scriptures.

Chapter 12

The Golden Calf

After the Old Covenant had been enacted, at the command of God Moses ascended the mountain with Joshua in order to give him the stone tablets of the law. And the cloud of the glory of God covered the mountain, and the form of His glory upon the peak was as a consuming fire. Moses went into the midst of the cloud and was upon the mountain where God was for forty days.

Aaron and Hur were left to govern the people. When the Hebrews saw that Moses was a long time in descending from the mountain, they went to Aaron and demanded that he make them a god to lead them, since the fate of Moses was unknown. Hur attempted to restrain the people, but they killed him. Then Aaron commanded their wives to remove their earrings and ornaments, thinking that they would not wish to part with them. But they gladly gave up their adornments to be made into an idol. Then

Aaron made them a golden calf and said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. ... To morrow is a feast to the Lord."

In the morning the Hebrews offered sacrifices to the idol, then sat down to eat and drink, and began to indulge in wantonness. God said to Moses, "Go, get thee down; for thy people have corrupted themselves: they have made them a molten calf. Quickly have they corrupted themselves! This is a stiffnecked people. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation."

But Moses began to entreat the Lord to spare the apostates for the sake of His name and for the sake of the covenant promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Then the Lord took pity upon the people, being inclined to mercy by the intercessions of Moses. The prophet began to descend from the mountain, carrying the two stone tablets with the commandments written upon them. These were created by the hands of God. Along the way he was joined by Joshua the son of Nun. As they approached the camp, they heard cries and songs. "It is the noise of war," cried out the warlike Joshua. "No, I heard songs and dances," replied Moses. When they approached the camp, they saw the calf and the dancing. Moses grew hot with anger and broke the tablets, for the people had broken their alliance with the Creator. He took the calf, burned it up with fire, ground it to dust, sprinkled the dust upon water, and gave it to the Hebrews to drink. And Moses stood in the gates of the camp: "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me." But only the descendants of Levi came to him. Then Moses commanded that the stubborn idolaters be executed. And three thousand people fell at their hands. The next day Moses went up into the mountain to entreat God for mercy. He asked the Creator, "O Lord, forgive them their sin. If not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book into which thou hast written me." "Who-soever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto a land flowing with milk and honey. Behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way."

Hearing their sentence, the people wept and took off their ornaments as a sign of penitence. Moses set up a tent for himself outside the camp, and whoever sought the Lord would go out to him. By this he prefigured Jesus Christ, Who was crucified outside the city, through Whom we have access to the Father. When Moses would go into the tent, a pillar of cloud would descend and stand before the entrance to the tent, and God would speak face to face with Moses as a man speaks with his friend. Seeing this, the people worshiped, each from his own place.

Chapter 13

The Building of the Tabernacle

When Moses was on the mountain, God showed him the heavenly prototype of the temple—an image of the universe with Christ at its head. He explained its purpose to the prophet and commanded that he build a copy upon the earth. When Moses descended from the mountain a second time, at the Lord's command he appointed Bezaleel and others to be builders of a portable temple—the tabernacle. Guided by the Holy Spirit, all Israel built a temple tent.

In the temple there were three parts: the court, which all the Israelites entered; the sanctuary, where the priests served; and the holy of holies, which the high priest entered once a year. In the court stood a brass altar, upon which sacrifices offered to God were burned. This symbolized the cross of Christ. There also stood a brass laver for sacred ablutions, which symbolized baptism. In the sanctuary there burned a seven-branched candlestick, symbolizing the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and there stood an altar of incense, indicating the prayers of the saints. There was also a table bearing the twelve loaves of shewbread, placed there in memory of the tribes of Israel and foretelling the twelve apostles.

The holy of holies was separated from the sanctuary by a curtain, upon which cherubim were embroidered. This cur-

tain indicates the angelic host standing guard over the world and contemplating God. In the most mystical place of the tabernacle stood the ark of the covenant, a special chest in which lay two stone slabs: the tablets upon which the Ten Commandments were written by the hand of God. Above the lid of the ark, overshadowed by icons of cherubim, the voice of God was sometimes heard revealing His will. This lid was called the mercy seat, or “place of cleansing,” for once a year the high priest would sprinkle it with blood to cleanse the sins of the people. This lid is an image of Christ the Redeemer, Who cleanses our sins. The ark of the covenant is a symbol of the Theotokos, adorned with the Holy Spirit, within whom God the Word became man.

When Moses sanctified the tabernacle, the cloud of the glory of God entered the tabernacle, so that no one could enter it to serve there. The cloud of God later ascended and stood over the tabernacle by day, while at night it glowed with fire. This glory rests invisibly in our temples to this day.

Chapter 14

The Old Testament Priesthood

In the tabernacle God established special ministers—priests whom He chose from among the descendants of Aaron, the brother of Moses. These were to serve the Lord, offer sacrifices to Him, burn incense, and explain the law of God to the people. The high priest presided over them, arrayed in special vestments that symbolized the whole world. The priests performed the usual services, in which they were aided by the Levites—the descendants of Levi, one of the progenitors of the Hebrew nation. These were appointed to their ministry by Moses, who offered a sacrifice and anointed Aaron and his children to their ministry with sanctified fragrant oil called myrrh. For eight days after their consecration they were not to leave the sanctuary. The high

priests prefigured Christ the Redeemer, Who entered the heavenly sanctuary by means of His own blood to deliver the whole world from sin.

On the eighth day Aaron offered a sacrifice to God and blessed the people in the name of the Lord. And the glory of God appeared to the people. Fire went out from the Lord and consumed the sacrifices offered upon the altar, and all the people fell upon their faces in reverent fear and worshiped.

God revealed Himself not only as a source of blessing, but also as a power that metes out retribution for sin. Nadab and Abihu went into the tabernacle, and instead of the fire that had descended from heaven they placed strange fire into the censer, which God had not permitted. Immediately fire went out from the Lord and consumed them, leaving their clothing untouched. Thus God showed that He forbids introducing the strange fire of one's own inventions and impure life into the mysteries of God.

Chapter 15

The Spies in the Holy Land

The Hebrews stopped in the wilderness of Paran, in the oasis of Kadesh-Barnea. And Moses sent spies to scout out Canaan.

The spies left Kadesh soon after the feast of Pentecost (the twenty-eighth day of the month of Sivan, or June), and returned on the eighth day of the month of Av (August). During these forty days they made the long journey to Rehob. This city is mentioned in the letters of Tell el-Amarna. It is located between the lake of Merom and the Litani River, from which a road leads to the city state of Hamath.

The spies scouted out the entire Holy Land, and in the valley of Eshcol they cut a grape branch that two men bore upon a pole. They also took pomegranates and figs and returned to the camp. The valley of Eshcol is located quite near Hebron. The grapes that grow in this valley are of remarkable size to this day. Even in our

time its grapes can be the size of plums, and a bunch can weigh up to 5 kilograms. The wine from them possesses a particular aroma. An instance like the one recorded in the book of Numbers occurred in 1819, when in Elbek (Syria) a vine grew to a size of 19 pounds, and had to be born on a pole by four workers taking turns by twos. In the interpretation of the venerable Ephraim the Syrian, "The bunch of grapes which two men carried upon a pole, and which hung upon the branch upon which it grew, depicts that the prophets and apostles bore Emmanuel upon themselves, as it were. In another sense this presents us with an image of the cross, while those who bore the bunch of grapes comprise an image of the two thieves."¹⁵⁰ And indeed, this bunch of grapes served as security of the future possession of the Promised Land, and the Body of Christ, that true grape vine (Jn. 15:1), is a security of entrance into the eternal Kingdom for communicants. But it is also a stern reminder for us Christians. For just as all the Hebrews, except for the children, perished in the wilderness and did not enter Canaan, so we also, if we do not become like children in meekness, likewise risk remaining forever in the terrible wilderness of sin.

Upon returning to Moses and to all the people, the spies brought the fruits of the land and said, "That land surely floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great. There we saw the giants. We were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the land eateth up the inhabitants thereof."

Indeed, archaeologists have discovered numerous fortified cities with "Cyclopean masonry" standing on practically every hill. An example of this is the excavated walls of Jericho. Interestingly, according to archaeological data, "In the late Middle Bronze (the 16th century BC) the cities were at the peak of their development and may be described as the largest fortifications in the entire history of Palestine." The spies' words that the land devoured its inhabitants are due firstly to the fact that literally just a few months before the Amalekites and their allies had oc-

¹⁵⁰ St. Ephraim the Syrian, *Explanation of the Book of Numbers*.

cupied Palestine, and the traces of the war were still apparent. Secondly, they describe how the cataclysms of the day resulted in the destruction of many. This is also attested by archaeological excavations which show the ruination from that era caused by earthquakes.

Information concerning the giants who lived in the Promised Land is also encountered in the texts of Ugarit. It may be that this refers to the very Neanderthals whose remains have been discovered, among other places, in Canaan. A still greater cause of fear for the Hebrews were the giants' magical abilities. One of the last giants with whom the Israelites later had to contend was Goliath. In addition to his physical strength (consider that his armaments weighed over 60 kg—6,000 shekels of brass armor and a 600-shekel iron spear [1 Sam. 17:5–7]) and his height of over three meters, he employed the power of the pagan gods, that is, the demons (Psalm 151). Another giant, Lahmi, had a spear with a shaft the size of a weaver's beam (1 Chron. 20:5)—a thick wooden beam to which the cloth was attached.

But all these natural considerations must yield to trust in the Word of the Lord. It was this of which one of the spies, Caleb, spoke to the people. Together with Joshua the son of Nun he reported that the Lord would give the land to the Hebrews if they would be faithful to Him. Then the entire community decided to stone them and Moses and to return to Egypt.

There can be no excuse for the unbelief of the Hebrews. Not only had they seen the miracles of the Lord in Egypt and in the Red Sea—they had before their eyes the continual miracle of God's presence: the manna, the pillar of fire, the cloud that covered the camp, the rock that poured forth water and followed the camp. Still more culpable is their fear of gods who had shown themselves to be impotent before the face of the true God.

Then the glory of the Lord appeared to the people, and God said to Moses, "How long will this people provoke me? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they." But Moses entreated the Lord to spare the people for His own sake. And the Creator forgave them for the sake of the prayers of the prophet. But those who had rebelled against Him would die in the wilderness. Only

Calab and Joshua, who had obeyed Him, would enter into the Promised Land.

And immediately the punishment of God befell those impious ones. Fire consumed the spies who had disquieted the spirit of the people. And the Lord pronounced sentence upon the rebels, based upon their own words: "As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward which have murmured against me. Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcases, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise" (Num. 14:28).

But the people again decided to oppose God. Now, citing the Lord's previous command, they resolved to storm the Promised Land from the south, and naturally they were utterly crushed. The Amalekites and the Canaanites, with whom they had allied themselves despite their different origins, routed the Hebrews and pursued them to the descent from the city, to the place that was later called Hormah. Moses remained in the camp with the ark, not wishing to take part in the ungodly undertaking. In this there is a lesson for us. We often try to cite various authorities in support of our deeds which are contrary to our conscience. But just as in the case of the Hebrews, God will not render aid to those who oppose His will, though we should attempt to compromise with our conscience.

