

Biblical Errancy And Inerrancy

Endtime Issues No. 101

24 July 2003

Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D.

Retired Professor of Theology, Andrews University

Dear Members of the Endtime Issues Newsletter:

In the last newsletter (no. 100) I invited readers to visit my website where I posted two pictorial stories about (1) Mary's Stars on the European Flag and Currency, and (2) The Dutch Edition of *From Sabbath to Sunday*. The response has been very encouraging. Within the first 24 hours over 2000 subscribers visited the website (www.biblicalperspectives.com) to read these fascinating stories. Several readers asked permission to post and/or publish the stories elsewhere.

In the future I intend to make a fuller use of my website by posting there news items and aspects of my research that would lengthen unduly the newsletters. An additional advantage is the possibility of illustrating significant events with pictures. This cannot be done in our regular newsletters because many of our overseas subscribers cannot download lengthy messages with pictures.

Beginning with this newsletter, I plan to post from time to time chapters from my new manuscript entitled *POPULAR HERESIES*. The research has been slow, due to the constant traveling across North America and overseas. By God's grace, I hope to complete it by the end of this year or, at the latest, early next year. I view this as an important research, because it examines a dozen popular heresies in the light of Scripture and history. It should prove to be an effective witnessing tool to help our Christian friends understand why such popular beliefs as biblical inerrancy, immortality of the soul, Sunday sacredness, eternal torment, speaking in tongues, once saved always saved, the Rapture, papal infallibility, and intercession of the saints, are heresies contrary to the teachings of the Word of God.

The procedure I will follow is first to trace each heresy historically and then to refute it biblically. The goal of this research project is to produce a book ideal for witnessing to Christians interested to know why some of their beliefs are wrong and Adventists teachings are right.

The reason for posting some of the chapters in our newsletters is twofold. First, I can benefit from your constructive criticism. Among our subscribers there are hundreds of educated people with analytical minds. They can alert me to problems in my methodology and conclusions. Second, you as subscribers can begin to enjoy the benefits of these studies before they appear in a published version.

The first chapter of *POPULAR HERESIES*, is entitled "Biblical Errancy and Inerrancy." Due to the length of the chapter of about 50 pages, I am posting it in two installments, beginning with this newsletter. You should find this study timely and informative, because it addresses the fundamental question of the trustworthiness of the Bible for defining our beliefs and practices.

The battle over the inspiration and authority of the Bible is being waged within Christian churches and in the scholarly community. Our own Seventh-day Adventist church is not exempted from the controversy. An indication is the two recent books written by two respected Adventist scholars, namely, Alden L. Thompsen, *Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers* (Review and Herald 1991), and Samuele Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word: The Crisis over Biblical Authority and Biblical Interpretation* (Berrien Springs, 1996). In many ways the two authors represent the division that exists among

Adventist Bible teachers, pastors, and lay members regarding the inspiration and authority of the Bible.

Due to the nature of the book as a witnessing tool to reach all Christians, this essay examines how the battle over the Bible is being waged in Christianity in general—not in the Adventist church in particular. Discussing the problem in the Adventist church would divert the attention from the primary objective of the book. Moreover, the issues we face in our Adventist church, are not different from those faced by other churches.

This essay shows that the authority of the Bible is undermined today, not only by liberal scholars who make the Bible a too-human and error-ridden book, but also by some conservative evangelicals who make the Bible too-divine and absolutely inerrant in all its details. This reminds us that heresies come in different forms. Sometimes they openly reject biblical teachings, while at other times they subtly distort them.

REPORT ON THE MEETINGS IN BONN, GERMANY

On Friday/Saturday July 4-5, 2003, I presented my PowerPoint SABBATH ENRICHMENT SEMINAR at a rally of several Adventist churches in the picturesque city of Bonn, Germany. The meetings were held in a most elegant university hall, overlooking the Rhine river. About 400 Adventist and non-Adventists attended the meetings. The reception and response were most gratifying.

What makes a German congregation unique is their interest for factual information. A man approached me on Friday night after I shared by testimony “My Search for the Sabbath at a Vatican University,” and told me: “Your testimony was good, but I hope that you will present tomorrow some of the important aspects the Sabbath/Sunday research you did in Rome.” I reassured him that he would not be disappointed.

To be sure to meet the cultural expectations of our German fellow-believers and friends, on Sabbath afternoon I delivered a three hours long (partly due to the translation) PowerPoint lecture entitled “How It Came About: From Saturday to Sunday.” Apparently the lecture met their expectations for factual information, because every body listen attentively until the end. Someone told me that it had been worth for him to drive 100 miles to listen to the lecture.

Incidentally, I seldom deliver this lecture to Adventist congregations in North America, because most people are not too interested to listen to a historical investigation on the change from Sabbath to Sunday in early Christianity. The situation is different in Germany. People are more cultural oriented. This is evident in the waiting lounges of the airports which are well supplied with various newspapers and magazines for passengers to freely use. Every body is reading.

An indication of the cultural interest of the Germans is the number of bookstores found in their cities. I took a walk in the center of Bonn and I counted a dozen of bookstores, almost as numerous as their food stores. Germans are to be commended for their desire to increase their knowledge in all fields, including religion. This poses a challenge for Adventist pastors who are expected to meet both the intellectual and spiritual needs of their congregations.

SABBATH DEVELOPMENTS IN HOLLAND

In the last newsletter I reported the fascinating story of the Dutch translation and publication of my dissertation *From Sabbath to Sunday —Van Sjabbat naar Zondag*. Providentially the Holy Spirit impressed several people to translate, edit, and publish the book. In the process all of them became Sabbathkeepers. If you did not get the chance yet, be sure to visit the website: www.biblicalperspectives.com. You will enjoy looking at their pictures and reading this incredible story.

Since posting the report of my recent visit to Holland, I have received several newspapers articles discussing the unprecedented interest for a rediscovery of the Sabbath by an increasing number of evangelical churches in Holland. Due to the importance of this development, I will quote extensively from a major article, which was graciously translated by Gottfried Oosterwal, Ph. D., a native of Holland and a retired professor from Andrews University Theological Seminary.

On July 5, 2003 two articles appeared in the section of “Religion and Philosophy” of the Dutch newspaper *TROUW*.

The first article, which is entitled “KEEPING THE SABBATH RATHER THAN SUNDAY,” reports: “The ‘Living Water Fellowship’ in [the city of] Assen made that leap to keeping the Sabbath. This ‘Fellowship’ is one of the tens of Evangelical churches which are moving their services from Sunday to Saturday.”

The article continues saying: “ Keeping the traditional-Christian Sunday is against the will of God, according to those Evangelicals who propagate the Sabbath. It is both pagan and ‘antisemitic.’ For that reason they not only turn away from the church service on Sunday, but they also discard all Christian holidays that are rooted in pagan traditions.”

The second article is rather lengthy and provides some valuable information. It is entitled “THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH: AWAY WITH ANTISEMITIC SUNDAY.” The author, Angelique Rijlaarsdam, begins the article saying: “Of the some 200 independent Evangelical churches [in Holland], about one quarter will soon make the transition from Sundaykeeping to Sabbathkeeping, according to an estimate by Bert Woudwijk, leader of the Shalom community in [the city of] Dordrecht. To continue keeping the Christian Sunday he calls ‘antisemitic.’”

