

during the blessed period of Lent, when our ascetic struggle needs victorious models, like many of the monks mentioned by the author. Most of the text is written in the style of memoir or travelogue, making it very accessible and a way to learn from the source. The alternation with additional information for understanding the context and the theological skills of the author, gives the reader peace and the opportunity to meditate on the consistent truths, so necessary in these relativized times of society.

Archm. Casian RUȘEȚ

**Ioan BUDE, *O necesară și mai corectă interpretare – dimpreună cu Sfinții Părinți – a textelor biblice despre „nașterea” dintâi a lumii*, Editura Învierea / Editura Eurobit, Timișoara, 2023, 107 pp.**

The present exegetical study, called *The First Birth of the World*, refers to the creation of the seen world, contained in the first four chapters of the book of Genesis, in order to distinguish between three other “births” or “rebirths” of this world: the partial “rebirth after the Flood”, the universal “rebirth” (objective salvation), accomplished through the Sacrifice and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the total “rebirth” (resurrection) at the Parousia: “The new heaven and the new earth”.

Preceded by a *Word to the Reader* (pp. 5-10), by *Abbreviated names of biblical books – in alphabetical order* (pp. 11-16) and a brief excursus on the *Septuagint* (pp. 17-18), the work is structured in four parts, following the exegesis of each chapter of the book of Genesis. As the author shows, the creation of the seen world as described in the Book of Creation is divided into two units: the first unit (chs. 1, 1-2, 3) is the general history of creation, as God created it in time; then, beginning with ch. 2, 4 another history is related, namely from Gen 2, 7 is about heaven or earthly paradise (vv. 8-14) and about the man called Adam whom God placed on this earth

to work it and enjoy all its fruits (vv. 15-16). More in detail, regarding the contents of the volume, we note, briefly, the following:

Chapter I, entitled *The Making of the World* (pp. 19-43), presents, in a broad exegetical development, the main data of divine revelation concerning the creation of the seen world, contained in chap. 1 of Genesis (v. 1-31). It clarifies, in the light of the Holy Fathers, the biblical expressions of the Hexaimeron and the creation of the seen world as a gradual succession “out of nothing”, with time and in time; of the heaven-firmament as seen from the earth; of the earth that was “untouched and empty”, of the Spirit of God that was carried over the waters, of light succeeded by darkness, of the heavens as atmosphere, of the separation and merging of the two terrestrial environments: watery and solid, and of their fruition, of the lights and of man created in the image of God; after all this, the author refers to the data of science, which confirms and does not contradict them.

In Chapter II, entitled *Sanctification of the Seventh Day. Man's Settlement in Heaven. The First Family* (pp. 45-65), delving into the prophetic-typological significance of the seventh day, which – in fact – is the Sabbath or “Blessed Saturday”, the author refers to the salvific work of the Sabbath when the Son of God rested in His own death whose type and prophetic prefiguration is the seventh day of creation. This day is the bridge that connects the “sixth day”, the day of this world subject to corruption, to the eighth day, the day without end (p. 47). In considering the creation of man, the author emphasizes the simultaneity of body-soul creation as well as the fact that having a “living soul”, he is defined as a person who shares in divine grace. Then, the “breath of life” represents the “spirit” received from God, which distinguishes him from other animals without spirit, speech and language. With regard to the two trees in Paradise, the tree of life represents the axis of creation, the tree of the world, identified in Christian tradition with the Holy Cross, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil expresses the paradigm of the duality of good-evil, life-death, to which the first man relates by obeying God's command, towards life or death. Next, emphasizing the prophetic-typological interpretation, with reference to the creation of the woman, it is shown that the mystery of Christ and the Church is prefigured by Adam and Eve, who become the first believers of the Church, and the creation of Eve from Adam's side

confirms the structural identity between man and woman, who by their union through marriage, will form one body, which certifies monogamy as the foundation of the family.

This is followed in this study by an excursus on “Heaven or the Old Testament Church” (pp. 65-69), in which it is pointed out that “the first book of the Old Testament is called the Genesis, not only because it tells of the creation of the seen world, but above all because it is an account of the foundation of the Church of Christ, that is, of the earthly stage of the Kingdom of God, which begins with Heaven and its inhabitants, Adam and Eve” (p. 65).