Seeing from their own sad example that they could do nothing without the aid of the Lord, the Hebrews were obliged to return to the wilderness and settle at the oasis of Kadesh-Barnea. Today this place is located on the border between Egypt and Israel. There they spent thirty-eight years.

Chapter 16

The Rebellion of Core, Dathan, and Abiron

During the time of the Hebrews' sojourn in Kadesh, one of the largest insurrections against Moses occurred, led by Core, Dathan, and Abiron. Their chief rallying cry was the demand for a universal priesthood. They said, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" (Num. 16:3). Amazing as it may seem, the rallying cries of the mutineers are taken up to this day by Protestants, schismatics, and adherents of Islam, who reject the divinely inspired hierarchy on the pretense that "all are equal before God." It is no accident that nearly all revolutionaries and tyrants attempt to prove their rightness by citing the voice of the people, as though the people as a group cannot be wrong and their will is infallible. The absurdity of this idea is clear to all. For no matter how many negatives one adds up, the sum will never be a positive. However many mistaken people come together, their combined efforts will never produce the truth. In order to learn the truth one must not follow the will of the majority, but obey the revelation of the immutable God.

And so it was that in answer to the mutineers' demands the Lord manifested His glory and power. The ringleaders of the insurrection went down to hades alive, and there they abide to this day in eternal ennui. The hades of the Old Testament is "the abode of darkness and the shadow of death; it is more a place of mindless ennui than a place of deserved punishment, a gloomy Sheol, a place of inescapable disincarnation, hardly touched by a passing dull ray of a sun as yet unrisen, a ray of hopes and expectations as yet unrealized. Thus was revealed the ontological infirmity of a soul which in the separation of death has lost the ability to be the entelechy of its body—the impotence of fallen, wounded nature."

There lies “the land of darkness and the shadow of death; a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness” (Job 10:21–22). And in this gloomy place the souls of the dead which never fade, which are self-aware and remember their past, lead their joyless existence. As Job sorrowfully said, “If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness” (Job 17:13). The kings of the earth sit there upon phantom thrones, the ancient monsters, the antediluvian giants; the heads of nations reclining upon beds, surrounded by their descendants, contemplate their crimes in a terrible half-sleep. Beneath the heads of tyrants and warriors lie swords stained crimson with the blood of the slain. All of them lie in the graves; their swords they have laid beneath their heads, reminding themselves of the savagery with which they inflicted terror upon the earth. They give way to new arrivals in the very depths of the abyss. And at the very bottom of this terrible valley, in filth and stench and amid swarming worms, there dwell the cruelest of sinners. The souls of the accursed there bear their shame, and the evil spirits taunt them (Is. 14, Ezek. 32). Before us unfolds a terrible panorama of the hades into which Core, Dathan, and Abiron descended. Interestingly, paganism offers very similar descriptions of life beyond the grave.

250 other elders were slain by the fire from heaven. The brass censers, having been sanctified by their death, were made into an altar for whole-burnt offerings, as a sign that none might approach it unless called by the Creator. Up until the covenant was altered, this sign of the election of Israel stood before the face of all the tribes, first in the tabernacle, then in the temple of Solomon.

A new confirmation of Aaron’s appointment was the miracle of the rod that budded, prefiguring the virginal birth of Christ the Savior. At the command of God, each of the tribes left a rod from their elders overnight, and in the morning the rod signed with the name of Aaron had put forth leaves, bloomed, and produced almonds. Throughout the time until the destruction of Jerusalem, the rod of Aaron remained a witness to the divine election of the ancient priesthood, for it lay before the ark of the covenant.

This miracle prefigured both the virgin birth of the Lord and the mystery of the cross. As by the power of God a dry stick demonstrated an abundance of life, so also by the power of the Holy Spirit the womb of the Ever-Virgin produced the eternal High Priest, on the one hand. On the other hand, the stick was barren, as the hearts of the gentiles were barren. But the power of Christ's death upon the cross produced eternal life in the souls of idolaters who converted.

Chapter 17

The Wandering in the Wilderness: Traces Throughout History

“Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness. For your fathers tempted Me, they proved Me and saw My works. Forty years long was I grieved with that generation, and I said: They do always err in their hearts. And they have not known My ways; so I swore in Mine anger: They shall not enter into My rest” (Ps. 94:8–11).

In reading the works of atheist scholars one sometimes hears allegations that the entire history of the wandering in the wilderness is either a legend or a highly mythologized account of bygone events. For it is believed that the books recounting these events (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) were written no earlier than the ninth century BC, while some are even dated to the fifth or fourth centuries BC. We have already demonstrated the absurdity of the very principles of biblical criticism that have produced these meaningless dates. But there are even theologians (such as Archpriest Alexander Men) who are willing to acknowledge these anti-Christian conclusions of the false scholars, and for this reason they hold the account of the wandering in the wilderness to be perforated with legends. In this chapter we will examine the archaeological and historical substantiation of the outward canvas of this wandering. In the next

chapter we will attempt to substantiate the antiquity of the laws of the Torah.

To begin with, we will cite a list of the sites of encampment during the journey, which Moses wrote at the Lord's command:

"These are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron. And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the Lord: and these are their journeys according to their goings out. And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians. For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the Lord had smitten among them: upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments. And the children of Israel removed from Rameses, and pitched in Succoth. And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham, which is in the edge of the wilderness. And they removed from Etham, and turned again unto Pihahiroth, which is before Baalzephon: and they pitched before Migdol. And they departed from before Pihahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah. And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim: and in Elim were twelve fountains of water, and threescore and ten palm trees; and they pitched there. And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red sea. And they removed from the Red sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin. And they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin, and encamped in Dophkah. And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush. And they removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink. And they departed from Rephidim, and pitched in the wilderness of Sinai. And they removed from the desert of Sinai, and pitched at Kibrothhattaavah. And they departed from Kibrothhattaavah, and encamped at Hazeroth. And they departed from Hazeroth, and pitched in Rithmah. And they departed from Rithmah, and pitched at Rimmonparez. And they departed from Rimmonparez, and pitched in Libnah. And they removed from Libnah, and pitched at Rissah. And they jour-

neyed from Rissah, and pitched in Kehelathah. And they went from Kehelathah, and pitched in mount Shapher. And they removed from mount Shapher, and encamped in Haradah. And they removed from Haradah, and pitched in Makheloth. And they removed from Makheloth, and encamped at Tahath. And they departed from Tahath, and pitched at Tarah. And they removed from Tarah, and pitched in Mithcah. And they went from Mithcah, and pitched in Hashmonah. And they departed from Hashmonah, and encamped at Moseroth. And they departed from Moseroth, and pitched in Benejaakan. And they removed from Benejaakan, and encamped at Horhagidgad. And they went from Horhagidgad, and pitched in Jotbathah. And they removed from Jotbathah, and encamped at Ebronah. And they departed from Ebronah, and encamped at Eziongaber. And they removed from Eziongaber, and pitched in the wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh.¹⁵¹ And they removed from Kadesh, and pitched in mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom. And Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor at the commandment of the Lord, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first day of the fifth month. And Aaron was an hundred and twenty and three years old when he died in mount Hor. And king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the children of Israel. And they departed from mount Hor, and pitched in Zalmonah. And they departed from Zalmonah, and pitched in Punon. And they departed from Punon, and pitched in Oboth. And they departed from Oboth, and pitched in Ijeabarim, in the border of Moab. And they departed from Iim, and pitched in Dibongad. And they removed from Dibongad, and encamped in Almondiblathaim. And they removed from Almondiblathaim, and pitched in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo. And they departed from the mountains of Abarim, and pitched in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho. And they pitched by Jordan, from Bethjesimoth even unto Abelshittim in the plains of Moab” (Num. 33:1–49).

¹⁵¹ The source text follows the Septuagint, which reads, “And they departed from Gesion Gaber, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin; and they departed from the wilderness of Sin, and encamped in the wilderness of Pharan; this is Cades” (Num. 33:36 LXX).

The next encampment of Israel was in Dophkah. For a long time nothing was known of this place except the name (which means “cattle dealer,” but here associations are found between this word and smelting work). In 1904 Flinders Petrie discovered a place called Serabit el-Khadim, which comprised the remnants of this encampment. “Upon a terrace protruding from a stone face there rose a temple. The faces of goddesses looked out through enormous cows’ eyes from the square pillars of the gates. From beneath the very earth, it seemed, a mass of columns sprouted up, among which one was very tall. Upon the golden sand around numerous stone altars, there survived traces of the remains of burned sacrificial animals. Dark caves yawned upon the surface of the overhanging cliffs, while high above the gorge surged the solid rock of the Sinai mountains.” Inscribed upon the cliff was the name of Ramesses II. Nearby were pits where from the time of Amenemhat III (Middle Kingdom) turquoise was mined.

But most interesting of all was the discovery of inscriptions written using one of the most ancient of all existing alphabets—the Proto-Sinaitic alphabet. Thus was confirmed the account of the book of Exodus concerning how Moses wrote down the words of God into a book at His command (Ex. 17:14). As we recall, according to many ancient authors it was the prophet Moses who invented alphabetical writing, which was first mastered by the Hebrews, then adopted from them by the Phoenicians. The inscriptions found on Sinai confirm what was said by the prophet Amos—that many of the Hebrews were idolaters during the wandering in the wilderness (Amos 5:25–26). There the following inscription is preserved: “Consecrated for Ba’alat.”

The next place of encampment was Alush, where many petroglyphs have been found depicting camels, riders mounted on horses, and much more. Cosmas Indicopleustes held these to be evidence of the wandering of the Israelites.

In Rephidim a terrible battle took place between the Amalekites and the Hebrews. Who were the Amalekites? In answer to this question it is often stated that they were a small Bedouin tribe; consequently there was no battle, but merely a skirmish between small clans. The biblical text however is referring to something different. Israel was some 600 thousand warriors

strong (Num. 2:32). In order to pursue them, Pharaoh “made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them” (Ex. 14:6–7). He would hardly have required so many warriors to vanquish a tribe whose “total number of people ... did not exceed 6,000.” As has been stated above, Pharaoh’s pursuit and his death are confirmed by Egyptian sources.

It should be said that there is no serious evidence in support of such drastically reduced numbers. It is usually claimed that if around six thousand persons live on Sinai today, in Moses’ time that land could not have produced sufficient food for more people than this; ergo, they did not exist there. Naturally, if Scripture had said that the Hebrews acquired food by hunting and gathering, we could consider this argument. But the Bible explicitly states that the people of God were fed in the wilderness by extraordinary means—that is, by a miracle. Deuteronomy particularly emphasizes the supernatural nature of this period of wandering: “And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee. ... Lest ... thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; and thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth” (Deut. 8:2–4, 14–17).

