

Biblical Creationism

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There is a cult of "Creationism" in America today. It appears in various ways, perhaps most notoriously in laws to require teaching creationism alongside evolution in certain school systems.¹ This study examines *what the Bible says about creation*; what the Bible *requires* of those who accept it as authoritative in matters of faith and life; and what the Bible *permits* regarding teachings of various kinds of creationism and evolution while still holding to biblical authority.

A word about my personal convictions is in order. I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the inspired word of God, and that they are infallible in all didactic matters. The problems arise when human beings attempt to decide what precisely is taught in the Bible. To deal with this in reference to creation is the task to which I have set myself.

THE BIBLICAL MATERIAL

The biblical account of creation is found in the first two chapters of Genesis and in shorter passages at various places in Scripture.² The cult of creationism, unfortunately, limits its study rather much to the first chapter of Genesis.

The Biblical Premise. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the canon of the believing community. They have been received as the authoritative word of God, first by Israel (the Old Testament, as it came into being), then by the Jews, and finally by the Christian church (both Old and New Testaments). As such, belief in the God of the Fathers, the God of the Scriptures, is assumed. It is not proved. The opening words of Genesis assume that the reader or hearer knows by faith who God is (Heb 11:3,6).

The Biblical Language. The language of the creation account, as in other matters, is phenomenological: that is, it describes things and events as they appear to us on earth. This is not "scientific" language—but even scientists speak of "sunrise" and "sunset," although they know that the sun and moon do not go down beyond the western hills or rise out of the eastern sea. To us on this planet, heaven is "up," for we only see that part

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which is above us; men go “down” to the sea in ships, for we see the ships disappear beyond the horizon. Earth appears to be flat. All points of the heavens above appear to be equally distant from us, so we think of Earth as the center of the universe.

Moreover, biblical language is culturally conditioned. It is the language of the periods in which it came into existence—and properly so, for if God had revealed Himself in twentieth-century scientific or linguistic jargon to men and women living two, three, or four thousand years ago, they would not have understood it, just as most of us who are not technically trained do not understand such language today.

At the same time, the language of the Bible is transtemporal. It communicates to men and women in every age, in every culture. It can be read and understood (to a limited degree, it is true, but sufficient for salvation) by nations and peoples of thousands of languages. Yet, because it is culturally conditioned, we must know something of the cultures out of which it came. The better we understand the people of the Bible and their cultural milieu, the more completely we will understand God’s revelation, for He revealed Himself to them, not only for their sake, but even for our sake.

The World-View. The biblical account of creation is earth-centered. It is not the story of the origin of the universe, but rather of this planet. It is probably not correct to translate the opening words, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (see below), but even if this translation is accepted, the story goes on, “the earth was...,” and practically the rest of the Bible has to do with the Earth,³ its inhabitants, its present unredeemed condition and its future redemption (Rom 8:20-22). To interpret this passage to mean that the creation of the entire universe took place at that time—4004 B.C., or any other comparatively recent date—is questionable exegesis.⁴

Genesis 1:1-3. This passage, as I understand it, consists of a temporal clause, several dependent clauses, and the main clause: “When in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was *tôhû*, and *bôhû*, and darkness [was] on the face of *tehôm*, and the *rûah* of God was moving on the face of the waters, then God said, ‘Let there be light!’ and there was light” [my translation].

The opening word *berê’sît*, as vocalized by the Masoretes, is in construct.⁵ Because many grammarians of the Hebrew language did not understand the use of the construct with a finite verb, they emended this, either to read *bârê’sît*, “in the beginning,” or they emended the verb *bārâ’* to read *berô’*, “the beginning of God’s creating.” No emendation is necessary. A noun may stand in construct with a finite verb in Hebrew, just as in Akkadian⁶ and probably other Semitic languages.

For example, Hos 1:2 reads *tehillat dibber-YHWH behôsea’*, literally “the beginning of Yahweh spoke by Hosea,” or “when Yahweh began to speak by Hosea.” That the form *tehillat* is construct cannot be denied; that

it is followed by a finite verb (unless we emend the text) likewise is clear. The clause continues with the words *wayyō' mer YHWH*, just as Gen 1:3 continues with *wayyō' mer 'ēlôhîm*, “then Yahweh said.” For other examples, cf Gen 34:40; 1 Sam 25:15; 30:31.