It is significant that some evangelical leaders in Holland are acknowledging that the change from Sabbath to Sunday in early Christianity was motivated more by hate for the Jews than love for Jesus Christ. This important factor is documented in my dissertation *From Sabbath to Sunday*, where I am showing how the anti-Jewish and anti-Sabbath legislation promulgated by Emperor Hadrian in A. D. 135 led many Gentile Christians to follow the leadership of the Bishop of Rome in changing the Sabbath to Sunday. The intent was to show to the Roman authorities the Christian separation from the Jews and identification with the rhythms and customs of the Romans.

The rest of the article is a “must” reading. I will quote it extensively. “In evangelical Holland there is a transition going on from Sundaykeeping to Sabbathkeeping. Kees Neeterson, editor in chief of *Charisma* (Journal for Evangelical Holland) highly recommends in his journal the book *FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY* by Samuele Bacchiocchi. The book shows that Saturday was largely replaced by Sunday by the fourth century A. D. According to Bacchiocchi, the Roman Catholic Church is largely responsible for this change. On the basis of pagan influences such as sun-worship and anti-Jewish sentiments, the Roman Catholic church made the Sunday the official day of rest of Christianity.

“Last month Bacchiocchi’s book was published into Dutch. Anyone who reads this book will be ‘a changed person, because he understands [the issue] better,’ Neeterson says. He himself is the publisher of the Dutch edition of *VAN SJABBAT NAAR ZONDAG*.

The book helps believers understand that Sunday is a human institution that militates against the will of God.”

The Dutch translation and publication of my book *VAN SJABBAT NAAR ZONTAG*, could not have come at a better time. At the very time when an increasing number of evangelicals in Holland are becoming interested in rediscovering the Sabbath, the book has appeared to help them to understand and experience more fully the Sabbath as a day to celebrate God’s creative and redemptive love.

“Neeterson, who has become a Sabbathkeeper, expects that the book will ‘sow discord’ among the faithful Bible believing Evangelicals, and ‘will open their eyes.’ He sees in the Netherlands a clear development in the churches that are now making the transition from Sunday to Sabbath. In the words of Neeterson: ‘This development has turned into a cascade.’

“Presently there are about 30,000 believers keeping the Sabbath in our country [of the Netherlands]. The most prominent are the Seventh-day Adventists, Seventh day Baptists, Messianic Jews, and Jews. Recently, an increasing number of Evangelicals have become Sabbathkeepers.

“One congregation that recently made the transition to Sabbathkeeping, is the ‘Living Water Fellowship.’ This full-gospel church in [the city of] Assen has been keeping the Sabbath since May. ‘This did not happen overnight,’ says their leader Wim Breedveld. It all began two years ago. ‘We studied the [biblical] teachings about the Sabbath, and organized a Friday evening celebration of the Sabbath with a communal meal. Eventually this developed into ‘real Sabbath keeping’ with a worship service on Saturday. Not all members participated in this transition.’ Breedveld says: ‘One pays a price. But on the other hand, it also attracts people.’ He sees this developments as a ‘restoration of God’s Will.’ And, he knows of at least five other Evangelical congregations which will shortly become Sabbathkeepers.

“‘It is a liberating experience to follow God’s commandment,’ says Bert Wouydwijk, leader of the Shalom church in [the city of] Dordrecht, an Evangelical church which has been keeping the Sabbath since 2000. . . . Woudwijk is in constant contacts with other Evangelical churches interested about Sabbathkeeping and ‘returning to Jewish roots.’ He expects that the landscape of Evangelical Holland to change substantially within the next two years. Says Woudwijk: ‘About 25 percent of the independent Evangelical churches will soon keep the Sabbath.’

“Questions about Sabbath keeping are alive not only in evangelical circles, but also across a whole spectrum of churches. The subject is being discussed in the Reformed and Christian Reformed churches, in ‘Samen-op-Weg kring [On-the-way-together circles], and among Roman-Catholics.

The article continues mentioning some of the problems and criticism that Sabbathkeepers face in Holland. In closing the article cites two inspiring testimonies. The first is from Loes Breimer, a mother of four teenagers who are very enthusiastic about Sabbathkeeping, especially Friday evening with singing and eating of the special bread she bakes. The article says: “Breimer really enjoys the Sabbath. To her, the Sabbath really marks the week. ‘The Sabbath creates space for God and strengthens my relationship with Him.’

The second testimony is from Pastor Wim Breedveld of Assen. The article says: “He experienced a new freedom after the transition from Sunday to Sabbath ‘It is a liberation to follow God’s own instructions, rather human traditions.’”

What an inspiring and encouraging article! Reading it I was reminded of Ellen White’s statement that in this final hour of world history “the Sabbath will be proclaimed more fully” (EW p. 33). Indeed, this is happening today in an unprecedented way. Practically every week I receive reports of pastors, congregations, and organizations that

are rediscovering the Sabbath. This past week I received a message from a Baptist pastor who wants to gradually lead his congregation to Sabbathkeeping. He asks me what is the best procedure to follow.

From overseas, this week I received a message from Dr Przemyslaw Waliszewski, President of the Polish Brethren Unity. He renews the invitation for me to speak at their annual congress next year. About five years ago over 1500 of their Polish Brethren Unity church members accepted the Sabbath. Since then they are invited me several times to speak at their annual congress in order to help them understand and experience the Sabbath more fully. God willing, I intend to visit them next year. My plan is to organize a combined rally with our Adventist believers. May God grant us wisdom to build bridges with sincere Christians who are seeking to understand and experience more fully His revealed truths.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AT THE END OF THIS NEWSLETTER

At the end of this newsletter you will find the following important announcements:

1. The date and location of my weekend seminars for July and August 2003
2. Information on how your church can purchase a state-of-the art HITACHI LCD VIDEO PROJECTORS at over 60% discount on the Factory Suggested Retail price. HITACHI has agreed to offer their line of outstanding LCD projectors to our Adventist churches and institutions at an incredible discount. A bonus 70" screen will be offered to the first nine orders. Read this amazing story at the end of this newsletter.
3. A special offer on the TWO CD-ROMS containing all the 16 books, 100-plus articles, and all the PowerPoint SABBATH/ADVENT SEMINARS

BIBLICAL ERRANCY AND INERRANCY

Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D.

Retired Professor of Theology, Andrews University

No book has ever been as assailed as the Bible. The attacks have come from outside and inside the Church. Paradoxically, the authority of the Bible is undermined not only by liberal critics who maintain that the Bible is a strictly human, error-ridden book, but also by those evangelicals who strongly believe in the total inerrancy of the Bible.

The liberal critics reduce the Bible to a human book devoid of supernatural revelations and miraculous manifestations. The Old and New Testaments are strictly human literary productions that partake of the shortcomings of their human authors. By contrast, some conservative evangelicals elevate the Bible to a divine level that overlooks its human limitations. They affirm that the Bible is absolutely inerrant, that is, without error in its original manuscripts. It can be trusted in every reference to history, geography, chronology, cosmology, and science.

This essay endeavors to show that both the errancy and inerrancy positions undermine the authority of the Bible by making it either too-human or too-divine. This reminds us that heresies come in different forms. Sometimes they openly reject biblical authority and teachings, while at other times they subtly distort scriptural teachings.

Objectives. This chapter examines the controversy over the errancy/inerrancy of the Bible. These opposing heresies are championed by liberal critics on the one hand and by conservative evangelicals on the other. Our procedure will be first to trace briefly the historical origin of each movement and then to evaluate their teachings from a biblical perspective.