The clothing and footwear of the Hebrews lasted for decades! This naturally contradicts the second law of thermodynamics, and it would not have been possible were it not for the direct intervention of the Creator. Furthermore, the holy prophet David says that “there was not among their tribes one man that was feeble” (Ps. 104:36). Imagine three million people not getting sick for forty years (except for instances of the Lord’s direct retribution). Clearly, the wandering in the wilderness was an education of sorts for the people of God. It is not for nothing that the prophet Hosea calls this time “a door of hope” (Hos. 2:15)!

But let us return to the question of the number of the Hebrews. Others assert that the book of Numbers cites data from the time of the census taken by the holy king David, which were projected upon the time of Exodus. In actuality, according to the book of Chronicles the Israelites had 1,100,000 battle-ready men, with 470,000 in Judea (1 Chron. 21:6), while the second book of Samuel (24:9) cites the following numbers: 800,000 battle-ready Israelites and 500,000 Judeans. This means that in the course of 500 years the population of the Hebrew nation increased 2.5–3 times over. Considering the years of war, these census data serve rather to confirm the authenticity of the data in the book of Numbers.

It should be noted that the population of the Hebrew nation at the time of the exodus, although the result of the Lord’s good pleasure (Scripture says that “the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them” [Ex. 1:7]), is not contrary to science. Interestingly, according to the mathematical calculations of T. Whitelow, if we assume that the descendants of the 51 grandsons of Jacob had an average of four male offspring, in seven generations (of 40 years each) the total number of male descendants would number over 835,000 persons.

But if it is proven that there were indeed that many Israelites, who were these Amalekites who were capable of resisting such an enormous force for a full day and who would have utterly routed it, were it not for Moses’ prayer and the prefiguration of the life-giving cross inscribed by the arms of the prophet? Clearly, they were a force to be reckoned with. According to the rabbinical traditions, Joshua faced 400,000 Amalekite warriors.

Scripture first mentions the land of the Amalekites in the account of the battle of the kings in Abraham's time, who "smote all the country of the Amalekites" (Gen. 14:7). But this most likely refers to the territory where they later took shape as a nation. The book of Genesis links the appearance of this ethnic group with the name of Eliphaz, son of Esau, whose concubine Timnah bore him Amalek (Gen. 36:12). According to the Hebrew tradition, Esau bequeathed to Amalek his hatred for Jacob, and the Amalekites seized the first convenient opportunity.

The Amalekites originally dwelt in Edom (southern Jordania and northern Saudi Arabia), but later, according to Arab sources, they began ruling in Mecca. The Arabs complained that they were savage, violent people who sacrilegiously abused the privileges of the holy place for their lawless deeds. For this God sent ants against them, which compelled them to abandon Mecca. "After this God sent drought and famine upon them and showed them a cloudy sky upon the horizon. They traveled without stopping in the direction of these clouds, which seemed close to them, but they could not reach them: they were pursued by the drought, which constantly followed close on their heels. God led them to their native land, and there He sent a deluge upon them. Safa (in southern Arabia), Mecca, and thousands of miles of coastal Tihama were reduced to rubble. ... Mecca was destroyed in a single night, filled with a terrible noise. The land became a desert." During this catastrophe perished the Joktanites, descendants of Joktan (Gen. 10:25), and the Jorhomites, descendants of his son Jerah (Gen. 10:26). In horror the Amalekites fled to Africa, where they hoped to find refuge in prosperous Egypt, and there they encountered the Israelites. With the Lord's aid the latter carried the victory. But the Amalekites smote the weak and the weary (Deut. 25:18), and the Lord swore that He would have war with Amalek from generation to generation (Ex. 17:16). And indeed, for many centuries Israel had to fight terrible battles with Amalek, which became the most powerful nation in the world (Num. 24:20). The Amalekites, under the name of the Hyksos, conquered Egypt (in Egyptians records the Hyksos are called the people of Amu) and Syria (Num. 13:29). Their authority extended to Crete and reached even to northern Iraq. (That the Hyksos and the Amalekites are identical is demon-

strated in greater detail in the book *Oedipus and Akhnatov* by Immanuel Velikovsky.)

According to Egyptian sources, the Hyksos burned temples, cities, and books, raped women, and constantly pillaged all their tributaries. Their favorite occupation was to wait until the harvest had ripened and been gathered, then suddenly come with other desert nations and steal it, leaving the victim with nothing but starvation (Judg. 6:3–6). According to Manetho, their growing desire was “to destroy the people of Egypt.” In excavating their settlements, archaeologists are struck by frightful discoveries. They find piles of bones, including severed arms and legs. According to the Hebrew traditions, a favorite pastime of the Amalekites was to torture captives, cutting off various parts of the body for fun and tossing them toward heaven, thereby mocking the Creator. This nation was so prodigiously cruel that to this day Jewish mothers frighten their children by saying, “An Amalekite will come and take you away!” The conflict between the people of the Lord and the descendants of Amalek lasted for millennia. Kings Saul and David crushed their impious reign and liberated practically the entire “Fertile Crescent.” But a descendant of King Agog of the Amalekites, Haman, nearly destroyed the Hebrew nation in the time of the Persians. War against the spiritual Amalekites continues to this day, and will end on the Day of Judgment, when the Lord will cast all His enemies upon their faces.

The next encampment of the Israelites was made in the wilderness of Sinai. There on the fiftieth day after Passover God descended upon Mount Sinai, now called Jebel Musa. At the foot of the mountain the Old Covenant was established, and the tabernacle was built. There the Ten Commandments were given, and the glory of the Lord appeared to Moses. In the foothills of Sinai the Hebrews built the golden calf. The black foot of the mountain is pointed out to this day near St. Catherine’s Monastery. As noted above, next to this mountain there is a granite rock with traces of water that flowed from twelve cracks. To this day this mountain retains the traces of the Lord’s descent, when it burned with fire to the heavens (Deut. 4:11). In the cliffs one can see what appears to be a depiction of bushes that are reminiscent of the burning bush that grew at the foot of Sinai (the very name of the mountain

means “Bush of Yahweh”). Similar depictions are also found upon smaller stones, which the local Bedouins offer for sale. They are said to be “divinely inscribed,” and are reputed to possess miraculous powers. Upon examining them you can practically see the lightning striking the mountain (Ex. 19:16) and searing these images into it. We will provide substantiation of the authenticity of the Mosaic Law in the chapter that follows. Here we must say a few words about the reality of the event itself. In dozens of passages the sacred books cite God’s manifestation on Sinai as the basis for fidelity to the covenant with God (see for example Ex. 19; 24; 31; 34; Lev. 7; 25; 26; 27; Num. 1; 3; 9; 10; 26; 33; Deut. 33; Judg. 5:5; Nehem. 9:13; Ps. 67:9, 18; Ecclus. 45:5-6; Acts 7:30, 38; Gal. 4:24-25; etc.).

In order for us to more easily find confirmation of the facts in the Bible, we need to picture how the miracle itself occurred. For this we must remember not only the account in the book of Exodus, but also the other sacred texts. So it was that on the third day of the third month (that is, in late May) a thick cloud, a storm, and darkness descended upon Sinai (Ex. 19:16–18). The whole mountain gave off smoke and shook, and fire went up from it to the heavens (Deut. 4:22–23). An ever-increasing sound of trumpets came from within the flame (Ex. 19:19). Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice (Ex. 19:19), and in this way the Ten Commandments were given. But the miracle did not stop with the mountain. The prophetess Deborah sang that “the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. The mountains melted from before the Lord, even that Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel” (Judg. 5:4–5). Streams of lava flowed down the white-hot cliffs, rain fell in torrents from heaven, the waters drew back and bared the foundation of the seas (2 Sam. 22:16), a scorching wind and flying flaming arrows accompanied the appearance of the Creator (Hab. 3:5). Terrible earthquakes shook the entire Near East (Ps. 67:9), so that the mountains leaped like rams and the hills like lambs (Ps. 113:4). Then the age-old mountains crumbled, the hills shrank, and streams split the earth (Hab. 3:6). Not only the Hebrews, but also the Ethiopians and the Midianites experienced the might of the Lord (Hab. 3:7). And small wonder: according to the third book of Esdras, “When thou leadest his seed out of Egypt, thou broughtest them up to the mount Sinai. And bowing the heavens, thou didst set fast the earth, movedst the whole

world, and madest the depths to tremble, and troubledst the men of that age. And thy glory went through four gates, of fire, and of earthquake, and of wind, and of cold; that thou mightest give the law unto the seed of Jacob” (2 Esdras 3:17–19).¹⁵² Naturally, so terrible a blow could not have gone unnoticed by the gentiles. With good reason Hebrew tradition states that all the nations heard the law, but rejected it, and for this reason they have no defense.

There are numerous non-biblical confirmations of this majestic manifestation of God. But the problem is complicated by the fact that the idolaters frequently ascribed the works of the true God to their own gods. This should be born in mind when reading pagan myths. For example, the texts of Ugarit speak of Baal as “riding upon the clouds,” clearly ascribing to him what was in fact done by “the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky” (Deut. 33:26).

This myth of Ugarit goes on to say of this same event: “Balu opened a crack in the clouds and lifted up his voice. At his voice the mountains shook and the shores of the sea trembled. And the foes of Balu hid themselves in the forests and in the crags of the mountains.” Thus the pagans attempted to ascribe the revelation of the true God to their false god. The Canaanites behaved similarly in the days of Elijah, when Jezebel ascribed the visitation sent by the Lord once again to Baal. Nevertheless, these accounts only serve to confirm that God’s manifestation on Sinai did in fact occur. Hesiod relates the same in his *Theogony*, in recounting the battle between Zeus and Typhoeus:

All the earth resounded horribly, and the wide sky above
and sea and Okeanos’ streams and earth’s lowest parts.

...

And the earth groaned.

Heat from both of them seized the violent sea, from thunder
and lightning, from the monster’s fire.

...

The whole earth was boiling, and the sky and sea;
great waves raged around and over the coasts from
the immortals attack,
and endless rumbling arose.

¹⁵² 2 Esdras in the 1611 King James Version. –Trans.

...

The vast earth burned widely
from unspeakable heat, and melted as tin is melted ...
so the earth melted in the glare of blazing fire.¹⁵³

Here we see a description of the terrible manifestation of the Lord Who overturned the earth.

Geological data show that the plateau of the Sinai peninsula is covered with basalt lava formations, although there are no volcanoes in the area. "Lava formations interspersed between extinct volcanoes stretch from Palmyra to southern Arabia all the way to Mecca."

The events at Mount Sinai bear the stamp of authenticity to this day. To this day the black pedestal of the golden calf and the ruins of the altar erected in its honor are pointed out in the region of the mountain. Upon the mountain an imprint of the calf is shown. The calf idol itself fits into the account of Scripture quite well. Numerous depictions of bulls have been found on Sinai and in Palestine, and one of the chief gods of Egypt was the bull Apis. It was in the form of this animal that the Hebrews wished to worship God (as Aaron attempted to arrange it) or to make a truly "new god"—an amulet imbued with magical power. Later, when the ten tribes fell away from Judah, the cult of the bull was again renewed in Samaria, Bethel, and Dan. In Hasor archaeologists have even discovered a calf idol that was perceived as the footstool of a deity. To this day in magic the golden calf is perceived as an amulet of wealth. For according to the Hebrew traditions the calf itself originated through magic. The apostates cast their gold ornaments into the fire, and through sorcery the idol emerged from the fire.