Much more common is the use of the noun *'āšār*⁷ before finite verbs. The construct form, of course, is *'āšer*, and it has developed into a relative pronoun: “the place of he built” = “where he built” or even “which he built.” But its original meaning is preserved in such expressions as *be'kōl 'āšer hiḥhallaktî*, “everywhere I walked about” (2 Sam 7:7).

To translate Gen 1:1 as a temporal clause, “when in the beginning,” does not alter the doctrine of creation. God is still the Creator, and His creation had a beginning. It does, however, shift the emphasis from the beginning of “the heavens and the earth,” and puts it on God’s creative word, “then God said,” and on what follows concerning Earth. This, I believe, is totally consistent with the viewpoint in the rest of the Bible.

Difficult Words. I have left untranslated certain words: *tôhû*,⁸ *bôhû*,⁹ *tehôm*, and *rûaḥ*. I have done this so as not to confuse the issue by introducing too many problems at once. The first two words are variously translated “without form and void” (RSV), “formless and empty” (NIV), “formless and void” (NASB).¹⁰ They have been forced into the “gap theory,”¹¹ according to which there was a long period of time between verse 1 and verse 3.¹² If my exegesis of v 1 is correct, there is no basis for such a theory. The word *tehôm* has been taken as cognate with Akk. *Tiāmat*, and used as part of the theory that the creation story in Genesis came from the Babylonian creation story. This deserves a separate treatment.¹³ The word *rûaḥ*, like the word *pneuma* in the New Testament, can mean either “wind” or “spirit/Spirit.” The phrase *rûaḥ 'ēlôhîm* can be translated, “the spirit (Spirit) of God,” “the wind of God,” or even “a mighty wind.” I do not believe the creation story is essentially altered by any one of these translations.

Latin Terms. The term “fiat” creation is used sometimes to suggest the opposite of an evolutionary process. The word *fiat* comes from Latin; in Gen 1:3 the Vulgate reads *fiat lux*, “Let there be light.” There is an important element here for exegesis, but it is sometimes obscured. Basically, fiat creation means that God’s creation came into existence by His word, “Let there be...” (cf. Ps 33:6-9; John 1:3; Heb 11:3). This will be discussed more fully, below.

Another term frequently used is “ex nihilo creation.” *Ex nihilo* also is Latin and means “out of nothing.” God created the world out of nothing. This theory has encountered objections; for one, “out of nothing comes nothing.” The objection, however, disregards the omnipotence of the Creator. But the pre-existence of matter, i.e., that matter has existed from all eternity, is certainly not a biblical view (cf. Col 1:12).¹⁴ God “hangs the earth upon nothing” (Job 26:7). But this deserves more careful treatment (see below).

THE CREATIVE WORK OF GOD

Light. The first creative act was to bring light into being (1:3). Without light, all is darkness, as astronauts and space probes testify. The universe is dark. Light comes from certain light-makers (Hebrew *me'ôrôt*). Scientists theorize that these came from the "big bang," but they are unable to explain the cause. The Bible says simply, "God said, 'Let there be light.'" However, we should be slow to equate 1:3 with the "big bang." For one thing, this is a scientific theory, and all such theories are subject to revision or rejection by further scientific studies. Then, too, the creation account in Genesis deals with Earth, and not with the Universe.

As far as Earth is concerned, there are two light-makers, the "sun" and the "moon." Since everything is described phenomenologically, i.e., as it appears to us on earth, these are both called "great"—which is phenomenally true, for they subtend the same angle. In a total eclipse, the moon exactly covers the sun. One is "greater," for it gives light and heat. Science tells us that the heat comes from nuclear fission, which is so hot that it gives light. The "lesser" gives only reflected light, the sun's light reflected from the moon's surface, and, when the moon is opposite the sun, earth-light (earthshine) reflected from the moon.¹⁵

The Bible does not say that God created the sun and moon on the "fourth day"—but rather that He simply said, "Let there be lightmakers in the sky." He also indicated another purpose besides giving light: they were to become "signs and seasons and days and years" (1:14)—and they have become such for peoples all over this planet.