To place the current controversy in a historical perspective, brief mention will be made of how the circulation of the Bible has been opposed outside and inside the church. This will help us to understand the relentless efforts of the Evil One to prevent the message of God's revelation from reaching sincere people.

The chapter is divided in four parts. This newsletter includes the first two parts and the next the last two. The first mentions briefly some past attempts to prevent the circulation of the Bible by the Catholic Church, English kings, Protestant church leaders, and communists governments. The second part examines Biblical Criticism—known also as Higher Criticism—from a historical and biblical perspective. Historically, we will briefly trace the development of the Critical Movement that has been largely responsible during the past three centuries for undermining biblical authority. Biblically, we will evaluate the validity of its presuppositions in the light of the witness of Scripture and recent research.

The third part, to be posted in the next newsletter, looks at the case for biblical inerrancy as taught by a large number of evangelicals who maintain that God guided the minds of the Bible writers in such a way that they were prevented from making any error. Whatever they wrote is supposed to be without error, not only with respect to religious teachings, but also in such areas as geography, astronomy, history, chronology, and the natural sciences. We shall see this teaching overlooks the human dimension of Scripture. The last part sets forth the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the inspiration and authority of the Bible. We shall see that Adventists hold to a balanced view of the authority of the Bible, by acknowledging that the source is divine, the writers are human, and their writings contain divine thoughts in human language.

Part I ATTACKS AGAINST THE BIBLE

During the first three centuries some Roman emperors sought to uproot Christianity by destroying the Bible. For example, on February 23, 303 A. D. emperor Diocletian decreed that every copy of the Bible was to be handed over to the Roman police to be burned. Thousands of valuable Biblical manuscripts were burned in public squares. Many Christians lost their lives for refusing to hand over their Bibles. The aim was to eliminate the presence of the Christian religion by suppressing its normative authority. The reason given by leading philosophers and government officials was that Christianity was largely responsible for the socio-economic crises that were plaguing the empire at that time.

With the rise of Islam in the seventh century, the Bible has been consistently outlawed in strict Moslem countries. To this very day distribution of Bibles is strictly forbidden in Moslem countries. Countless Christians have lost their lives for attempting to share the teachings of the Word of God. The success of ruthless Moslem ruler to uproot the Bible and Christianity is evident in the countries they conquered. For example, prior to the Moslem conquest of the seventh century, the North African countries of Lybia, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, were flourishing Christian nations that produced such church leaders as Augustine and Tertullian. Today, Christians and Bible are practically nonexistent in these countries.

The circulation of the Bible has also suffered from within Christianity at the hands of the Catholic Church, English kings, and Protestant church leaders. More recently, communist regimes also have attempted to prevent the circulation of the Bible and to discredit its teachings. Each of the above powers in different ways have assailed the Bible by preventing its circulation among the laity.

Catholic Attempts to Prevent the Reading of the Bible. Historically the Catholic Church has been opposed to the translation of the Bible in the common languages of the people and to its circulation among the laity. For example, the Synod of Toulouse in 1229 A. D. forbade lay Christians to possess copies of the Bible. The right to read and teach the Bible was reserved to the clergy.

For centuries the Waldenses faced physical, civil, and economic persecutions at the hand of the Catholic House of Savoy for translating and distributing portions of the Bible. The most cruel massacre of the innocent Waldenses took place in the Italian Piedmont valleys in 1655 by the army of Charles Emmanuel II, the Catholic Duke of Savoy. The whole Protestant world was shocked by this brutal massacre. Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), Lord Protector of England, protested vigorously and John Milton, his foreign secretary and poet, dedicated this famous sonnet of *Paradise Lost* to the thousand of slaughtered Waldenses.

“Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones.”

Incidentally, it was a Waldensian fellow carpenter who loaned a Bible to my father, while he was still a young devout Catholic. Reading that Bible proved to be a turning point in my father's religious experience, as well as in the future of our family. My father lost that Bible when he showed it to his parish priest, hoping to receive answers to questions raised by reading the Word of God. The priest abruptly took away the Bible from my father's hands, saying: “This book will breed only confusion and unrest to your soul. Leave it with me.”

It is only since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) that the Catholic Church has encouraged its members to read the annotated Catholic Bible. This recent decision has not significantly increased the reading of the Bible in Catholic homes, because

historically the Word of God has been and largely remains an unknown book to most Catholics.

Protestant Attempts to Prevent the Circulation of the Bible. Surprisingly, even Protestant rulers and church leaders have attempted to prevent the translation and circulation of the Bible. For example, Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of London, strongly opposed the efforts of William Tyndale (1494-1536) to translate and publish the Bible in English.

Tyndale, a brilliant Bible scholar trained at Oxford and Cambridge, was greatly distressed by the ignorance of the clergy and laity about the Bible. He determined to educate the English people about the Word of God by translating it in their own language. But, he faced enormous opposition from both secular and religious powers in England. Consequently, he was forced to go to Germany to continue his English translation of the New Testament.

In 1526 the first 3000 copies of the octavo edition of Tyndale's English New Testament were published in Worms, Germany. When copies reached England, Bishop Tunstall ordered them to be collected and burned at St. Paul's Cross in London. Eventually, Tyndale's New Testament became the basis for the King James translation.

Tyndale was relentlessly attacked for daring to translate the Bible into English. He was attacked not only by London Bishop Tunstall, but also by William Warham, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and by Thomas Moore, the Chancellor of the English Parliament. These men sent secret agents to trap him as he moved around from his Antwerp base. He was finally arrested and imprisoned in the Castle of Vilvorde, a few miles from Brussels. Early in October 1536 he was strangled in the courtyard of the castle. The effectiveness of the opposition to Tyndale's English translation of the New Testament was such, that of the 18,000 copies that were smuggled to England, only two known copies remain.

Communists Attacks Against the Bible. In the past 100 years Communist governments have attempted to discredit the Bible and to prevent its circulation in their countries. They have used both educational and legal measures. Educationally, people have been taught that the Bible is a superstitious fairy tale book to be rejected by enlightened communist minds. Legally, many people have been arrested and imprisoned for attempting to smuggle Bibles into communist countries.

Autocratic political and religious systems feel threatened by the Bible because its message summons people to give priority to God in their thinking and living. When people accept the God of biblical revelation, making Him first and supreme in their lives, they will not give in to the demands of autocratic political or religious rulers who want the absolute allegiance to their persons, teachings, or parties.

Conclusion. The past attempts to suppress the Bible by burning it or banning it, have proven to be futile. Christians have been willing to suffer torture and death, rather than denying its truths which made them free. The Bible remains unchallenged year after year as the world's best seller. It is still the greatest force for the moral renewal of our human society.

Voltaire, the noted French infidel who died in 1778, predicted that within 100 years Christianity would be extinct. Instead, the irony of history is that the Geneva Bible Society used his house and his printing presses to publish copies of the Bible! No other book in history has been so hated, burned, and banned. Yet it still survives today and reaches almost all the people of the world with its close to 2000 translations. Its moral principles still serve as the moral foundation of many societies.

Part 2 BIBLICAL CRITICISM

The failure of the past attempts to prevent the circulation of the Bible has not weakened the Devil's determination to destroy its authority and influence. During the past three centuries he has adopted a new strategy which has almost destroyed the high view of the Bible previously held in the Christian world. The result has been a theological crisis of unprecedented proportions. This crisis has been precipitated by the introduction of a new method of investigating the Bible known as "Biblical Criticism," or "Higher Criticism."