The traditional chronology of events at Mount Sinai is as follows. On the first day of the month of Sivan (May–June), on the day of Pentecost, the manifestation of God took place. On the 10th of Sivan Moses ascended the mountain. On the 15th of Tammuz the Hebrews rebelled against the Lord. On the 16th of Tammuz Hur was killed and the calf was cast. On the 17th of Tammuz Moses broke the first tablets and destroyed the idol.

¹⁵³ Hesiod, *Hesiod's Theogony* (Cambridge, MA: Focus Information Group, 1987), 73–74.

On the 10th of Tishrei (on Yom Kippur, the day of purification) Moses returned with the new tablets. On the 15th of Tishrei construction of the tabernacle was begun. On the 1st of Nisan in the second year after the exodus, the tabernacle was dedicated.

Concerning the arrangement of the tabernacle, the construction of portable sanctuaries among nomadic peoples is recorded in the texts of ancient Egypt, Ugarit, and Phoenicia. Similar temples existed among the nomads of the Syria-Palestine region and the Arabs even in the first centuries after Christ's birth. In Timnah, to the north of Eilat, fragments of a Midianite tent have been discovered—a sanctuary erected over the ruins of an Egyptian temple. Thus, there are no grounds for the inventions of the proponents of biblical criticism alleging that the account of the building of the tabernacle was created only after the construction of Solomon's temple (a view held by Fr. Men). Below, in speaking of the law itself, we will demonstrate in greater detail the absurdity of this accusation. Here however we will note that the arrangement of the tabernacle did not correspond exactly to that of the temple (a lack of gates leading into the devir; a single lamp—the menorah—instead of ten, as in the temple; no equivalent to the two pillars at the entrance). Nor is there any need to invent a sanctuary, which was something perfectly ordinary for nomads of the time. It is unclear how a tabernacle could have been invented after the fact if it was kept in the temple courts right up until the captivity. This is especially true since the prophet Jeremiah also cited the commonly known fact that the sanctuary was previously located in Shiloh (Jer. 7:12), which would have been absurd if the tabernacle had been a literary fiction. And the authenticity of the book of the prophet Jeremiah arouses hardly any doubts, especially since even the ring of his secretary, the prophet Baruch, has been found.

Still less comprehensible is the assertion that while the tabernacle did exist, it was far more modest in appearance than described in the Bible. It is unclear where the skeptics came by this information. In Scripture only what was written is written. Their words are a complete fabrication!

As for the material aspect of the matter, the Hebrews had quite enough gold, silver, and other materials, for during the ex-

odus from Egypt the Hebrews despoiled the Egyptians (Ex. 12:36). This is also confirmed by the Ipuwer papyrus. The Hebrews themselves were laborers, and could hardly have complained of a lack of skilled labor. Besides, the construction foreman Bezaleel was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, they were located near the mines of Sinai, where they could make use of smelting furnaces. Yes, if the Hebrews did indeed number about 6,000 men, the building of the tabernacle in the form described in the Torah would have presented a challenge (although even small nomadic tribes had portable sanctuaries). But, as we have demonstrated above, in actuality they numbered nearly three million.

Furthermore, indirect confirmation of the luxuriousness of the tabernacle may also be found in the Ugarit myth, which contains an account of God's manifestation on Sinai. There the catastrophe itself is linked with the construction of "a court of gold and silver, a habitation of precious stones" for Baal. Furthermore, both in the myth and in the Bible a period of seven days preceded the building of the tabernacle, accompanied by fire burning upon a sacred mountain (Ex. 24:16). Consequently, we have before us one of the first specimens of pagan propaganda, which nevertheless confirms the biblical narrative.

Before the wandering began, God commanded that a census be taken of all battle-ready men (who in total numbered 603,550). This census was repeated after the forty years of wandering (they now numbered 601,730). Here it should be noted that the terminology used in the book of Numbers is of a highly archaic nature. "The expression in Num. 1:3, 'to number by armies,' corresponds precisely to the Akkadian *sabam paqadu*, encountered in documents from Mari (18th–17th centuries BC)." This once again demonstrates the authenticity of the event described in the book of Numbers. It is also attested by the fact that the theophoric names used in this book do not include the name Yahweh, but rather include only ancient names such as El (God), Shaddai (Almighty), and Zur (Rock, Firmament). The location of the camps of the tribes of Israel described in the second chapter of the book of Numbers does not match their dispersion in Canaan, which once again confirms that this book was written during the wandering in the wilderness.

“And they removed from the desert of Sinai, and pitched at Kibrothhattaavah. And they departed from Kibrothhattaavah, and encamped at Hazeroth.”

The next camp of the Israelites in Kibrothhattaavah was marked by two visitations from God. In Taberah when the people complained, fire broke out in the outskirts of the camp, and it was extinguished only by the prayers of Moses (Num. 11:1–3). But the complaining did not cease, and the people began demanding meat, reviling the manna. Once again the Lord repeated the miracle with the quails, but in punishment for their greed and ingratitude. Another important event was the bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon the seventy elders, which prefigured the outpouring of the Comforter upon the fullness of the nations of the earth (which is why this excerpt from the book of Numbers is read on the day of Pentecost).

The actual place where Israel was camped is known. On the way to Aqaba, Prof. Palmer encountered the remnants of an ancient encampment, surrounded by numerous graves. These were those self-same “graves of lust.” As he continued his journey he discovered traces of another large encampment, which to this day the Arabs call “the observation post of Hazeroth.” To this day the Arabs recall that this place was linked with a caravan of pilgrims that became lost and wandered in the wilderness. This most likely refers to the Hebrews. In Hazeroth the sites of individual homesteads are preserved, with hearths and other areas for food preparation, precisely corresponding to the designation of this place as a “settlement.” In this place the Lord punished Miriam, the sister of Moses, with leprosy because she and Aaron had rebuked their brother for his marriage to a black woman. Thus the Almighty God condemned those who attempt to introduce racism into the bosom of the Church and who claim that a person should only marry within the confines of “his own nation.”

The following encampments of Israel are far more difficult to determine. We know only their names and their approximate location in the wilderness in the eastern portion of the Sinai peninsula, not far from Aqaba, and on the shore of the gulf—for example, the seventh encampment, Haradah. The wilderness of Paran (“abounding in caves”) is now called Tih. It compris-

es a series of flat limestone promontories rising from the Sinai peninsula toward southern Palestine. The name of one of these encampments—Libnah (“whiteness”)—specifically suggests the impression of the Israelites who saw the limestone cliffs sparkling in the sun.

Here it is appropriate that we give a translation of the names of the encampments of Israel, which reflect both the Hebrews’ perception of their wandering and the stages of man’s spiritual journey.

Rameses—a city in honor of Ra, the sun god, but in Hebrew this same name may be translated as “oppressed with alarm (noise).”

Succoth—“shelters.”

Pihahiroth—“mouth of caves; meadow with a reed.”

Baalzephon—“lord of the north.”

Migdol—“tower.”

Etham—“I shall acquire wholeness.”

Marah—“bitterness.”

Sur—“wall.”

Elim—“oaks.”

Dophkah—“cattle dealer.”

Alush—“attached.”

Rephidim—“plains.”

Sinai—“covered with shrubbery” or “bush of Yahweh.”

Kibrothhattaavah—“graves of lust.”

Hazereth—“settlements.”

Rithmah—the name comes either from the name of the gorse bush, on which the hungry wanderers fed, or from the verb meaning “to bind, to hitch.”

Rimmonparez—the name may be translated as “division of promontories.”

Libnah—“whiteness.”

Rissah—from the word “to split up.”

Khelathah—“assembly” and “reproof.”

Shapher—“clarity, brightness.”

Haradah—“trembling, fear.”

Makeloth—“assembly of the nation.”

Tahath—“below, the underneath, that which does not change”—that is, the lowlands.

Tarah—"respite, delay." The name of this encampment in Hebrew matches the name of Abraham's father, Terah.

Mithcah—"sweetness."

Hashmonah—"emitting rays, shining"

Moseroth—"union of the covenant"

Benejaakan—"sons of libation."

Horhagidgad—"cave cultivating happiness."

Jotbathah—"favorable, pleasing place."

Ebronah—"cultivated lands."

Eziongaber—"spine of the giant."

Sin—"clay."

Kadesh—"holy."

Hor—"light."

Zalmonah—"shady, dark."

Punon—"wavering," possibly originating from the name of the Idumean duke Pinon (Gen. 36:41).

Oboth—"ascending upward."

Ijeabarim—"watch tower of Abarim (crag, mountain range, streams)."

Dibongad—"desolating fate," a Moabite city mentioned in the inscription of King Mesha. Today it is known as Tel Dhiban, 6 km from Arnon.

Almondiblathaim.

The mountains of Abarim.

The encampment near Jordan from Bethjesimoth to Abelshit-tim in the plains of Moab.

Such is the meaning of the names of the encampments of Israel during the wandering of the Hebrews in the wilderness. But let us return to the search for where the biblical narrative and the events of this wandering coincide.

The time of the Hebrews' sojourn in the wilderness of Paran at the oasis of Kadesh-Barnea is also the time when Moses sent the spies to scout out Canaan (Num. 13).

"So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath. And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one

cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs. The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence" (Num. 13:21–24).

After scouting out all of Palestine, the scouts paid particular attention to the southern part of the country, called Neg'eb in the source, for from there the Hebrews planned to accomplish their conquest. In Hebron archaeologists have yet to excavate the strata corresponding to the time of the exodus. But information concerning the giants who lived in the Promised Land is also encountered in the texts of Ugarit. It may be that this refers to the very Neanderthals whose remains have been discovered, among other places, in Canaan.

"And they returned from searching of the land after forty days" (Num. 13:25). This occurred on the eighth day of the month of Av, which to this day is a day of fasting among the Jews.

"And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan. And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight" (Num. 14:27–34).

The words of the scouts were no exaggeration.

But of course all these circumstances can in no way justify the behavior of the scouts and the Hebrews who heeded them. Their punishment was not long in coming. God protected Moses, whom the mutineers wished to kill. And only the mediation of the very prophet whom they had just attempted to kill saved the Hebrews from destruction. Fire consumed the spies who had troubled the spirit of the people. And the Lord, citing the words of the mutineers, passed sentence upon them:

“And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward which have murmured against me. Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcases, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise. I the Lord have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die” (Num. 14:27–35).

Like the dry rod that budded by the power of God, which “brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds” (Num. 17:8), so also the womb of the Ever-Virgin produced the eternal High Priest by the power of the Holy Spirit. Here we must say a few words about the recent confirmation of the biblical account of how the Old Testament priesthood originated with Aaron. For biblical criticism asserted that all the accounts concerning Moses and Aaron were invented after the fact. At the same time, even the godless scholars noted that “the names

of the priests include an unusually large number of names of Egyptian origin: Phinehas, Hophni, Putiel, Pashur, Hanameel," which clearly speaks in favor of the biblical account of the exodus from Egypt.