Fiat creation. One point often overlooked has to do with the method of creation. According to Gen 1, God did not "create" the sun, moon, "firmament," the dry land, the vegetation, and the animals. That is to say, these were not discrete activities or special creations. Rather, God brought them into being by His word, "Let there be...." It is true that in some instances, the original fiat is followed by the clause, "And (or so) God made" (Hebrew *wayya'aś*), but since the verb in the jussive (*yeĥi*) precedes the clause "so He made," good exegesis would suggest that the verbal fiat was the manner in which God made the referenced item. Thus in vv 6-7, 11-12, 14-16, 24-25 we find such sequences of word and result.

The jussive¹⁶ forms of the Hebrew verb are not always identifiable by morphology. In Genesis 1, in addition to *yeĥi*, the following are clearly jussive in form: *tadšē'* (v 11) and *tôṣē'* (v 24); yet in RSV and NASB, twelve verbs (in NIV, eleven) are translated as jussives. Some of these are imperfects with convertive *waw*; following a jussive, such a verb is to be translated as a jussive.¹⁷ Some have the same form in imperfect and in jussive (e.g., *yīṣr'ēṣ ū* and *yeōpep* [v 20]). As a matter of fact, to translate v 9 "Let the waters be gathered together...and let dry land appear," has the same meaning as to translate it, "Let the waters be gathered together...and dry land shall appear."

'*āsā and bārā*'. It is important to note, also, the verbs in the clauses

that follow these jussives, since this will determine more precisely the meanings of such verbs. In vv 7, 16, and 25 the verb is *wayya'aš*, "and he made"; in v 21 the verb is *wayyibrā* "and he created." Since certain items are the same in both parts of the statement (vv 20-21), we cannot make a distinction between "create" and "made" with regard to the living creatures in the waters and the birds in the heavens. Moreover, since the creation of land-animals (vv 24-25) is described by the verb *wayya'aš* "and he created," whereas the "lower" forms of animal life (fish, fowl) are described by the verb *wayya'aš* "and he created," it is impossible to maintain that the verb *bārā* "create" implies a different kind of creative activity than the verb *'āsā* "make." As a matter of fact, both verbs are used in the statement, "for in it [the seventh day] he rested from all his work, which God created to make" (NIV "the work of creating that he had done") (2:3).

It has sometimes been argued that the verb *bārā* is only used of divine activity. God is always the subject (except, of course, when the verb is passive, e.g. Ezek 21:35; Ps 102:19). But this is beside the point, for no one is arguing that someone other than God did the creating. In the creation account, God is likewise the subject of the verb *'āsā*. Moreover, the verb *bārā* in the Piel ("to cut, clear") is used with human subjects (Josh 17:15; Ezek 21:19 [MT 24]; 23:47).

With regard to the creation of Earth, the planet on which God's redemptive activity takes place, we can summarize by saying that it was brought about by God's fiat, by His creative will, by His word. When we come to the account of the creation of the Adam (*hā'ādām*), it is necessary to examine the words and expressions more closely.

The Days of Creation. "Creationists" often stress the point that God's creation took place in six *days*, defined even as "six twenty-four-hour days." Now there should be no argument that Genesis presents the creation story in six distinctly numbered days (1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31), and summarizes the creation and God's creation-rest, in 2:1-3. Moreover, there is no other figure used in the Bible; it is either "six days" or an indefinite statement, such as "in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens" (2:4b). In some passages, the creation, unmentioned, stands in the background, e.g. "Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God" (Deut 5:13-14).

Responding to this line of reasoning, some have pointed out that, since the sun was not created until the fourth day, there was no way of counting days before that. To me, this is exegetical nonsense. The story is told, as stories in novels once were told, by an all-seeing, all-knowing author. Not only was there no one on earth to record the events of days one through three; there was no one on earth until the afternoon¹⁸ of the sixth day. Either we accept the account as a revelation from God, or we reject it as the imaginations of a human author. But, having accepted it as a revelation

from God, we still must ask ourselves, What is God teaching us? Does He intend these days to be interpreted as measured by the earth's rotation? Possibly so.