Definition of Biblical Criticism. The term "Biblical Criticism" describes the application of the modern literary and historical-critical methods to the study of the Bible. It critically analysis the biblical text with the aim of identifying literary sources, the manner and date of composition, conjecturing the authorship, and the literary development of the text.

In theory, the intent of Biblical Criticism is to enhance the appreciation of the Bible through a fuller understanding of its literary history and message. In practice, however, it destroys any confidence in the divine origin of the message of the Bible, because it presupposes its writings to be a merely human literary production, entirely conditioned by the culture of the time.

It is important to note that there is another category of criticism known as "lower" criticism, which is functionally different from "higher" criticism. *Lower criticism* is concerned with ascertaining as nearly as possible the text of the original manuscripts from the remaining copies. In view of its function, lower criticism is commonly called *textual criticism*. Lower criticism is more objective than that of higher criticism, because its scope is limited to an analysis of available textual manuscripts.

The case is different with *higher criticism*. While the higher critic is interested in the accuracy of the text, his overriding concern is to study the writings purely as *human literature*, rejecting a priori any possible divine inspiration of the writers and divine intervention into human affairs. He inquires into the date of the composition, the authorship, the possible use of sources, the culture that influenced the text. It is therefore frequently distinguished in literary, historical, source, form, and redaction criticism, depending on the aspect of higher criticism being examined.

The fundamental problem with higher criticism is his reliance on the critic's subjective speculations, rather than on verifiable scientific investigation. James Orr makes this point in his major article on "Biblical Criticism" in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, of which he was Editor-in-chief. He wrote: "While invaluable as an aid in the domain of Biblical introduction (date, authorship, genuineness, contents, destination, etc.), [Biblical Criticism] manifestly tends to widen out illimitably into regions where exact science cannot follow it, where, often, the critic's imagination is his only law."

This method of linguistic and historical research is not unique to our times. Similar methods were used in the past by Theodore of Mopsuestia (c.350-428) who used grammatical and historical indicators to exegete biblical texts. Even Luther used this method in his exegetical analyses of Bible texts. What is new is the radical approach of the study of the biblical text, which consists in rejecting a priori any supernatural or miraculous divine manifestation in human history, thus forcing all the evidence to comply with these assumptions.

The Negative Impact of Biblical Criticism

The negative impact of Biblical Criticism can be seen in the increasing number of Bible scholars, preachers, and lay-Christians who have lost their confidence in the trustworthiness of the Bible. While historically the Bible has been regarded as God's revealed Word, today liberal critics refuse to identify God's Word with the message of the

Bible. The crisis of Biblical authority is a fundamental problem facing many Protestant churches are facing today. Although W. Pannenberg, a renowned liberal scholar, is himself part of the problem, he correctly affirms: "The dissolution of the traditional doctrine of Scripture constitutes a crisis at the very foundation of modern Protestant theology"²

Surprisingly, as the authority of the Bible *is going down* in the Protestant world, the authority of the Pope *is going up*. The reason is simple. People resent tyranny, but welcome the voice of authority. And the Pope speaks with authority to the millions of Protestants who no longer know what to believe. To them the Pontiff has become, as Church Historian Martin E. Marty puts it, "a walking fortress of faith" in the midst of a godless society.³

The Negative Impact is Widely Recognized. The negative impact of liberal criticism is widely recognized by evangelical scholars. For example, James M. Boice boldly affirms: "Modern biblical criticism, more than anything else, has weakened and almost destroyed the high view of the Bible previously held throughout Christendom."⁴ An increasing number of Christian leaders are joining the chorus of unbelief in casting doubts upon the trustworthiness of the Bible. The defection from a high view of the Bible is having a far more devastating impact on the future of Christian churches than the past attempts to suppress the Bible.

The anti-supernatural presuppositions of Biblical Criticism influences the methods used in contemporary biblical studies and the preaching of many ministers. Speaking of his own Baptist Church, Clark H. Pinnock, a respected Evangelical scholar who has served as President of the Evangelical Theological Society, sadly notes that "a considerable number of important Baptist leaders and thinkers have publicly and unequivocally rejected and sometimes denounced belief in the complete trustworthiness of the Bible. . . . And we must say that this shift of opinion has caused an ongoing and serious split between a large majority of Baptist people who hold the traditional Baptist and Christian view of the Bible and the majority of seminary and college professors who frankly do not."⁵

An Unprecedented Crisis. With almost prophetic foresight, renowned systematic theologian, A. H. Strong, warned in 1918 of the severe dangers posed by negative Biblical criticism. "What is the effect of this method upon our theological seminaries? It is to deprive the gospel message of all definiteness, and to make professors and students disseminators of doubt. . . . The unbelief in our seminary teaching is like a blinding mist slowly settling down upon our churches, and is gradually abolishing, not only all definite views of Christian doctrine, but also all conviction of duty to 'contend earnestly for the faith' of our fathers.' . . . We are ceasing to be evangelistic as well as evangelical, and if this downward progress continues, we shall in due time cease to exist."⁶

These insightful observations highlight that Biblical Criticism has caused a crisis of unprecedented proportions in Christianity. What is at stake is two versions of Christianity: one based on divine revelation and the other derived from human reason. Because of the devastating impact that Biblical Criticism is having on Christian beliefs and practices, it is important to examine its ideological roots and historical development, before we evaluate its presuppositions and methods.

The Ideological Roots of Biblical Criticism

Biblical Criticism developed in the 18th and 19th centuries, partly as a reaction against the rigid Protestant teachings which were based on a verbal concept of inspiration. To counteract Catholic teachings, during the Post-reformation period, Protestants theologians exalted the authority of the Bible by teaching the radical concept of verbal inspiration. The Liberals reacted against this radical view by going to the other extreme in rejecting any form of divine revelation.

Rationalism. Two major philosophical ideologies influenced the development of Biblical Criticism, namely rationalism and evolutionism. Rationalism, an outgrowth on the Enlightenment Movement of the eighteenth century, attempted to reduce Christianity to a religion developed by human reasoning, rather than by divine revelation.

Friedrich Schleimacher (1768-1834), who is rightly regarded as the most influential liberal theologian of the nineteenth century, sought the essence of Christianity in intuitive feelings rather than in an objective divine revelation. This rationalistic, subjective approach to Scripture led to the rejection of any miraculous elements in the biblical texts, because they could not be empirically proven.

Evolutionism. The second philosophical ideology that influenced the rise of Biblical Criticism is the evolutionary philosophy, which applies to the biblical text Darwin's theory of the evolution of the species from simple to complex. The result was that the religion of the Bible was viewed as a product of a religious evolution. As Church Historian Earl Cairns explains, "critics emphasized the development of the idea of God from the primitive storm god of Mount Sinai to the ethical monotheistic god of the prophets"⁷

The end result was that within a relatively short period of time, the Bible came to be viewed as a distinctively human document, stripped of any transcendent authority. Hence, the Bible must be studied and interpreted in the same way as other literature, according to the methods of literary research. Unfortunately, this forcing of the Bible into the categories of secular literature, distorts its message and weakens its capacity to transform human lives.