Then, in the late 1990s, Israeli geneticists conducted a DNA analysis of the Kohanim—descendants of Aaron. Here we cite the report on the discovery:

"A genetic marker is a variation in the nucleotide sequence of the DNA, known as a mutation. Mutations which occur within genes—a part of the DNA which codes for a protein—usually cause a malfunction or disease and is lost due to selection in succeeding generations. However, mutations found in so-called 'non-coding regions' of the DNA tend to persist.

"Since the Y chromosome consists almost entirely of non-coding DNA (except for the genes determining maleness), it would tend to accumulate mutations. Since it is passed from father to son without recombination, the genetic information on a Y chromosome of a man living today is basically the same as that of his ancient male ancestors, except for the rare mutations that occur along the hereditary line. A combination of these neutral mutations, known as a haplotype, can serve as a genetic signature of a man's male ancestry. Maternal genealogies are also being studied by means of the m-DNA (mitochondrial DNA), which is inherited only from the mother.

"Dr. Skorecki made contact with Professor Michael Hammer, of the University of Arizona, a leading researcher in molecular genetics and a pioneer in Y chromosome research. Professor Hammer uses DNA analysis to study the history of populations, their origins and migrations. His previous research included work on the origins of the Native American Indians and the development of the Japanese people.

"A study was undertaken to test the hypothesis. If there were a common ancestor, the Kohanim should have common genetic markers at a higher frequency than the general Jewish population.

"In the first study, as reported in the prestigious British science journal, *Nature* (January 2, 1997), 188 Jewish males were asked to contribute some cheek cells from which their DNA was extracted for study. Participants from Israel, England and North

America were asked to identify whether they were a Cohen, Levi or Israelite, and to identify their family background.

“The results of the analysis of the Y chromosome markers of the Kohanim and non-Kohanim were indeed significant. A particular marker, (YAP-) was detected in 98.5 percent of the Kohanim, and in a significantly lower percentage of non-Kohanim.

“In a second study, Dr. Skorecki and associates gathered more DNA samples and expanded their selection of Y chromosome markers. Solidifying their hypothesis of the Kohens’ common ancestor, they found that a particular array of six chromosomal markers was found in 97 of the 106 Kohens tested. This collection of markers has come to be known as the Kohen Modal Haplo-type (CMH)—the standard genetic signature of the Jewish priestly family. The chances of these findings happening at random is greater than one in 10,000.

“The finding of a common set of genetic markers in both Ashkenazi and Sephardi Kohanim worldwide clearly indicates an origin pre-dating the separate development of the two communities around 1000 CE. Date calculation based on the variation of the mutations among Kohanim today yields a time frame of 106 generations from the ancestral founder of the line, some 3,300 years—the approximate time of the Exodus from Egypt, the lifetime of Aaron HaKohen.

“Professor Hammer was recently in Israel for the Jewish Genome Conference. He confirmed that his findings are consistent—over 80 percent of self-identified Kohanim have a common set of markers. The finding that less than one-third of the non-Cohen Jews who were tested possess these markers is not surprising to the geneticists. Jewishness is not defined genetically. Other Y-chromosomes can enter the Jewish gene pool through conversion or through a non-Jewish father. Jewish status is determined by the mother. Tribe membership follows the father’s line.

“Calculations based on the high rate of genetic similarity of today’s Kohanim resulted in the highest ‘paternity-certainty’ rate ever recorded in population genetics studies—a scientific testimony to family faithfulness.

“Wider genetic studies of diverse present day Jewish communities show a remarkable genetic cohesiveness. Jews from Iran, Iraq, Yemen, North Africa and European Ashkenazim all cluster

together with other Semitic groups, with their origin in the Middle East. ...

"This genetic research has clearly refuted the libel that the Ashkenazi Jews are not related to the ancient Hebrews, but are descendants of the Kuzar tribe—a pre-10th century Turko-Asian empire which reportedly converted en masse to Judaism. Researchers compared the DNA signature of the Ashkenazi Jews against those of Turkish-derived people, and found no correspondence.

"In their second published paper in *Nature* (July 9, 1998) the researchers included an unexpected finding. Those Jews in the study who identified themselves as Levites did not show a common set of markers as did the Kohanim. The Levites clustered in three groupings, one of them the CMH. According to tradition, the Levites should also show a genetic signature from a common paternal patrilineal ancestor.

"It is interesting to note that the tribe of Levi has a history of a lack of quantity. The census of BaMidbar shows Levi to be the smallest of the tribes. After the Babylonian exile, the Levites failed to return en masse to Jerusalem, though urged by Ezra Ha-Sofer to do so. They were therefore fined by losing their exclusive rights to maaser. Though statistically, the Levites should be more numerous than Kohanim, today in synagogue, it is not unusual to have a minyan with a surplus of Kohanim and yet lack even one Levite. The researchers are now focusing effort on the study of Levites' genetic make up to learn more about their history in the Diaspora.

"Using the CMH as a DNA signature of the ancient Hebrews, researchers are pursuing a hunt for Jewish genes around the world. The search for lost tribes, whether the biblical 10 Lost Tribes which were uprooted from Eretz Yisrael by the Assyrians, or other would-be Jews, Hebrews or 'chosen peoples,' is not new. Using the genetic markers of the Kohanim as a yardstick, these genetic archaeologists are using DNA research discover historical links to the Jewish people.

"Many individual Kohanim and others have approached the researchers to be tested. The researchers' policy is that the research is not a test of individuals, but an examination of the extended family. Having the CMH is not a proof of one's being

a Kohen, for the mother's side is also significant in determining one's Kohanic status. At present, there are no halachic ramifications of this discovery. No one is certified nor disqualified because of their Y chromosome markers.

"The research, which began with an idea in shul, has shown a clear genetic relationship amongst Kohanim and their direct lineage from a common ancestor. The research findings support the Torah statements that the line of Aharon will last throughout history."¹⁵⁴

But let us return to the wilderness. The 40 years of wandering drew to a close, and in the first month (March) Miriam died. Concurrently with her death, the source of water that had accompanied Israel in the wilderness dried up. Here the Hebrews rebelled against God once again. By the revelation of God, Moses and Aaron approached a granite cliff and ought to have brought forth water from it by a word. But Moses, falling into anger and weakness of faith, struck the cliff with his rod, which the Lord had not commanded him to do. The cliff immediately gave forth water, but for their feeble faith Moses and Aaron forfeited the opportunity to enter the Promised Land. Here we see that the closer a person is to God, the more is required of him for his sins. That which for one person would have been pardonable stripped the man who spoke with God face to face of the opportunity to behold his dream fulfilled. To many it seems that if a person is holy, all things are permissible for him, but Scripture says the opposite. To whom much is given, of him much will be required.

The spring that Moses brought forth exists to this day. As Cabern writes, Moses "struck twice, and two new springs broke forth to the surface and flow to this day." To date, no archaeological traces of Israel in Kadesh have been found.

So it was that after this miracle the people, at the Lord's command, began their journey to the Promised Land in order to invade it from the land beyond Jordan. Edom refused to permit Israel to pass through his territory, and thereby laid the foundation

¹⁵⁴ Yaakov Kleiman, "The DNA Chain of Tradition: The Discovery of the 'Cohen Gene,'" accessed at http://www.cohen-levi.org/jewish_genes_and_genealogy/the_dna_chain_of_tradition.htm on 10.27.2022.

for the eternal enmity between the Idumeans and the Israelites, of which the prophets so wrathfully spoke and which ultimately led to the destruction of Idumea itself.

Along the way the people of God had to contend with fierce resistance from the Canaanites. The ruler of Negeb, King Arad, went out to fight the Hebrews, believing they would be conquered as easily as they had been 38 years previously. But this time God was with His people, and the Israelites emerged victorious.

The city of Arad which the Hebrews conquered has been excavated. In it the remains of a mighty fort, established in the early Bronze Age by the Canaanites, have been discovered. A mighty wall, topped with semicircular stone towers located 20–25 meters from each other, surrounded a citadel with an area of 9 hectares.¹⁵⁵ Inside it was furnished with homes that consisted of a single large room, a kitchen, a pantry, and a yard. The level of the floor was below street level. A sanctuary of Dumuzid, the Mesopotamian god of fertility, was discovered, with a depiction of two human figures with ears of grain instead of a head. This city was destroyed on four occasions. One of these destructions corresponds to the time of Exodus. Later the residence of the Judean vicars was located in Arad. Notably, from that time there survive the ruins of a sanctuary that corresponds exactly to the tabernacle of Moses in size, which once again confirms the authenticity of the scriptural accounts.

So it was that on Mount Hor, not far from Petra, now called Jebel Haroun, Moses' brother Aaron died. On the peak of this mountain to this day the grave of this first archpriest is pointed out. Today it is a simple white building, but it is built upon the ruins of a beautiful Christian church.

Soon after the death of the prophet Aaron a new rebellion of the Israelites began. They began once again to say, "Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread" (Num. 21:5). Immediately the retribution of God smote the mutineers. A great many poisonous snakes, called seraphs ("burning ones"), attacked them.

¹⁵⁵ About 22 acres. —*Trans.*

Then at Moses' prayer the Lord sent salvation to those who trusted Him. He commanded that a bronze serpent be made and that it be lifted up upon a standard, so that if anyone who had been bitten by a snake should gaze upon it he should not die. According to Christ the Savior, it was not the bronze serpent that saved, but the fact that it served as a prefiguration of the crucifixion. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (Jn. 3:14–15). "But how could a serpent be an image of Christ?" some may ask. The answer is give by St. Gregory the Theologian: "Although the bronze serpent was hung against the biting serpents, this was not as a figure of Him who suffered for us, but as depicting the opposite; and those who gazed upon it are saved by the certainty not that he is alive, but that he is cast down (as he deserved), that he himself is slain and that together with him he slays all the powers that had been subject to him. And what memorial ought we to place at his grave? 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' (1 Cor. 15:55). You are cast down by the cross, slain by the Life-giver, breathless, dead, motionless, inactive, and although you retain the form of a serpent, you are given over to disgrace in the heights!"

Amazingly, archaeological confirmation of this account in the book of Numbers has recently been found. In Timnah, not far from Eilat, near the remains of an ancient bronze mine a depiction of a bronze serpent with a golden head was found. Its length was 5 inches (12.5 cm). Beside it the remains of a portable tent were found—a sanctuary that coincided in size with that described in the book of Exodus. The archaeologist Rothenburg discovered not only openings for the poles that upheld the tent, but also remnants of the fabric from an awning. This sanctuary most likely belonged to the Midianites, who most likely borrowed it from the Israelites.

"And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in Oboth. And they journeyed from Oboth, and pitched at Ijeabaram, in the wilderness which is before Moab, toward the sunrising. From thence they removed, and pitched in the valley of Zared. From thence they removed, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, which is in the wilderness that cometh out of the coasts

of the Amorites: for Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the Lord, What he did in the Red sea, and in the brooks of Arnon, and at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar, and lieth upon the border of Moab. And from thence they went to Beer: that is the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water. Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it: The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves. And from the wilderness they went to Mattanah: and from Mattanah to Nahaliel: and from Nahaliel to Bamoth: and from Bamoth in the valley, that is in the country of Moab, to the top of Pisgah, which looketh toward Jeshimon" (Num. 21:10–20).

