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Those Questions. III.

3. Isn't the Bible merely a compilation of ancient bits of wisdom uttered by wise men? Was not the flood in which Noe was saved something like the recent Yangtse flood?

The whole question of the authenticity of the Bible demands a large volume. Here we can give only a few convincing points. Answering the second question we showed the proofs that the Gospels are historical, and using them as true history we proved that Christ is God. If He is God and He refers to them as containing true history and true teaching, and further as protected by the Holy Ghost from error, we are fully satisfied that they are authentic, and not mere fables or folk lore.

Further, by the laws of historical criticism we can prove that they were written at the time to which Catholic tradition assigns them and by men who knew what they were writing about. For instance, take the first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch. They are written in the ancient Hebrew of the time of the exodus of the Jews from Egypt. The only foreign words they contain are Egyptian words, and of the language of the time of the Pharaohs, not of the later Ptolemys, to which time rationalists would like to assign them. Excavations made in Egypt and Palestine (with the set purpose, often, of refuting their historical character) have fitted in perfectly with the Pentateuch. In matters of geography, ethnology, and the like, they are entirely in conformity with the findings of the best scholarship that has worked on that period. Rationalists who want to assign them to the fifth century before Christ are also faced with the inexplicable difficulty of the Samaritan Pentateuch, for the Samaritans hated the Jews for a thousand years before Christ; and since they had the same religious book as the basis for their lives, they must have taken it with them when they separated, those thousand years before. So much for the 500 B.C. theory.

The "flood" was something like the recent Yangtse flood, or any other flood, but was on a grander scale than any other before or since. There is no need to suppose that it was universal in the sense that it covered the whole globe, but only that it wiped out all but a few persons of the human race. In substantiation of the claim that it did this, consider the fact that every nation, every tribe, has a tradition of the Flood - garbled and corrupted, of course, in most cases, but nevertheless a tradition of the Flood that wiped out all but a few people. Archeology also bears witness to the Flood; on the site of the ancient Ur of the Chaldees, the ancient home of Abraham, an expedition is now uncovering valuable evidence of it - by digging down through the ruins of two later cities to uncover a more ancient one.

4. Since so few people, even among the educated, know anything about astronomy, wasn't it possible to foist off as real the story Genesis gives of the origin of the earth, the story of creation, and the like?

Listen: if Moses had written a scientific account of the origin of the earth and of creation, we wouldn't understand it yet. God's whole purpose in the story He had Moses write in Genesis was to tell us that He had made the world and everything in it, that He had separated life from dead matter, that He had made man distinct from the animals by giving him an immortal soul and giving him an immortal and supremely high destiny, that man corrupted the nature God gave him by disobeying the one command he had received, and that God had promised to restore man to his destiny and give him the help to attain it, even though He would not restore all the special gifts He had given to the first man. Moses does that, doesn't he? Where is the "foisting" in that?

Gaps in Adoration: Sun. 3:00, 4:00, 6:00. Mon. 12:00, 3:30, 5:30 (2); 6:00 (2); 6:30 (2) Tues. 7:30, 11:00, 12:00 (2), 1:00, 5:30 (2), 6:00 (2), 6:30 (2). The cards for these periods are at the pamphlet rack in Sorin Hall. Fill them out without delay.