Fundamentally, the Critical Movement is anti-supernatural and anti-miraculous. It rejects the idea that God acts in any supernatural way in the history of mankind. It views all religious movements as human developments determined strictly by natural causes. The religion of the Bible is no exception. Consequently, the Bible contains *no revelation*, but a gradual development of the human apprehension of God, from the primitive beliefs of cave-dwellers, to the refined monotheism of our day. Biblical writings have only a historical value by providing a record of remarkable manifestations of religious experience. In the end, human reason and experience supersedes biblical revelation.

While the Reformation weakened ecclesiastical authority, Biblical Criticism has weakened biblical authority. The result is that for many seminary professors and preachers the Bible is no longer the normative, authoritative Word of God that reveals His will and purpose for mankind, but a fallible book that contains gems of truth mixed with error.

The Historical Development of Biblical Criticism

The origin of Biblical Criticism is generally traced back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Men such as Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), Thomas Hobbes (1668-1712), and Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677), analyzed the Bible as ordinary literature and began doubting the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, viewing it as the result of a long compilation of several editors.

Biblical Criticism of the Old Testament. Jean Astruc (1684-1766), a French scientist and physician, laid the foundation for the "documentary theory" of the Pentateuch. He disputed the Mosaic authorship of Genesis by isolating the two Hebrew names for God, *Elohim and Yahweh*. From this he concluded that the author of the book drew upon two separate major sources.

This theory was soon adopted by such scholars as Johann Eichhorn (1752-1827), Wilhelm De Wette (1780-1849) and Edward Reuss (1804-1891). These men expanded the "Documentary Theory" from Genesis to the whole of the Old Testament. The culminating work was done by Julius Wellhausen in his *Prolegomena* (1878), where he presents the well-known Graf-Wellhausen four stages (JEPD) documentary hypothesis.

The *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* offers a concised description of the Graf-Wellhasen theory. "The Bible writer called Jahvist (J), a citizen of the southern kingdom of Judah, wrote his source material, among which, for example, are the patriarchal stories from Abraham to the Exodus, in the middle of the 9th century B. C. A century later the writer called Eloist (E), living in the northern kingdom of Israel, wrote his account. These two documents were cleverly combined into one book, JE, by a redactor or editor (R-JE) about 650 B. C. In 621 B. C. the book of Deuteronomy (D) was produced, although not in the form we know it. The book was worked over by another redactor (R-D) about 550 B. C. Between the years 500 and 450 B. C., a priestly writer (P) wrote the legal and religious parts of the Pentateuch, which were then incorporated into the other books of a presumed Mosaic origin by another redactor (R-P), who did the final work of editing about 400 B. C. or a little later. Since that time, according to this theory, the Pentateuch has not experienced appreciable modification."³

Later writers divided Isaiah into two parts and dated Daniel in the second century. The application of the principles of Biblical Criticism not only radically changed the dates and the authorship of the Old Testament books, but also introduced a completely secular and evolutionistic study of their sources.

The Biblical Criticism of the New Testament. The application of the anti-supernaturalistic assumptions of Biblical Criticism were applied to the New Testament at about the same period. Herman Samuel Reimarus published in 1778 his *Fragments* where he denies the possibility of miracles, thus alleging that the New Testament writers were pious liars. This gave rise to the quest for the "historical Jesus" by such scholars as David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1878), Bruno Bauer (1809-18882) and Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965). In his *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, Schweitzer depicts Christ as a radical eschatologist who precipitated his own death, allegedly to bring about the establishment of God's Kingdom. The common denominator of these studies is a priory elimination of supernatural elements in order to allow the real man Jesus to emerge.

The liberal criticism of the New Testament culminated in the work of Rudolf Bultmann who was determined to strip away the mythology of the New Testament writers. He contends that all the references to heaven, hell, miracles, the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Atonement through Christ's death, the Ascension and Second Advent, are myths and absurd superstitions, incredible for modern people. For Bultmann, the New Testament is the outgrowth of an oral tradition in which the church creatively added supernatural elements to the life and teachings of Jesus. Consequently the study of the Bible must be approached in existential terms. People must find authenticity, security, and meaning beyond the words of scripture to their existential meaning.

Conclusion. The major characteristics of Biblical Criticism can be summed up in two words: humanistic and naturalistic. It is humanistic because it assumes that the Bible is man's word about God, rather than God's Word to mankind. It is naturalistic because it assumes that the Bible is the result of an evolutionary process. It is the outgrowth of people's apprehension of God, edited and amended over centuries.

The end result is that the Bible loses its distinctive authority, becoming merely a piece of religious literature, important for the themes presented, but without any normative authority for defining beliefs and practices. If the Reformation weakened *ecclesiastical authority* by exalting *Sola Scriptura*, Biblical Criticism has weakened *Biblical authority* by exalting *human reasoning*.

An Evaluation of Biblical Criticism

The determining elements of the entire critical movement are its presuppositions and assumptions. Their evolutionary world-view largely determines their speculations about the Bible and its teachings. The world-view of a cosmos developing from simple to complex forms of life is appealing, but ultimately it robs God of His creative and redemptive power. It also deprives human life of meaning and hope for a glorious future.

Underlying Presuppositions. The leaders of the critical movement view nature and history as the product of forces in the process of development. Consequently, there has never been, nor there could ever be a direct intervention of God into human affairs. If there is a God, he is a prisoner within His own cosmos, limited to the evolutionary method to bring things to pass. These naturalistic assumptions dismiss as myths and legends the biblical accounts of Creation, the Fall, the Flood, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, and miracles.

An example of this humanistic perspective is found in *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, where Adam is treated as merely a symbol of mankind rather than as a historical person.⁹ The rejection of the historicity of Adam has led numerous critics to reject also the historical person of the second Adam, Christ Himself.

Consistent with this humanistic perspective is the rejection of "predictive prophecy" as this would involve a supernatural revelation. No Old Testament prophet could have foretold events to occur centuries later. A. B. Davidson reflects this view when he writes: "The prophet is always a man of his time, and it is always to the people of his time that he speaks, not to a generation long after, not to us."¹⁰

Liberal critics are united in their presuppositions that, as J. A. Alexander of Princeton puts it, "there simply cannot be prophetic foresight of the distant future."¹¹ For example, since the book of Daniel predicts the fate of the Babylonian, Medio-Persian, Greek, and Roman empires, it is assumed that it was authored by an unknown scribe during the time of the Maccabees (c.167 B. C.). This assumption is discredited by the fact that Daniel's prophecies reach beyond the second century B. C. to the final establishment of God's Kingdom.

These underlying anti-supernatural assumptions cause liberal critics to deny a priori all the exhibitions of divine power mentioned in the Bible. The denial of the Bible's claim to be a revelation from God who acts in human history, raises a fundamental question: Who is telling the truth, the Bible writers or the critics? Both cannot be right.

If the critics are right, then Jesus Christ was an impostor, since He vouched for the trustworthiness of the Old Testament prophets who wrote about Him (Luke 24:44; John 5:39, 46-47). If Christ was a victim of the ignorance of His day, or even worse, a charlatan, then we are left only with the speculations of the critics, who offer us no provision for our salvation, nor any hope for our future destiny.

To reject as untrue and unscientific anything that savors of the miraculous in the Bible, means to ignore the complex structure and design of the cosmos, including that of the human body. No evolutionary theory can explain how rational human beings could ever derive from irrational matter, how our intricate and complex cosmos could ever have evolved spontaneously from chaos. It is a scientific fact that order does not evolve spontaneously from disorder, design from confusion. Whether the critics wish to admit or not, the very complex design of the human body with its multitude of parts so intricately connected, points to the miraculous work of an omniscient Designer.