In Chapter III, entitled *The Fall of the Ancestors into Sin. Punishment. The Promise of the Messiah* (pp. 71-87), the author points out that the demonic spirit in his perfidy aroused both puzzlement and interest in the woman’s soul, somehow convincing her that God might have selfish intentions. And so the devil succeeded in breaking man from God in order to usurp his status as the crown and master of creation (Genesis 1, 26-28). But in breaking away from the Creator, the first humans, who could have become immortal through obedience and God’s grace, immediately fell from grace into death, giving the devil the opportunity to establish another world contrary to the one willed by God. Thus, in the spiritual nature of fallen man, new characteristics appeared, as defects of attitude and behaviour such as guilt, shame, fear, hypocrisy, cowardice, pride, selfishness, capable of replacing the filial love which engaged him in communication and communion with God, his Father, and came to ruin the dignity of the image of God inscribed in his nature. Actualising the temptation and fall of the first humans, the author points out that “this temptation and perfidy of Satan did not then, on the spot, totally consume itself, but continued fiercely throughout the history of humanity and still continues today, in the most diverse, evolved and refined forms, denoting, however, the same inexhaustible hatred towards God and His creation and, in particular, towards man” (p. 74). On the other hand, the promise of a Saviour (in verse 15) lies in the fact that “mankind throughout its history will have to struggle with evil (i.e. the devil) in all its forms of manifestation, but through the woman’s Follower – Christ the Lord – it will be overcome”. This is also the opinion of the Sacred Tradition, expressed

clearly and concisely as early as the second century by Saint Irenaeus of Lyons: “The seed that will crush the serpent’s head is the son of Mary” (p. 79).

Chapter IV is entitled *Cain and Abel. Their descendants* (pp. 89-101). Adam and Eve, having been taken from the Garden of Eden, had two sons: Cain and Abel. Because of the sin inscribed, through Adam’s disobedience in the conscience of man, Cain commits the first fratricide, because of envy transformed into murderous anger. Under divine punishment for his deed, Cain will continue his life and work by building a city, and his wife will give birth to Enoch, to whom other sons are born, including Lamech. He, like his father, commits murder, from which we see that Cain’s descendants lead a godless life... After them, Eve gives birth to Seth, who in turn gives birth to a son, Enos. “Then men began to call on the name of the Lord God” (Genesis 4, 26). One of Cain’s descendants led a nomadic life, keeping many herds of animals; another was a maker of musical instruments, another a maker of tools of brass and iron.

In the *Conclusions* (pp. 103-106), the author considers that, “in the face of the immense and undeniable «poem» of God’s creation, the most appropriate conclusion would be another poem, namely, the inspired verses of the psalmist-king David, from his marvellous Psalm 103, which is a veritable icon of creation and of divine mercy”, which he reproduces in full (pp. 104-106).

Reading the contents of the book, we can establish the following considerations:

1. The author bases his study on the authenticity and authority of the biblical account of Genesis as revealed by God to His prophet Moses.
2. At the same time, the authenticity of the exegesis gives full authority to the study, based on the interpretation of the Fathers and authorized Elders of the Church, well aware that Holy Scripture is a written part of the Holy Tradition of the Church, so that it is very clear that Scripture can be studied and examined within the Church, and “the mouths of the Church are the Holy Fathers, in all the harmony of their teaching” (p. 103).
3. Having for many years held the chair of Biblical Study of the

New Testament at the Faculties of Theology in Timișoara and Caransebeș, the Rev. Dr. Ioan Bude, Protopope and university lecturer, has shown great mastery in the exegesis of the scriptural text, with a thorough knowledge of the terms and expressions used in Hebrew and Greek, as well as a judicious bibliographical selection.

4. Thanks to the correct interpretation of the biblical texts, the present study sheds light on their meaning, dispelling the confusion and misconceptions that have accumulated over time.
5. The present volume proves its importance also through the topicality of the themes presented, which are in part contested and degraded in the postmodern age we are living in, such as creationism and the unity and indissolubility of marriage as the basis of the family, constituted according to the divine order and imposed by human nature as the basic cell of society. The author then notes the presence of the evil spirit in the world, capable of overthrowing the authentic values established by God in His creation and in the nature of man as the crown and master of creation.
6. The style of the present study is lively, direct, engaging and engaging, enabling the reader, whoever he may be, to understand its message and to orient his mentality and his religious and moral behaviour according to the scriptural data revealed by God to men for the salvation and holiness of their lives.
7. In addition to these, the book also features exceptional graphics, with Cover I featuring the “creative act” (Sistine Chapel) and Cover IV showing the “seven days of creation” (medallion-symbols).
8. Through the new perspective in which it approaches the subject, through the richness of the ideas and implications it suggests, and through the rigorous method of research, this study is an important contribution to the field of biblical theology.

Therefore, more than any other recommendation, we repeat the author’s invitation to all those who wish to know God’s revelation of His creative act of the seen world:

“Therefore, my dear reader, whoever you may be, I hope that, in so far as you are willing to receive the Word of God about the first «birth» of the world, transmitted through Moses and brought down to us through the Holy Fathers, it will easily and surely find its way to your heart” (p. 10).

**Rev. prof. dr. Sorin COSMA**