Thus we see that after the chastisement with the serpents Moses again performed a miracle with water. The enormous significance ascribed to wells in the Pentateuch is not by chance. For in Scripture living well water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 7:37–39). Nor is it by chance that a well was opened for Israel following the miracle of the bronze serpent. For following the cross of the Lord the waters of the Comforter inundated the earth.

After the chastisement with the serpents God gave the converted Hebrews victory over two great Canaanite kings—Sihon of the Amorites and Og, king of Bashan. These kings themselves were not ordinary men, but giants possessed by evil spirits. The length of the iron bedstead of King Og, for example, was nine cubits (4.95 m), and its breadth was four cubits (2.2 m) (Deut. 3:11). Incidentally, a Basalt table stone found near Hamman perfectly matches the biblical description. Flavius Josephus supplements the scriptural text with additional details. According to his report, Sihon established a defensive perimeter along Arnon. But upon seeing the forces of the Hebrews he was seized with horror, and his forces fled in panic, wishing to hide in the cities. They never reached them, however, for a terrible thirst came upon them, and as a result all the Amorites were slain at the watering place.

No occult abilities or physical might were of any help to the Amorites. During the battle with the Hebrews the Canaanites were attacked by hornets. They fled and were put to the sword.

But the enemies of God did not stop at mere physical resistance. Balak, king of Moab, decided to employ occult force against the Hebrews. From Mesopotamia he invited the well-known seer Balaam, son of Beor, whom he asked to curse Israel. This person holds a strange place in sacred history. On the one hand, he is a magician who practices avian augury, while on the other he hears the commands of the Lord, and his spiritual eye is open. He likewise behaves strangely toward the emissaries of the king of Moab. On the one hand, he says that though Balak should give him an entire house full of gold, if God forbade it he would not go; but on the other hand he nevertheless clearly wishes to violate the express will of God. He manages to obtain permission to go to Balak, which results in the miracle of the ass that spoke. This remarkable person then comes to Ashdodthpishgah, and God compels him to bless Israel. But even this clear intervention of the Creator does not cause Balaam to wholly become a believer. In the battle with the Midianites Balaam is slain, because he counseled the foes of the Hebrews concerning how to seduce the latter to idolatry through fornication.

Remarkably, in Jordania in 1967, at the ancient site of Deir Alla, a Dutch archaeological expedition discovered an inscription of Balaam, son of Beor. It consisted of pieces of plaster inscribed with ink, and is currently located in the Amman Archaeological Museum. Executed in black and red ink, the inscription has proven to be one of the most interesting discoveries of the twentieth century for biblical studies, since it discusses a biblical personage—the prophet Balaam, son of Beor. The limestone cladding originally covered a stone wall, and apparently crumbled off due to an earthquake. If scholars are correct in their supposition that the inscription dates to the second quarter of the eighth century BC (775–750 BC), this could be the earthquake from the time of King Uzziah mentioned in the Bible. The custom of installing stelae with inscriptions is mentioned in the Torah (Deut. 27:2), which records the command that a stele of this kind be erected on mount Ebal: “Thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister: and thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law.” Mount Ebal is the next stopping place after Deir Alla on “the way where the sun goeth down” (Deut. 11:30) leading from the Jordan valley to the Mediterranean Sea. Remnants of similar

inscriptions have also been discovered in the north part of the Sinai peninsula.

Unfortunately, inscriptions on broken pieces of plaster are highly susceptible to damage. Twelve pieces (“combinations”) have been successfully restored, but of these only two are large enough to read a text that is to any degree intelligible. The width of the inscription was about 32 cm long; if the first and second combinations are put together, it was no less than 70 cm.

After the inscription was discovered, the stage of deciphering began. Scholars agree that the inscription was located at the site of an ancient sanctuary and dates to the eighth century BC. Apparently it belonged to the Midianites—a nation mentioned in the biblical book of Numbers. Classifying the language of the inscription has proven difficult, since in Semitology it is customary to strictly differentiate between Aramaic and Canaanite dialects, but this text has traits typical for both of these linguistic subcategories.

The inscription was first published by Dutch scholars J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij in 1976. A year later a work by French epigraphists A. Caquot and A. Lemaire was published. The deciphering and interpretation of many parts of the inscription remains a subject of controversy and allows for different variations.

Below we will cite the text of the inscription from Deir Alla in our own translation, based on existing editions. We primarily follow the deciphering and notations of Sh. Akhitov’s collection, *Sobranie evreiskikh nadpisei* [*Collected Hebrew Inscriptions*] (Jerusalem: 1992, Hebrew ed.).¹⁵⁶

Combination I (made up of fragments of the cladding):

The ... Book of Balaam, son of Beor. A divine seer was he. The gods came to him at night.

¹⁵⁶ The English text is based on the translations by B.A. Levine (first combination), published in 2003, and by J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij (second combination). Where the text of the author of the Russian translation differs, the translation of the Russian is by the current translator and is placed in square brackets; where text is missing from the Russian translation, ellipses have been used. Fr. Daniel’s designation of direct speech has been followed, which differs from the English translations. –*Trans.*

And he beheld a vision in accordance with El's utterance. They said to Balaam, son of Beor: "So [do without delay]. No one knows what you have heard!"

Balaam arose on the morrow; ... and for two days he fasted, and wept

bitterly. Then his [people] entered into his presence, and they said to [him:] "Balaam, son of Beor, why do you fast, and why do you weep?"

Then he said to them: "Be seated, and I will relate to you what the Shaddai gods have planned, and go, see the acts of the god[s]!" The gods have banded together; the Shaddai gods have established a council, and they have said to [the sun:] "Sew up, close up the heavens with dense cloud, that darkness exist there, not brilliance;

[and bolt the seal of a dark cloud. And never remove the seal.]

It shall be that the swift ... will shriek insult to the eagle, and a nest of vultures shall cry out in response. The stork, the young of the falcon and the owl, the chicks of the heron,

[the] sparrow [will insult] ... pigeons. ... Where there are ewes, a staff shall be brought. [And the] hares ... eat

[the wolf] ... [they] drink [wine], ... and hyenas [listen to the teachings of the young of foxes

... they mock wise men.] [A poor woman covers her body with myrrh,] and a priestess [dons a sash of a spider's web. An important man reveres, and one who reveres is important.

... the deaf hear] from afar

... [the fools foresaw misfortune,] Shagar-and-Ištar

... The [eagle and] piglet[s] ... the young of the

... gifts of the sash ..."

Combination II:

[The gods ...

ate ...

a virgin, delight with caresses ...

to him offspring and a] house; [every fresh ...

will El delight with caresses; he will go into] an eternal house;

[A house ...]

A house where no traveler enters, nor does a bridegroom enter there, [a house ... and]

worm[s] from a grave. From the [thighs] of men, [from the shin] ...

[Shall one] not counsel ... you [with counsel] ... or [give] advice[?] [Answer] ...

Cover with a [single] wrap. If you hate him, he will be mortally afflicted. ...

[I will place] under your head. You shall lie on your eternal bedding, [to divide]

... in their heart. The [offspring] moans in his heart, he moans ...

There [mentors shall] behold [a vision for those who sit before them]. Death seizes

a suckling. And a suckling

... and a suckling ... [death, there as by a breath of wind it shall prepare the heart.] The [offspring abides] ... as he approaches

[the end] ... he poured plaster upon the wall ...

[And you shall ask] a king [about his horse, and the questions ...

... foresight have I sought for them at a greater distance ...

the understanding of a book he spoke] to his people [in their language]. You have been condemned ...

and have not spent yourself, O king.

As we see, the first, most intact excerpt comprises the beginning of a book. It refers to a prophecy received by Balaam at night (as in chapter 22 of the book of Numbers). The gods united and conceived a plan to destroy the world by establishing eternal darkness. The reason for this was the violation of certain existential laws both of nature (with small animals lording over the larger) and of society (one who was formerly revered now reveres others, etc.).

Starting at the tenth line, deciphering the text becomes less straightforward. A. Rofeh conjectures that here Balaam is addressing his listeners (“Hear a teaching!”)—those who have not despaired and have not given themselves over to drunkenness (“drunk wine”) as a result of the catastrophe suffered (“Hear

from afar"). Further on, in line 11, he deciphers: "A poor woman who prepares myrrh was taken to the wise men, and a priestess."

The second excerpt is difficult to decipher. It does not contain a single fully preserved line of text, while in the first line not a single word can be made out. Consequently the exact meaning escapes us. In the opinion of A. Rofeh, this excerpt is primarily erotic in nature, as in line 4: "O maiden, delight with caresses." He likewise reads line 7 as "a house that is beneficial for the wanderer and the groom this is," which in his opinion signifies a house of prostitution. In line 8 another possible translation allows for a possible description of male genitalia. The tenth line, in his opinion, contains advice to the groom: "He shall clothe her in a single garment, and woe if he should hate and drive her forth," which he juxtaposes to "spread out the garment" with regard to the bride in Ruth 3:9 and Ezek. 16:8. The expression in verse 11, "I shall lay [my hand] beneath your head, you shall lie upon my bed" has parallels ("His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me") in the Song of Solomon (2:6) and in the ancient literature of the Near East, which describes ritual intimate acts. But aside from the obvious erotic motifs, equally obvious is the theme of death, which follows after ritual prostitution. The second excerpt tells us the advice that Balaam gave to Balak, king of Moab. He taught him "to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication" (Rev. 2:14). According to Flavius Josephus, Balaam told Balak that although it was impossible to completely destroy the Hebrews, if through debauchery they agreed to sacrifice to the gods, the Lord would depart from them and punishment would smite them. And so it occurred. The Midianites seduced the Israelites to worship Baalpeor (that is, the lord of Mount Peor), in whose honor ritual orgies were held. And the wrath of God smote the people. 24,000 people were smitten by God and perished (according to Flavius it was the plague). The initiator of the rebellion, according to Flavius Josephus, was Zimri, son of Salu, who like modern intellectuals was indignant at the narrowness of the Mosaic religion and demanded the freedom to fornicate with whomever he wished, and to worship whatever gods he pleased. Only his execution, which was carried out by Phinehas, caused

the smiting of the Hebrews to cease. The excavations at Ugarit afford us a better understanding of the narrative of the book of Numbers. It turns out that the Israelites were seduced not by professional prostitutes, but by the wives and daughters of the Midianites. This debauchery was part of the ritual of the festival of fertility, which was celebrated by mass fornication, through which a person entered into a mystical connection with the pagan gods—that is, the demons.

The discovery of Balaam's inscription also confirms the biblical account of the great catastrophe from the time of Exodus, when the darkness that could be felt befell Egypt in punishment for its lawlessness. The words of the second excerpt likewise contain apparent references to the plagues of Egypt: "Death seizes a suckling; and a suckling..." This is the more reliable given that Balaam was well aware of the exodus from Egypt: "God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn" (Num. 24:8).