The word "day" (Hebrew *yôm*), as is generally recognized, has several meanings: (1) the period of light, as opposed to darkness or night (e.g. Gen 1:5; John 11:9); (2) the period comprising day and night (e.g. Gen 2:2), the 24-hour day; (3) an indefinite period, such as "the day the Lord has made" (Ps 118:24); (4) a specific day or event, such as "the Day of Atonement" (Lev 23:27), "the Day of preparation" (Mark 15:42); (5) a long period of time, such as "the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:2, referring to this age of grace) or "as a thousand years" (2 Pet 3:8).

The "days" of Genesis 1 are evening-and-morning days. That is how the word in context would have been understood by Israelites who heard or read the creation account; that is how they were understood until dogmas such as the evolutionary theory challenged a six-day, 144-hour creation. The question, it seems to me, is not "what kind of days were they?" but rather, "Why was the story cast in just this way?"

At this point, it is helpful to notice the structure of the story. There are two groups of three, with obvious parallels:

Day 1, Light;

Day 4, Light-makers;

Day 2, separation of the "waters" above the *rāqîa'* from those below;¹⁹

Day 5, the living things in the waters above (sky, fowl) and those in the waters below (sea, fish);

Day 3, creation of dry land;

Day 6, Creation of land-animals and the Adam.

Further, on Day 3 the expression "and God said" occurs twice, and there are two parts of the creation-activity: separation of water and dry land, and formation of vegetation, whereas on Day 6 the expression "and God said" occurs three times with corresponding acts (creation of animal life, creation of man, establishment of man's dominion).

If the creation account in Genesis 1 was intended solely to stress the time involved, why is there such an "artistic" arrangement? Given the presence of this arrangement—in itself a "creation"—does it indicate to us that the divine Author is trying to teach us something more than the creation events? Why six days? Could God not have snapped His fingers and brought the world into being? Certainly! Or perhaps He could have gone about His work as some of us do ours: in bits and snatches with little order, and lots of remodeling. Why the repetition of the clause, "And God saw that it was good," and finally, "God saw all that He had made, an Lo! it was very good" (1:31)? Exegesis must go behind the words—without ignoring them!—and look for the intended message.

On this point there will be difference of interpretation: works of art convey different messages to different receptors. Personally, I do not take

it as a defeat if my interpretations are rejected by many. But I do object, and very strongly so, if another interpreter insists that I must accept his or her interpretation.

The Process of Creation. Since God did not create the world by a single word, it follows that there was a process involved. A study of the creative works on the successive days teaches that this process was orderly. In fact, when the Concordist (Day-Age) interpretation was being worked out, there were attempts to harmonize the “days” of creation with the geological ages.²⁰ Such attempts failed, because the harmony could only be achieved by manipulating either the geological ages or the events of the Genesis days. But the biblical account does reveal an orderly process that involved time.

The biblical account also reveals that after the first *ex nihilo* creation, i.e., the bringing into existence of matter, God proceeded thereafter to use what He had already created to proceed to the next stage of creation. This is more evident from the third day onward. The waters on Earth were gathered together in order to let dry land appear (v 9). God commanded the Earth to put forth vegetation (v 11), and this vegetation was given the power to reproduce, “according to its kind” (v 12). God commanded the waters of Earth to bring forth swarms of living creatures (v 20), and the result was fish of the sea and fowl of the air, each “kind” with ability to reproduce “according to its kind” (v 21). God commanded the earth to bring forth living creatures (v 24). In no instance is there a new “out of nothing” creation.

However, we have skipped over the commands to bring into existence the “firmament” (v 6) and its lights (v 14). It is possible, I agree, to assume that God did not use previously created matter to form these; it is also possible to assume, on the basis of the other details of His creative activity, that these were indeed formed out of material which He had previously created. These are matters of interpretation. No one who holds the Scriptures as authoritative can be excoriated for choosing one or the other of these interpretations. Thus, if someone chooses to believe that the sun and stars were made of matter flung into space by the “big bang,” or that Earth was formed of material that came from the sun, and Earth’s moon of material from Earth, this is not inconsistent with the other creative acts in the Genesis account. It is incumbent on such a one, however, to integrate this interpretation in a consistent view of the “days.”²¹