The Methods of Biblical Criticism. The methods used by liberal critics reflect their fundamental assumptions. For example, since they assume that the biblical narratives developed along evolutionary lines, the complex civil and ritual legislations of the Pentateuch are assigned a much later post-Mosaic date. Harry Emerson, a radical critic, wrote: "We know that every idea in the Bible started from primitive and childlike

origins and, with however many setbacks and delays, grew in scope and height toward the culmination of Christ's Gospel."¹²

On the basis of this gratuitous assumption, the Mosaic authorship of nearly all the legislation of the Pentateuch is denied, because it is regarded as too advanced for the time of Moses. Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) contended that in Moses' time, Israel could not have possessed the complicated civil and social laws contained in the Pentateuch. Thus, the legislation was produced at a later date.

Is this assumption true? Hardly so. Centuries before Moses, civil and religious laws flourished in Babylon and Egypt and most likely were part of the religious education of Moses. A number of law codes have been exhumed from the ancient past. For example, the Sumerian systems of Ur-Nammu (about 2050 B. C.), the Akkadian laws of Eshnunna (about 1950 B. C.), and the Code of Hammurabi, were all as technical as the Mosaic legislation, which they preceded by several centuries.¹³

Liberal critics of an earlier generation contended that Moses could not have authored the Pentateuch simply because the art of writing was developed several centuries later at the time of David (about 1000 B.C). Archeological discoveries have long refuted such false assumption. In his informative book, *History Begins at Sumer*, (New York, 1959), the late Dr. Samuel Noah Kramer, America's foremost Sumerologist, compellingly shows that a complex civilization with schools and writing existed in Mesopotamia almost a thousand years before Moses was born.¹⁴

Another compelling evidence of the existence of writing before Moses comes from the Hittites. Liberal critics had dismissed them as a legendary people, since only the Bible mentions them. The critics were convinced that the Bible writers had a predisposition for fabricating myths and legends. But archeology has exposed the critics' ignorance and arrogance by proving that the Hittites were an intelligent people whose writings antedate Moses and show striking resemblance to the literary patterns of the Pentateuch. The above examples serve to show that the conclusions of liberal critics are often based on gratuitous assumptions, devoid of external support.

The Documentary Theory. Liberal critics have dissected certain books of the Bible according to the perceived literary sources used by authors or redactors. For example, we noted earlier that the well-known Graf-Wellhausen school of thought has cut up the first five books of the Old Testament into a literary crazy quilt, as if Moses counted for nothing. Their division of the Pentateuch into four major documentary sources, called J, E, P, and D, is largely based on the assumption that the use of different divine names ("Jehovah," or "Elohim") in various portions of the Pentateuch reflects different authorship. Allegedly such "pattern" implies that different redactors have reworked the material.

The notion that the use of different names for God presupposes that different redactors have arbitrarily manipulated the text, is gratuitous, to say the least. This question is discussed in considerable detail by Kenneth A. Kitchen, of the School of Archeology and Oriental Studies at the University of Liverpool. In his book, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*, Kitchen shows that "major variations in style" are "universal in ancient texts whose literary unity is beyond dispute"¹⁵ He further points out that "even the most ardent advocate of the documentary theory must admit that we have yet no *single scrap* of external, objective, i.e. *tangible*, evidence for either the existence or history of 'J,' 'E,' or any other alleged source document."¹⁶

Other scholars have been forced to reject the JEPD Documentary Theory for being without merit. In his book *The Documentary Hypothesis*, Umberto Cassuto, late professor at the University of Jerusalem, admits that the main arguments of this theory are "without substance." He further declares that the system is an edifice "founded on air," and that it is "null and void."¹⁷

In a similar vein Professor Moses H. Segal writes in his book *The Composition of the Pentateuch: A Fresh Examination*, that "We must reject the Documentary Theory as an

explanation of the composition of the Pentateuch. The theory is complicated, artificial, and anomalous. It is based on unproven assumptions. It uses unreliable criteria for the separation of the text into component documents."¹⁸

It is encouraging to note that competent scholars are now rejecting the documentary theory which has dominated the field of Old Testament studies for over a century. R. Rendtorff sees "clearly signs of the great unanimity in the abandonment" of the documentary theory.¹⁹

The attempt of liberal critics to charge Bible writers with deceptive falsification of the text for inexplicable motives has backfired. It has led responsible scholars to recognize that the critics themselves are the falsifiers. They are the ones who have played fast and loose with the biblical text to suit their theories. By so doing they have slandered the God who has revealed Himself through Bible writers.

Does God Teach Truth by Means of Falsehood? The quality of the books of the Bible does not lend support to the charge of falsification of their content. Such a notion is abhorrent to the Christian conscience that has not been dulled by the presuppositions of liberal critics. Even critics recognize that the moral and religious teachings of the Bible are the best this world has known. It is inconceivable that God, who is altogether just and holy, would teach truths about Himself by means of myths, sagas, falsified history, which are not true to life or history.

If the critics are right, then much of the Pentateuch was written by several deceptive writers and redactors, who lived at different times and places, but who schemed together to attribute the finish product to Moses. Can God sanction such dishonest means and pious fraud to communicate His truths? Could He allow His people to be fed falsehood for centuries? If the critics were right that there is no truth in the story of creation, of the Fall, the Flood, the call of Abraham, the work of Moses, then God has been an arch-deceiver, conniving with evil to accomplish His purpose. Such a conception is abhorrent and repulsive to any one who believes in the righteous God of the Bible.

The Book of Daniel provides a fitting illustration. According to the critics the book was written by different authors in the second century B. C. and contains but a grain of truth. Yet the book offers gripping stories that have influenced countless lives through the centuries. It portrays in a vivid manner the supernatural manifestation of God's power in enabling Daniel to interpret dreams, in giving visions that reveal the future unfolding of world empires, in delivering from the fiery furnace, in saving from the lion's mouth. These stories have built the faith of believers through the centuries. If they are fiction, as the critics allege, then God has been deceiving sincere believers for millennia. Such a God may be acceptable to the critics, but is repulsive to the Christian conscience. The God of the Bible is a truthful God. He would not resort to teach religious lessons by fabricating stories and events which never occurred. There are difficulties in the Book of Daniel, but they are not as great as the moral dilemmas posed by the critics.

To examine the problems found in a biblical text or book is a legitimate scholarly endeavor, but to conclude on the basis of insufficient evidence that the writings are unreliable and untrue is quite another matter. We must not forget, as Merrill Tenny points out, that "Apart from the question of inspiration, the authors of the Old and New Testaments were not impelled by a perverted ambition to victimize a gullible public. They were not making a point of producing religious fiction. Most of them were prophets and preachers who jeopardized their lives to proclaim what these message contain. They would not have wasted their efforts in trivia, nor would they have propagated untruth."²⁰

The Limitations of Biblical Criticism. A fundamental problem of the critical movement is its failure to accept certain limitations in the investigation of the Bible. There is the limitation dictated by the unique character of the Bible. Its dynamic is different from any other religious book. No other book has produced a similar moral impact on people.

King Josiah was moved to repentance and reform by the reading of the law (2 Kings 22:10-13; 23:1-25). The translation and reading of portions of the Old Testament by Ezra brought about sweeping reforms in the lives of the people (Neh 8:1-6; 9:1-3). The translation and circulation of the Bible in the 16th century inspired reformatory movements in various parts of Europe. No other book by Plato, Muhammed, or Buddah has influenced moral changes or given such a lofty concept of God as the Bible.