After the smiting had ceased, God commanded that war be made against the Midianites, due to which the seducers were destroyed. Along with them, as we have stated above, Balaam was also slain.

The wandering of the Hebrews in the wilderness came to an end, and to show all that it was impossible for His command not to be fulfilled, God commanded that a new census be taken. When this was done it was found that "among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. For the Lord had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun" (Num. 26:64–65). Interestingly, although the total number of Hebrews had hardly decreased (there had been 603,550, and there were now 601,730), the population of a number of tribes had drastically decreased, while that of others on the contrary had increased. This was particularly and strikingly true of the tribe of Simeon, the population of which was reduced by half (from 59,300 to 22,200 people), clearly attesting to the fulfillment of the words of Jacob: "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel" (Gen. 49:7). And so it was that several centuries later the ancient

prophecy came to pass, for Levi also, at the Lord's command, did not receive a lot among the people, but became the progenitor of a tribe of priests.

One other person remained who was also deprived of the hope of entering the Promised Land. This person was the prophet Moses himself. For this reason God gave His friend a great honor. As the venerable Ephraim writes, "God abased Moses by not permitting him to lead the Hebrews into the Promised Land; but he also exalted him in that Joshua, whom He gives preference over Moses, is appointed as though as his servant. For Moses, being greater than Joshua, was to fortify him." Thus, at the Lord's command, Moses laid hands upon Joshua and through this made him the leader of Israel (Num. 27:12–23). This ritual was a prefiguration of the sacrament of ordination, when through the laying on of hands a person is given the power to direct the people of God. Great were the gifts given to Joshua, but they were still less than that which Moses had, who spoke with God face to face, as a man speaks with his friend (Ex. 33:11). Joshua did not have the gift of prophecy, and had to guide the people with the aid of the priests, receiving revelation through the Urim and Thummim. God set this distinction to show that perfect communion with God was inaccessible in the Old Testament, until the One should come Who like Moses was both Prophet and King, but Who unlike the latter would lead God's people into the Eternal Homeland.

After appointing his successor the prophet Moses began distributing the conquered lands beyond Jordan. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh received Bashan and Gilead on the condition that their battle-ready men would assist their brethren from the other tribes in battle. The fate of these, who had settled beyond the Jordan, unfolded outside the periphery of sacred history. Scripture only mentions three significant episodes connected with their fates. These were the labors of the judge Jephthah, a man of Gilead; the aid that the inhabitants of these places rendered King David during the rebellion of Absalom; and the wars with the descendants of Hagar, in which God gave them aid because they had hoped in Him (1 Chron. 5:10, 18–22).

Before his death Moses again assembled the Hebrews on the plains of Jordan (in the place where in the time of Flavius Jose-

phus the city of Abilla was located) and reminded them of the law of Almighty God. This sermon of Moses before his death was recorded by him in the book of Deuteronomy. According to the venerable Ephraim the Syrian, “The lazy might have made excuses, citing the difficulty of seeking out the laws, and even for the diligent it would have been wearisome to seek them out; hence Moses compiled them from three books into one, so that those who wished to know the laws could derive benefit for themselves without difficulty.” In his last book the prophet rose to unprecedented heights of prophecy. Whereas in the preceding books Moses had prophesied concerning the past and the present, in Deuteronomy he foretells the future. There we find both the far-off fates of the Hebrew nation and individual predictions of the destiny of the twelve tribes—and, most importantly, the coming of the Messiah is proclaimed. The lofty significance of this book was indicated by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. During the forty days of His temptation He answered the devil with quotes from this book. With good reason the prince of darkness had such hatred for this sacred book that his attack on the Bible began specifically with it. One of the first arguments advanced against Scripture was the assertion that the book found by the high priest Hilkiah under King Josiah (2 Kg. 22:8–13) was Deuteronomy, which had just been written. There have never been any serious arguments in support of this. Furthermore, the laws of Jehosaphat bear a resemblance to the precepts of this book (2 Chron. 17:7–9). King Amaziah did not slay the children of the murderers of his father, in strict accordance with the commands of Deuteronomy (2 Chron. 25:1–4).

Contemporary researchers have discovered that “compositionally the book of Deuteronomy resembles an agreement between an overlord and a vassal, the structure of which better correlates with corresponding Hittite and Akkadian documents of the 15th–13th centuries BC than with Aramaic and Assyrian agreements of the 8th–7th centuries BC. Essentially, the agreements mentioned comprise a vassal’s oath of fidelity to his overlord. They ordinarily consist of three main parts: the first part gives an overview of the historical events preceding the agreement, the prehistory of the relations between the parties to the agreement; the second part presents an itemized list of rights and obligations under the agreement, the conditions of the agree-

ment—essentially, the law proper; and the third part lists threats and curses upon one who violates the agreement and blessings upon one who keeps it. In Aramaic and Assyrian documents the first part is usually absent.” Thus, even from the standpoint of archaeology the traditional attribution of this Mosaic book may be considered confirmed, since as it happens the middle of the second millennium BC coincides with the time when the prophet lived.

Having spoken his final prophecy, at the Lord’s command Moses ascended Mount Nebo and beheld the land which he could not enter. Gazing upon the image of the eternal homeland, Moses the servant of the Lord died at the word of the Lord. “And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day” (Deut. 34:4–5). According to a tradition reflected in the epistle of the apostle Jude, the devil argued with the archangel Michael, protector of the Hebrew nation, concerning the body of Moses, wishing to deliver it to the Israelites that they might make an idol of it. But the commander of the heavenly hosts said, “The Lord rebuke thee” (Jude 9).

But the story of the greatest of the Old Testament prophets did not end here. He did enter Palestine after all. This occurred in the days of Christ the Savior, when the latter called him forth from Sheol and vouchsafed him to behold the glory of God not from behind, but face to face. On Tabor Moses appeared in glory and conversed with the Lord concerning His end, which He was to accomplish in Jerusalem (Lk. 9:30–31). Thus God fulfilled the prayer with which the prophet had entreated Him, asking that he be granted to see the face of the Creator and to enter the Promised Land.

A new confirmation of Aaron’s appointment was the miracle of the rod that budded, prefiguring the virginal birth of Christ the Savior. At the command of God, each of the tribes left a rod from their elders overnight, and in the morning the rod signed with Aaron’s name had put forth leaves, bloomed, and produced almonds. Throughout the time until the destruction of Jerusalem, the rod of Aaron remained a witness to the divine election of the ancient priesthood, for it lay before the ark of the covenant.

This miracle prefigured both the virgin birth of the Lord and the mystery of the cross. As by the power of God a dry stick

demonstrated an abundance of life, so also by the power of the Holy Spirit the womb of the Ever-Virgin produced the eternal High Priest, on the one hand. On the other hand, the stick was barren, as the hearts of the gentiles were barren. But the power of Christ's death upon the cross produced eternal life in the souls of idolaters who converted.

Chapter 18

Balaam the Seer

After the chastisement of the serpents, at God's command Moses again performed the miracle of bringing forth water. Then Israel sang this song: "Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it: The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves."

When Balaam left his land riding upon an ass, the angel of the Lord appeared and several times stood in the way. After several attempts to circumvent this being, invisible to men but visible to the beast, the ass lay down. When Balaam began to beat it, by the will of God the ass spoke with a human voice and told him of the angel. At this the seer also beheld the heavenly messenger, who commanded him to speak only the words of God and not to attempt to work sorcery against the people of God.

This remarkable person then comes to Ashdothpisgah, and God compels him to bless Israel. In a fury Balak, king of Moab, denies him his reward.

By the mouth of Balaam the Spirit of God foretells the coming of Christ: "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel" [Num. 24:17].

Based on this prophecy, 1500 years later the disciples of Balaam came to worship the newborn Divine Infant. And this prophecy is read on the eve of the Nativity.

The miracles in Egypt are also mentioned, and there is a hint of the debauched counsel of Balaam.

Chapter 19

The Rebellion at Mount Peor

In leaving, Balaam advised the king of Moab to seduce the Israelites by fornication, and thereby to deprive them of divine protection. And so it occurred. The Hebrews began to fornicate with the Moabite women and to participate with them in worshipping Baalpeor. This was ritual debauchery, through which a person entered into fellowship with the demons. The wrath of God immediately overtook the apostates, and a plague began.

At the command of God, Moses ordered that all the idolaters be executed. Then, at the very moment when those faithful to the Creator were weeping at having angered God, one of the captains of the tribe of Simeon brazenly brought a prostitute into his house. Then Phinehas, a grandson of Aaron, seized a spear and pierced them both through with the spear as debauchers, and the plague immediately ceased. And God said, “Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel. ... They shall therefore be priests forever; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.” And indeed, Phinehas and his descendants become high priests in the house of God.

23,000 people perished from the plague, and 1,000 were executed. At the Lord’s command Moses commanded that the seducers be destroyed. Among them there also perished Balaam, to whom the revelations of God had been given, but who had chosen the path of evil. Citing this account, the apostle Paul warns: “Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. ... Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Cor. 10:9, 11).

The righteous Phinehas is commemorated on March 12/25.

Chapter 20

The Death of Moses the God-seer

When the Hebrews reached the borders of the Holy Land, God told Moses that the time had come for him to die as punishment because he and Aaron had not precisely fulfilled the Lord's commands at the waters of Meribah (Num. 20:7–13). Approaching the Jordan, Moses repeated all the commandments that the Lord had given on Mount Sinai, that the children of those who had died while wandering in the wilderness might remember all the miracles of God and keep His laws. This final address of the God-seer, which he recorded, is called the book of Deuteronomy.

This book contains one of the most important prophecies concerning Christ the Savior. Moses says: "The Lord said unto me, I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (Deut. 18:17–19). The Lord Jesus Christ, who was born among the Hebrews, in truth became a Prophet like unto Moses. As Moses was persecuted from his birth, so Herod wished to kill Christ; as Moses led the people out of Egyptian slavery, so Christ freed all men from slavery to the devil; as Moses made the Old Covenant with God and men, so Christ made a New Covenant between His Father and the Church in His blood. Moses gave the law of slavery; the Lord gave the law of freedom. Moses' face shone when he descended from the mountain; Jesus Christ shone when He was transfigured on Tabor. For this reason the apostles also applied this prophecy explicitly to the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 3:20–24). It is important to remember this, given that the Muslims falsely apply this prophecy to Muhammad.

Upon concluding his prophecies, Moses pronounced blessings upon those who would keep the law, and curses upon those who

would break the covenant with the Creator. These blessings and curses proved to be prophecies, which are precisely fulfilled in the Hebrew nation to this day (see Deut. 28:30). In pronouncing these predictions, at God's command Moses appointed as his successor Joshua, who prior to this had received the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands (Num. 27:15–23). Then at last he gave an address denouncing apostates, which was to be a warning for all the ages (Deut. 32). It is sung in our churches every Tuesday of Great Lent, and the second ode of the canon was composed on its basis.