The Creation of the Adam. Are there two accounts of creation? The view that Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 are two different (and contradictory) accounts of creation can be found in almost any critical treatment of Genesis.²² It is remarkable that critics can find editorial harmonizations of many supposed discrepancies of little import in the history of the scriptural text, and yet allow the final redactors of the Pentateuch to let such glaring contradictions remain in the story of creation. Much more cogent,

in my opinion, is the view that these are not two independent accounts, that they are not contradictory, but that Genesis 2-3 (the account of the creation of the Adam and their fall) is a more detailed account of the creation of Adam as told in 1:27-30. Obviously, 2:1-3 belong with the first chapter, as indicated by 2:4, a clear break in the text.²³

If I am correct in my assumption that Genesis 2 is an enlargement of 1:27-30, then the details of Genesis 2 must be taken into account when we attempt to interpret Genesis 1. Gen 2:5 reads, "In the day of [= when] ²⁴ Yahweh God's making of earth and heaven" (note the order!)—then follows a parenthetical statement, vv 5-6, and the main clause is resumed in v 7—"then Yahweh God formed the Adam dust from the ground, and he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the Adam became [*wayehi le-*] a living being."

It is important to note that the Adam was *not* made *ex nihilo*; rather, God used previously existing material ("dust of the earth"). The verb *wayyîšer* "and he fashioned" is used of a potter and his products (Isa 29:16; Jer 18:4-6); it can also mean to fashion in the mind, to plan. Therefore it is not necessary to conclude that God actually took dust in His hands and shaped it as a potter shapes clay. The descriptions of God in the Old Testament are frequently anthropomorphic, portraying God in human form. As many expositors have noted, the resulting creature was both dust and deity, dust from the ground and the breath of God.

My translation "the Adam" is based on Hebrew *hā' ādām* (1:27; 2:7-8). We usually think of "Adam" as the male, and "Eve" as the female.²⁵ But a careful reading of Gen 1:27-29 will show that "the Adam" is followed by plural pronouns, "them," "you (pl.)." Furthermore, the structure of 1:27 indicates this same interpretation.

So God created the Adam in His image;
In the image of God created He him,
Male and female created He them.

As I understand this passage, it reveals to us something of the image of God, for if the Adam was created in God's image, and if the Adam was both male and female,²⁶ then it follows that both male and female attributes are found in God. Furthermore, if the Adam who was created in the image of God was a community of persons, that is to say two persons in one, it tells me that the God in whose image the Adam was created is also a community of persons.²⁷

Gen 2:21-23 likewise teaches that woman was not a separate creation, but was "taken out of Man."²⁸ The stress put on "rib" by earlier expositors does not impress me. For one thing, both "bone" and "flesh" are mentioned in Adam's statement, 2:23. Further, the meaning of *šēlā'* is not precisely defined (cf. BDB p. 854); it seems to indicate an integral or essential part of a structure.

CREATION AND EVOLUTION

Interpreting the Text. At the outset I differentiated between *what the Bible requires* and *what the Bible permits* in matters of interpretation. The biblical text requires all who accept it as authoritative to ascribe the beginning of all things to God, specifically to God the Creator, who revealed Himself in His creation, in the Scriptures, and finally in Jesus Christ (Heb 1:1). It requires us (assuming that we accept its authority) to differentiate between the Creator and Creation.²⁹ The universe is not God, it is not an expression of God; it has been formed by God. The human being is part of God's creative activity—the final stage in the creative process, and that for which the previous activity was intended. Even the sun, moon, and stars were intended to serve as indicators of years and months and days, as times and seasons, for the use of the human creature. But the human being is not God, but God's creature, and by God's grace and adoption, God's child (John 1:12-13; Rom 8:14-17). The creation account in Genesis also requires us to believe that God's creative activity proceeded in orderly stages that extended over a period of time, and that, having brought matter into existence *ex nihilo*, God proceeded to use that matter for successive stages of creation by the power of His word.

But the text also permits interpretations that are consonant with its requirements. Upon such an exegetical and hermeneutical basis, it is not impossible to harmonize the biblical account with certain evolutionary theories. If evolution is defined in such way as to include God at every stage, if it is described so that God is apart from His creation and yet involved in the creative acts, if evolution is the manner in which God's creative activity occurred, with the human being as the goal of the process and not just an accident of random mutation, then it can be fitted into the biblical account.