This means that any critical investigation of the Bible must take into account that the Bible is not merely one of the many surviving religious documents of antiquity, but a unique book whose dynamic differs from any other book. It is only with an attitude of reverence that a genuine investigation of the Bible can be conducted.

Critics should also accept the limitation of the evidences available to test the accuracy of the Bible. To conclude that some statements of the Bible are inaccurate because they do not agree with the information available, means to ignore that sometimes the Bible is the sole witness of the events reported. During this past century new discoveries have often corroborated the trustworthiness of the biblical record.

In forming their conclusions about the accuracy of biblical accounts, critics must also recognize the limitation of purpose of Bible writers. Their intent was not to explain contemporary phenomena for the benefit of twentieth century scholars, but to communicate a message that was relevant to their intended audiences.

A fitting example of the need to recognize the above limitations, is the work of E. R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*. Contrary to the prevailing assumptions of the critics, Thiele's painstaking research demonstrated that the chronologies of the kings of Israel and Judah could be reconciled. Assuming that the record was accurate though obscure, he showed that two methods of reckonings were used in the chronology of the Hebrew kings—methods which sometimes changed without notice in the text.

The Spirit of Biblical Criticism. An evaluation of the critical movement would not be complete without giving some consideration to the spirit that animates their critical investigation of the Bible. Are the critics motivated by their presuppositions or by their religious faith? What is supreme in their thinking, their theories or their faith? The fundamentals of a biblical faith are divine creation, revelation, incarnation, resurrection, Second Advent, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

By contrast, liberal critics have no place for these beliefs. Ultimately, the question is: By which authority shall we investigate the Bible? Will our thinking be guided by critical presuppositions, or by the internal witness of the Scripture? If we make the critics' assumptions supreme, then we are obligated to reject anything in the Bible that does not fit them. Sadly, this is what has happened. Liberal critics have chosen to investigate the Bible on the basis of their humanistic and evolutionary assumptions, and consequently have been compelled to reject the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

When people make their philosophy their ultimate authority, it is not a long step before their reason becomes their own god. This is indeed the step that some liberal critics have taken. By accepting the evolutionary assumption that all things exist in a state of change and becoming, they assume that God is changing, the Bible will be outgrown, and Christianity will soon become a religion of the past. This leaves us without absolute truths, no moral standards, no meaning for this present life, and no hope for our future destiny.

It would be unfair to suggest that all liberal critics go as far as predicting the eventual dismissal of the Bible and dissolution of Christianity. Most of them still retain a wholesome respect for the Bible because of their early conservative training and upbringing. They try to hold together their critical presuppositions and their religious experience. Eventually, however, the two become irreconcilable. We are beginning to

see its impact on the very existence of those liberal churches where the Bible has become a mere plaything for the intellect.

Conclusion. Liberal critics have contributed in their own ways to the understanding of the language and of the socio-historical settings in which God revealed Himself to His own people. Unfortunately, their evolutionary world-view and anti-supernatural assumptions have greatly depreciated the authority and function of the Bible in Christianity. The biblical accounts of Creation, the Fall, the Flood, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, and miracles are dismissed as myths and legends.

An increasing number of responsible scholars have come to recognize that liberal critics have played fast and loose with the biblical text to suit their theories. They have elevated their own reasoning at the expenses of the internal witness of the Scripture.

The negative impact of liberal criticism calls for a responsible reexamination of the inspiration and authority of the Bible. In the next section we shall see how conservative Christians have responded to the attacks of liberal critics by developing the "Doctrine of Biblical Inerrancy."

ENDNOTES

1. James Orr, "Biblical Criticism," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (1960), vol 2, p.751.
2. W. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology* (Philadelphia, 1970), p. 4.
3. Martin E. Marty, *TV Guide*, Sept 5, 1987, p. 34.
4. James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Faith: A Comprehensive and Readable Theology* (Downers Grove, Illinois, 1986), p. 79.
5. Clark H. Pinnock, "Baptists and Biblical Authority," in Ronald Youngblood, ed., *Evangelicals and Inerrancy* (New York, 1984), p. 155.
6. A.H. Strong, *A Tour of the Missions: Observations and Conclusions* (Philadelphia, 1918), pp. 170-174.
7. Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids 1981), p. 412.
8. *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 151-152.
9. *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, Nashville, 1973), p. 47.
10. *A Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. James Hastings (Edinburg, 1902), vol. 4, p. 118.
11. *A Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, 1953), p. 24.
12. Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Modern Use of the Bible* (New York, 1924), p. 11.
13. For a discussion, see, "The Code of Hammurabi," *The Christian Courier* (March 1999), p. 43.
14. Samuel Noah Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer*, (New York, 1959), pp. 85-135.
15. Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (London, 1966), p 125.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 23; emphasis in the original.
17. Umberto Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis* (Jerusalem, 1961), pp. 5, 100, 101.
18. Moses H. Segal, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: A Fresh Examination* (New York, 1985), p. 95.
19. R. Rendtorff, "Pentateuchal Studies on the Move," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 3, (1976), p. 45.
20. Merrill C. Tenny, "The Legitimate Limits of Biblical Criticism," in *Evangelicals and Inerrancy*, Ronald Youngblood, ed., (New York, 1984), p. 33.

UPCOMING WEEKEND SEMINARS

As a service to our subscribers, I am listing the date and the location of the upcoming seminars for the month of July and August 2003. Every Sabbath it is a great pleasure for me to meet subscribers who travel considerable distances to attend the seminars.

JULY 4-5: BONN, GERMANY

FRIDAY EVENING: July 4 - 7:30 p. m. Bonn SDA Church, located at Maarflach 12, 531113 Bonn.

SABBATH: July 5 - 10:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m: Haus der evangelischen Kirche, located at Konrad-Adenauer-Allee 37, 53113 Bonn

For information call Pastor Prieser at 2241 - 34 33 03 or Henryk Miglio at 2241 - 31 28 59.

JULY 12: NEAR VENICE, ITALY

Location: Conegliano SDA Church

For information call Pastor Patrizio Calliari at 0422-362083

JULY 25-26: LOS ANGELES: NORMANDIE SDA CHURCH

Location: 12420 South Normandie Avenue, Los Angeles , CA 90044.

For information call Pastor Adolphus Garnett at (323)757-0176 or (323) 216-0545

AUGUST 2: CHICAGO: BURRRIDGE SDA CHURCH

Location: 725 75th Street, Darien, Illinois 60559. The church rents the Lord of Life Lutheran Church

For information call Pastor Ante Jeroncic at (630) 963-1036 or (630) 730-3075

AUGUST 8-9: TORONTO EAST SDA CHURCH

Location: 170 Westwood Avenue, Toronto, ON M4K 2B1, Canada.

For information call Pastor Vaudre Jacques at (905) 660-0136 or (416) 696-5784

AUGUST 15-16: NEW YORK: GETHSEMANE SDA CHURCH

Location: 357 Empire Boulevard, Brooklyn, NY 11225

For information call Pastor Jean-Marie Charles at (718) 444-2125

AUGUST 29-30: OTTAWA FRENCH SDA CHURCH

Location: 375 King Edward Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1N 7M5, Canada

For information call Pastor Max Pierre at (613) 740-0041

SPECIAL OFFER ON LCD VIDEO PROJECTORS!!!