Having spoken his final prophecies, Moses blessed all the tribes of Israel, foretelling the fate of each of them (Deut. 33), and at the word of the Lord he ascended Mount Nebo, there to see the land into which he could not enter. Gazing upon the image of the eternal homeland, Moses the servant of the Lord died at the word of the Lord, at the age of 120. "And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day" (Deut. 34:4–5). This occurred on the first day of Adar (February–March).

The memory of the prophet Moses is celebrated on September 4/17.

Troparion of the prophet, tone 2:

Thou didst ascend to the heights of the virtues, O Prophet Moses, for which cause thou wast vouchsafed to behold the glory of God and didst receive the grace-filled tablets of the law. And, bearing within thyself the lineaments of grace, thou wast the honored boast of the prophets and the great mystery of piety.

Kontakion, tone 2:

Today the choir of the prophets rejoiceth with Moses and Aaron, for the end of their prophecy hath found fulfillment in us: today the Cross shineth forth, whereby Thou hast saved us. Through their supplications, O Christ God, have mercy upon us!

Chapter 21

The Spies in Jericho

When Moses had departed to his fathers, God commanded Joshua to begin the conquest of the Holy Land.

“I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee,” He said. “Be strong and of a good courage. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left. Thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: then none shall withstand thee. Be not afraid: for the Lord thy God is with thee.”

At Joshua’s command the whole nation began preparing to cross the Jordan. But first two spies were sent to learn how things stood in the nearest city that would have to be conquered—the city of Jericho.

They entered Jericho and stayed in the home of the harlot Rahab. Then the king of the city learned that Rahab had hid the spies, covering them with stalks of flax. When the messengers of the king had gone, the mistress of the house said, “I know that the Lord hath given you the land. All the inhabitants of the land are faint because of you, for we have heard of the great miracles of the God in Egypt. Now, therefore, I pray you to save me and my family.”

The spies promised to preserve their lives, if they would hang a red cord from the window and not betray them to the Canaanites. They also required that all who wished to be saved assemble in her house. Whoever went out would perish. Rahab promised them that she would do all this. Her house was part of the wall (such houses have been discovered during excavations of the ruins of Jericho), and she let the spies down by a rope. They informed Joshua of all this, and Rahab immediately hung a red cord from her window.

Rahab the harlot is a symbol of the church of the gentiles, who had apostatized from the Creator and worshiped the de-

mons. They renounced fidelity to their false gods for the sake of the true God. They were delivered by the spilled blood of Christ, symbolized by the red cord. The sole house of Rahab, where salvation was possible in Jericho, signified the sole Church, outside which there is no escape from eternal perdition.

Chapter 22

The Storming of Jericho

Upon receiving the report of the spies, Joshua gave the order to begin the attack. But Israel's path was blocked by the seasonal spring flooding of the Jordan. At God's command the people approached the river, and the priests, carrying the ark of the covenant, entered the churning waters. And a miracle occurred. Immediately the water stopped upstream of the Jordan, and the people crossed the river as though on dry land. At the command of Joshua twelve stones were taken from the river bed, and in their place twelve others were laid as a witness to the miracle that had occurred. The moment the feet of the priests left the bed, the water immediately rushed down. This sign showed that God had not forsaken Israel after the death of Moses, and it prefigured baptism, through which men, led by Jesus Christ, ascend to heaven. With good reason the Lord's Baptism took place on this very spot. The twelve stones taken from the river symbolized the twelve apostles, upon whom the New Israel—the Church of God—was built. This event occurred on the tenth day of the first month (Aviv—March).

Then Joshua circumcised all the Hebrews who had been born in the wilderness, and removed from them the shame of slavery. So also baptism cuts off from our hearts the growths of sin and death. After this the feast of Passover was celebrated for the first time in the Holy Land. The Hebrews ate of the fruits of Canaan, and on that day the manna ceased to fall. So also Holy Communion accompanies us all the way to the Kingdom of God. Then, beyond the bounds of this world, we will be united with the Lord without veils.

When their forces approached Jericho, Joshua saw the archangel Michael, who said that he had come to his aid.

The city barred its gates in fear before the Hebrews. At the command of the Creator, the latter processed around the city for six days, sounding trumpets, as a sign of the preaching of the gospel that would resound until the evil of this world should be destroyed.

On the seventh day they processed around Jericho seven times to the sound of trumpets, and after the seventh time the people gave a shout, and the walls collapsed. All the inhabitants were destroyed at the Lord's command, and all their property was destroyed, that the Hebrews might understand that it was the work of God. Only Rahab and her family were spared, and they joined the people of God. She even entered the lineage of Christ, as a pledge of the conversion of the gentiles. In the twentieth century archaeologists discovered the destroyed, charred walls of Jericho.

Joshua cursed the man who should rebuild this city, and promised that in punishment he would lose two sons.

One of the Hebrews stole property from the accursed city, and God turned His face away from Israel. Only after the violator had been executed did the Lord return to His people.

Chapter 23

The Battle at Gibeon and the Conquest of the Holy Land

Joshua's next battle was the taking of Ai. For this assault a military ruse was employed. A part of the Hebrews fled from the Canaanites, and when the latter pursued the retreating forces, those waiting in ambush seized the city. All the inhabitants were slain, and the city was taken by the Israelites.

After this Joshua fulfilled the will of the Lord. On Mount Ebal he built an altar, and all the people proclaimed curses upon the apostates and blessings upon those who kept the covenant

with God. In the 1970s archaeologists found the very altar that Joshua built.

All the kings of Canaan formed a military alliance in order to destroy the Hebrews. Only the inhabitants of Gibeon decided to enter into an alliance with Israel through a ruse. The captains of the people were deceived, and without asking the advice of the Lord they concluded an agreement with them. In punishment for their deceit the inhabitants of Gibeon became servants of the temple.

Upon learning what the inhabitants of Gibeon had done, the coalition of the Canaanites decided to punish them. Then at the request of his allies Joshua and the people fell suddenly upon the united army of Canaan. This was a decisive battle, in which the entire fate of the Hebrew nation and of God's very covenant with Abraham was decided. The Canaanites were seized with panic when the forces of the Hebrews fell upon them. And God Himself intervened in the battle: great stones fell from heaven, killing the majority of the Canaanites. The battle was at its height, but the sun was already beginning to set.

Then Joshua cried out to the Lord and exclaimed, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon."

And the sun stood still, and the moon stood for nearly a whole day while the people wrought the vengeance of the Lord.

The Canaanites were routed, and the five kings hid in a cave, where they were found. Joshua commanded that they be cast at the feet of the conquerors, and ordered the military captains to place their feet upon their necks.

"Fear not, nor be dismayed," said Joshua: "for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight."

The five kings were executed, and upon their bodies a heap of stones was piled. Joshua then fell upon the superior forces of the Canaanites near the lake of Merom and crushed them. He destroyed the war chariots of the Canaanites and burned the capitol of northern Canaan, Hazor. Likewise victorious was Joshua's march through southern Canaan, where he destroyed the giants who dwelt there. The ruins of the cities laid waste by Joshua were found by archaeologists in the twentieth century, thereby confirming the account of Scripture.

After this the land was distributed by lot among the tribes, and cities were set apart for the priests. A part of these cities became sanctuary cities, where those who had killed involuntarily could seek refuge. At the Lord's command, the priests and the Levites were to live off the tithe (a tenth part of one's income) that the Israelites brought to them, and in exchange the former prayed to God, taught the people God's law, and meted out justice.

Caleb, the other spy who together with Joshua had proven faithful to God, received for his inheritance the very Hebron where 45 years prior he had cut down the enormous grape vine. According to the law of God, the earth cannot be private property, but is given to people for their domain. The Hebrews therefore drew lots in order to show the direct action of the Creator.

In this way God did as He had promised, giving the Promised Land to the Hebrews.

Chapter 24

The Death of Joshua

When the holy war was complete, Joshua released Rubin, Gad, and half of Manesseh to the domains beyond Jordan, having commanded them to keep the commandments of the Lord. These crossed the river, erecting an altar as a sign that they were part of the one people of God.

At his request, the military commander himself received a city for his domain. Finally, sensing the approach of death, Joshua gathered all the Israelites in Sechem, where the tabernacle was located, and there he said:

"Thus saith the Lord, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood, and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham and led him into this land. His grandson Jacob settled in Egypt. But I brought you out from thence. And I gave you this land for your possession, and I sent the hornet before you, which drove out the Canaanites from before you, and wild beasts fell upon them. Now ye live in houses which ye did not

build, and ye drink from wells that ye did not dig. Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves other gods: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, for He is holy.”

Then the people said, “No, only Him Who Is will we serve. For He drove away from us our enemies who lived in this land.”

Joshua said that if they were prepared to serve the Lord, they were to cast away idols, because God would not tolerate duality of faith, and then His wrath would be kindled. They reaffirmed their decision. Then Joshua made a covenant with the people, read the Pentateuch, and wrote into it all that had happened during the time of conquest. He took an enormous stone and placed it next to an oak near the sanctuary as a testament to the covenant. If the people should violate it, the stone would be their accusation.

Then, having sent the people away, Joshua died in his city of Timnathserah, and they placed with him the stone knives with which he had circumcised the Hebrews near Jericho.

The memory of the holy righteous Joshua is celebrated on September 1.

Conclusion

Our path has reached its end, and we take our leave of the sacred pages of the book of Genesis. We have passed through the fire of evolutionism and the water of modernist pseudo-theology, but we were led by Him Who was the fourth Person in the furnace in Babylon. We have contemplated the glory of the incorruptible world, which came forth incorruptible from the hands of God, and the abyss to which it was brought down by the fall into sin of the first-created people. We have likewise beheld the zenith of the necromantic civilization of the apostates, the renaissance of which we are witnessing, and we have seen how merciful justice cleansed the universe in the first baptism of the flood. If it pleases the All-good Redeemer, in the future we will return to our study of how to reconcile the most accurate Revelation given by Moses with the current achievements of what is falsely termed scholarly wisdom, that we may fulfill the commandment of our Savior Jesus Christ: “Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old” (Mt. 13:52).

I sincerely ask all those who have read my humble work to offer up their pure prayers for the author of these lines—the sinful priest Daniel—that God grant that he take up his abode in those mansions of paradise to which the pious Orthodox reader directs his steps. I entreat you to cover with your merciful love the countless shortcomings of this work, which the author has undertaken solely out of his zeal for the defense of our mother the Church, which is affronted by the new gnostics—the “Christian evolutionists.” Their heresies, which reject the omnipotence, the all-goodness, and the wisdom of the Creator in the name of following the spirit of this age, will lead those whom they seduce directly to acknowledgment of the enemy of the human race, the author of evolutionism, and to the rejection of the whole economy of the Second Adam, Who said, “We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have

told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" (Jn. 3:11–12).

As in the second century, so also in the twentieth the Church rightly proclaims the Tradition received from the apostles, as it was delivered by St. Irenaeus of Lyons, "which preaches the one God Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, Artificer of man, Who brought about the flood and called Abraham." Both then and now she knows no gods of evolution who could help or hinder the One Who created the world in six days, and Who makes all things as He is pleased to do.

Annunciation of the Most Pure Virgin, on which the Creator restored corrupted Adam, in the year 7507 from the creation of the world.