Two points, I think, must be kept in the forefront. First, biblical exegesis must be based on the Bible, and must not simply be an attempt to conform the biblical teachings to scientific hypotheses. Second, scientific study must be freed of any *a priori* that renders it hostile to biblical study.

Terminology has been confused and confusing. Using terms from a former age, evolution could be defined as atheistic, deistic, or theistic. These terms are no longer definitive; what one person calls theistic is deistic to another.³⁰ To avoid such unclarity, Ramm used the term *progressive creationism*.³¹

Interpretation within Progressive Creationism. I now wish to offer some examples of biblical exegesis and interpretation which take seriously the efforts of scientists. In these matters I recognize that Scripture is infallible, but interpreters (myself included) are not.

For example, the "dust from the ground" which God used to create the Adam (2:7) could be interpreted to mean previously existing forms of life,

subhuman beings, which had been brought into being along with other animals by progressive creation on the sixth “day.” Scientists are convinced, on available evidence, that Earth is probably 4.5 billion years old, and the Universe possibly five times as old. “Man,” defined anthropologically (not biblically) is of the order of 2 million years. About 10,000 years ago, a sudden increase in intellectual activity began, sometimes defined as the “Neolithic Revolution,” at which time man became a food-producer, rather than a food-gatherer (hunter and fisher).³² Some scholars are inclined to place this revolution at the time of the advent of *Homo sapiens*, the latest stage of evolution of the genus *Homo*.

To those who take both the biblical account and scientific methodology seriously, it is important to attempt some way of handling each set of data without compromising either. One approach would be to interpret Gen 2:7 to mean that God took a hominid and, by breathing into it the divine spirit, created the Adam.³³ It is tempting to equate this with *Homo sapiens*. However, a word of caution is needed. When we survey the past attempts to equate biblical doctrines with scientific theories, the record is indeed sad: the flat earth, the geocentric universe, the age-day attempt at harmonizing Genesis 1 with geology—to mention but these three. Far better, it would seem, to keep the two sets of data in separate but not mutually exclusive compartments, so that future emendation may be readily done if necessary.

There are certain extensions of such a theory that must be taken into consideration. Was there only one pair that evolved into *Homo sapiens*? If not, then polygenism must be examined, as certain Roman Catholic scholars were doing a generation ago.³⁴ Was there intermarriage between the man-like beings who were present on Earth with the Adamic beings that resulted from God’s special creation? Is this where Cain got his wife? Does this lie behind the sons-of-God-daughters-of-men story in Gen 6:4? Did the great Flood destroy those hominids who were not *Homo sapiens*, or how and why did they disappear? Some of these questions are purely scientific; some are biblical; but all of them involve the person who is trying to take both the Bible and science seriously.

On a more theological level, what about passages such as Rom 5:12? Does “death” mean physical death? The words of warning stated in Eden, “in the day you eat of it [the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] you shall die” (2:17), have to be interpreted in the light of Gen 3:16-17. If that statement (2:17) had proved to be literally true, there would be no human race today, for Adam and his wife would have died immediately. Theologians speak of a “federal headship,” which is consistent with Rom 5:18. It is not those who are physically descended from Christ who receive eternal life: therefore it is not necessarily those who are physically descended from Adam who receive condemnation. Federal headship of Christ may also imply federal headship of Adam.

To go a step further, “life,” as it applies to the Adam, is described in

2:7, “Yahweh God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” Life resulted from the inbreathing of God into that which had been dust. Can we then say that “death” is the removal of that breath of God? “You are dust, and to dust you shall return” (3:19).³⁵ Is it possible to be medically alive and biblically dead (Eph 2:1)? Such an interpretation would free us from the unrealistic teaching that nothing or no one on Earth died before Adam’s fall.³⁶

God has revealed Himself in His world, as well as in His word. “The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork” (Ps 19:1). If this is true—and I believe it is—then it follows that a reverent scientist who studies the heavens and the firmament should come to an understanding of truth that is not incompatible with that which a biblical student learns from the study of Scripture. I am assuming, of course, that both persons are using complete disciplines, and not simply selecting elements that will give them the desired conclusions. And if that scientist and that biblical scholar have not yet arrived at total agreement, this is but another indication of how large truth is and how limited our comprehension of it.