If your church is looking for a state-of-the-art LCD video projector, you will be please to receive this exciting news. The HITACHI corporation of North America agreed to offer their line of projectors to our Adventist churches and institutions at over 60% discount, through one of the major distribution center in New York.

Let me explain briefly what happened. During the past two years I have bought five different video projectors to present my popular PowerPoint SABBATH and ADVENT SEMINARS. I was looking for the best video projector on the market for my itinerant ministry around the world. After trying over a dozen of video projectors, including SONY, IN-FOCUS, PROXIMA, PANASONIC, EPSON, SANYO, I found that the HITACHI CP-S370W 2200 LUMENS VIDEO PROJECTOR, outperforms any video projectors in its class. It is light and bright, surpassing in performance all the other projectors of the same lumens that I have tried.

Many of the churches where I have presented my PowerPoint seminars were so impressed by the outstanding performance of the HITACHI CP-S370W video projector, that they asked me how to get one at a reasonable price. I decided to contact the HITACHI corporation of North America to explore the possibility of offering the HITACHI PROJECTORS to our Adventist churches and institutions directly without having to go through a local dealer. I told HITACHI that I can be their best field representative, since I use their projector every weekend. Adventist churches and institutions can see first hand the marvelous performance of this outstanding projector.

HITACHI saw the light and they decided to authorize me to offer their projectors to our Adventist institutions directly through one of their major North America Distribution Center. The special price is over 60% discount on the factory suggested retail price. You can read below the list of their projectors together with the special price. This means that your church can purchase any of the dozen models of HITACHI projectors ranging from 1200 to 4500 lumens at an incredible low price.

For example, if your churches wants to purchase the HITACHI CP-S370W 2200 LUMENS VIDEO PROJECTOR which I am use every weekend with great satisfaction, the special price is only \$2200.00, shipping expenses included. This is a bargain price for such a marvelous projector, considering that the factory suggested retail price is \$6995.00.

The procedure is very simple. Once I receive your order, I will pass it on directly to the major HITACHI distributor in New York. He will ship the projector directly to your address. It is as simple as that. I do not handle or store any projectors. I only pass on the orders to the major North America HITACHI distributor center who takes care of everything.

Last week HITACHI sent me 9 screens 70" wide as a bonus for generating so many orders. This means that you can receive FREE OF CHARGE one of these screens, if your order reaches me before they run out. The screens usually sell for about \$200.00 each, but you will receive it free of charge.

Your personal effort to inform other pastors and churches of this unique opportunity, is greatly appreciated. I have reasons to believe that the outstanding performance of the HITACHI projectors will thrill you.

During the past two years I have tried more than a dozen of different makes of video projectors in the various churches where I presented my seminars. None of them perform as well as the HITACHI CP-S370W 2200 LUMENS VIDEO PROJECTOR that I carry with me every weekend in my catalogue briefcase together with the TITANIUM Apple lap-top computer. I am talking from experience, not from hearsay. The projector is small, light (only 7 pounds) and exceptionally bright. I have used this HITACHI CP-S370W VIDEO 2200 LUMENS PROJECTOR even in large auditoriums with 2000 people with excellent results.

If your church is interested in a smaller or larger model, below is a partial the list of the HITACHI PROJECTORS that are available. They are listed with both the suggested Manufactured Suggested Retail Price and the special discount that HITACHI offers to our churches. You can see that the discount is over 60%. For example, the price of the HITACHI CP-S370W 2200 LUMENS VIDEO PROJECTOR is only \$2200.00, instead of the suggested price of \$6,995.00

Hitachi Projectors

Model	Res.	Brightness	Weight	MSRP	Your Price
CP-X275W	XGA	1200 Lumens	5 lbs	\$5,495	\$1900.00
CP-S225W	SVGA	1400 Lumens	5 lbs	\$4,495	\$1400.00
CP-S317W	SVGA	1700 Lumens	6 lbs	\$5,995	\$1800.00
CP-X327W	XGA	1800 Lumens	6 lbs	\$6,795	\$2000.00
CP-S370W	SVGA	2200 Lumens	7 lbs	\$6,995	\$2200.00
CP-X385W	XGA	2200 Lumens	7 lbs	\$7,995	\$2800.00
CP-X430W	XGA	2500 Lumens	9.9 lbs	\$8,995	\$3300.00
CP-X880W	XGA	3000 Lumens	12.6 lbs	\$10,995	\$4000.00
CP-X885W	XGA	3500 Lumens	12.6 lbs	\$12,995	\$4700.00
CP-X995W	XGA	4500 Lumens	14.3 lbs	\$12,995	\$4900.00

If your church is interested in one of these projectors, feel free to call me at home at (269) 471-2915 or on my cellular at (269) 208-1942.

I look forward to help your church purchase a state of the art video projector at a bargain price.

Christian regards
 Samuele Bacchiocchi
 Retired Professor of Theology, Andrews University

SPECIAL OFFER ON TWO CD-ROMS

To express my gratitude for your interest in my research, I wish to offer for the first time my newly released CD-ROMS at an incredible discounted price. The two CD-ROMS contain all my 16 books, 100-plus articles, and the popular SABBATH/ADVENT SEMINARS which I present around the world.

Many people have encouraged me to place on CD-ROMS all my 16 books, the 100-plus articles, and the popular PowerPoint seminars. For many months I have worked every waking moment to convert all my published material of over 6000 pages into ADOBE PDF format.

An Adventist, who is a computer expert, has linked all the files to an ACROBAT search engine. This will make it possible for anyone with a PC or Apple computer to locate immediately what I wrote on any given topic or Bible text. By typing in the name of a topic or of a text, you will have at your finger tips the findings of my research. As an extra bonus, we have included also the KJV of the Bible. You will find this CD to be of tremendous help in the study of the Bible.

The first CD-ROM contains, not only my 16 books and the KJV of the Bible, but also over 100 essays I have authored during the past 30 years of biblical research. The second CD-ROM contains all my popular PowerPoint seminars presentations on the Sabbath and Second Advent. Each lecture is illustrated with over 100 colorful slides. The text explaining each slide comes with the PowerPoint program itself and can be printed separately. This makes it possible for anyone to use and modify my lectures in other languages as well. I have spent over 1000 hours on this project which helps people visualize the beauty of our message.

The regular price for each CD-ROM is only \$100.00, but I am pleased to offer you the CD-ROMS for only \$50.00 each. If you buy the two CD-ROMS together your special price is only \$70.00, airmailing expenses included even overseas. This means that you save \$130.00 when you order the two CD-ROMS together. You can order the two CD-ROMs by emailing us your credit card number, or by calling us at (269) 471-2915 or by mailing your check to: BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103. If you prefer to mail a check, you can print out and mail to me the following form:

Please mail me the CD-ROM with BOOKS/ARTICLES and/or the CD-ROM with the SEMINARS at the special price of \$50.00 for one or \$70.00 for the two. Specify which CD-ROM you want _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Mail your order to:

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES
4990 Appian Way
Berrien Springs, MI 49103

WE GUARANTEE TO PROCESS YOUR ORDER ON THE SAME DAY WE RECEIVE IT.

Contact Information

Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D.
Retired Professor of Theology and Church History
Andrews University
4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, MI 49103

Phone (269) 471-2915 Fax (269) 471-4013
E-mail: sbacchiocchi@qtm.net or sbacchiocchi@csi.com
Web site: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com>