I read somewhere of a biblical scholar who, defending a rigid creationist interpretation, agreed that Adam had a navel. God would have created Adam so that he was at that stage of life which would be equal to his apparent age. The same scholar claimed that the trees which God created had annular rings equivalent to their apparent age even though they were but a day old.³⁷ It seems to me that such reasoning involves God in a moral problem. If a sincere, born-again believer, who is a trained scientist, is pursuing scientific research, and the data which God has put into His creation leads that scientist to a false conclusion, then God can be faulted. Then the earth is not displaying His handiwork, but instead a false caricature.

Creationism is a basic biblical subject—but it must be biblical creationism. The biblical scholar must not mock scientific method, of which he has little or no knowledge. This in turn will, hopefully, lead to appreciation of the biblical scholar by the scientist. After all, they are not enemies. The scientist is seeking answers to the “what?” and “how?” of creation; the biblical scholar is seeking answers to the “why?” At present, we both “know in part” (1 Cor 13:12).

Notes

1. Many of the tenets of “Flood Geology,” “Creation Science,” and similar systems, are based on G. McCready Price, *The New Geology* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publ. Assoc., 1923).
2. Significant passages are: Isa 40:26,28; 42:5; 45:18; Jer 10:12-16; Amos 4:13;

Pss 33:6-9; 102:25; Job 38:4-38; 40:15-41:1-34; Neh 9:6; John 1:1-5; Acts 17:24-26; Rom 1:20; Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:2; 11:3; Rev 4:11.

3. The word for "earth" in Hebrew is *'éres*, which means the land beneath us, as opposed to the sky above or the seas. It can refer to the whole of the planet, or to as little as the piece of ground I live on. Hebrew *tēbēl* refers to the planet Earth. There is no Hebrew word for "universe," hence "heaven and earth" refers to the part of the universe that is seen, and *'ōlām* (Modern Hebrew) implies endless existence in time or space.

4. Cf. Prov 8:26. The passage (8:22-29) is instructive.

5. The *construct* in Semitic languages is a means of expressing a genitival relationship: "the man's son" in Hebrew would be "son-of [construct] the man."

6. In Akkadian, the verb in such a construction is in the subjunctive (i.e. a dependent clause). Hebrew probably had a subjunctive at one time, since this "mode" occurs in Ugaritic (C.H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*, [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965] §9.7), Arabic, and Ethiopic, where the final vowels attest its presence (cf. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, Ed Kautzsch/Cowley [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985] §106p).

7. The noun is not listed in BDB. It is cognate with Aramaic *'ātar*, Akkadian *ašāru*, Arabic *'ātaru*, etc., all meaning "place."

8. Cf. Isa 45:18. The stichoi are short and somewhat cryptic, but clear: "Not empty [*tōhū*] I created it; For habitation I formed it." God's creative work is not complete until He has created the Adam.

9. Isaiah uses both words in a graphic description of utter desolation, cf. Isa 34:11-12.

10. Cf. Jer 4:23-26.

11. For a summary of works presenting the gap theory, cf. B. Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955), pp. 195-210, and note 25 on p. 196.

12. The verb *hay'eā* is sometimes translated "became," to support this theory, (cf. *Scofield Reference Bible* not on Gen 1:2). However, this verb does not mean "become" unless it is followed by the preposition *le-* (or sometimes *ke-*), cf. Gen 1:14, 29; 2:7; 3:22.

13. I accept the relationship of Hebrew *tehôm* and Akkadian *tiāmat* as cognate words; this, in itself, is not a sufficient basis for making the biblical account dependent on the Babylonian account. The 36 occurrences of this word in Scripture should be studied, using a good concordance. For a careful study of the Babylonian creation story, cf. A. Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951).

14. The term "creator," used of God, does not mean that He simply arranges, designs, constructs, but that He creates. To argue that the verb *bārā'* means "to create out of nothing," ignores the use of the word in context. The creation of "man" (*hā'ādām*), for example, was not out of nothing, but out of "dust from the earth" (Gen 2:7).

15. The words for "sun" and "moon" do not occur in the creation account in Genesis, perhaps, as one writer has suggested, because Sun and Moon were pagan deities, and the biblical Author did not wish to lend support to such erroneous ideas.

16. The jussive usually expresses a mild command or wish (cf. *Gesenius* §109a.) In English it is usually translated by a clause beginning with “let,” e.g., “let the shorter persons stand in the front row.” The jussive is usually in the third person; in the first person, it is sometimes referred to as “cohortative,” e.g., “Let us go unto Bethlehem.”

17. Cf. *Gesenius* §109f.

18. One scholar of the seventeenth century calculated that the creation of Adam took place on October 23, 4004 B.C., at 9 a.m. “forty-fifth meridian time”—I assume this means East Longitude, the approximate location of the garden of Eden by his interpretation. Cf. B. Ramm, p. 174. But God created all the land animals before creating Adam on that day, hence my term “afternoon.”

19. *rāqîa'* is traditionally rendered “firmament.” The root meaning is “spread out,” and “expanse” is a valid translation, as is “sky.” To the people of biblical times, the sky was solid, and the stars were set in it. Yet, they were aware of three “heavens,” one in which the stars were fixed, one in which there were “wandering” stars (planets), and one in which the sun and moon made their diurnal passages. They were even aware of the fact that the moon passed over the sun, the planets passed over the sun and over the fixed stars, and the sun over the fixed stars.

20. Cf. Ramm, pp. 211-229; E. K. Gedney, “Geology and the Bible,” *Modern Science and Christian Faith*, 2d ed. by A. F. Everest (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1950).

21. One possible means of accomplishing this would be to interpret the days as times or means of God’s revelation. P. J. Wiseman, e.g., considered the days of Genesis 1 as the days on which God revealed the account of creation *Creation Revealed in Six Days* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1948). Another possibility is to look upon the “days” as frames within which the story is told, with no intended reference to time. I do not find either interpretation convincing.

22. Cf. *Interpreter’s Bible*, I, p. 465.

23. The phrase *’ēllê tōlēdōt* “these are the generations of” occurs ten times in Genesis, indicating a new “chapter” in the book, cf. 2:4; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2.

24. Hebrew *beyôm* often means “when,” an idiom found in other Semitic languages.

25. The word *’ādām*, without the definite article, occurs in 1:26, “Let us make Adam....” The next time, in 3:21, “And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife....,” where “Adam” has become his personal name.

26. I reject the idea that either Adam or God was hermaphroditic. The term hermaphrodite has to do with reproduction, which is not under discussion here. When it does come into the story (Gen 4:1) it is by the sexual union of Adam and his wife.

27. In my opinion, this explains the use of the plural form *’ēlōhîm* with singular verbs and adjectives. This is not a “plural of majesty,” for the Israelite kings never used a plural of majesty. I would prefer the term “plural of community,” similar to British expressions, “the government are,” etc. The number of persons in the community of the Godhead is not at this point revealed.

28. The word for “Man” is *'iš*, possibly to bring out the play on words with *'iššā* “woman.” Hebrew *'ādām* is cognate with *'ādāmā* “ground, soil, earth”; it may be that *'iš* is used any confusion with *'ādāmā*.

29. Hence any form of Pantheism is to be rejected. God is immanent in His creation, but He is distinct from it. He existed before it came into being. He did not *need* to create; it was His will.

30. When I learned about Deism, it was the view that God (the First Cause) started everything running (“would up on the clock,” was a simile sometimes used), and then left it to run itself. He was no longer involved in the world He had brought into being.

31. B. Ramm, pp. 226-229.

32. Adam’s sons, Cain and Abel, were food-producers (4:2). This by definition puts them in the Neolithic Age.

33. Some object to this on the ground that it involves a second “creation.” Actually, it assumes that God was actively involved in the creative process for this entire period, with Adam as His ultimate creature, made in His own image.

34. Polygenism struggled with passages such as Rom 5:12. Those who were willing to accept the theory that several “races” of man evolved, usually found a solution in the concept of federal headship. In other words, Adam was our representative; when he fell, we fell. We do not simply inherit a sinful nature; we are born into a sinful world.

35. This would agree with biblical expressions such as “to give up the ghost” (Gen 25:17; Mark 15:37).

36. A somewhat incredible extension of this theory is that lions and other carnivora ate straw like the ox before Adam’s fall. Did they then have to have an entirely different digestive system after the fall?

37. I came across such theories when I was in college, nearly sixty years ago. Ramm deals with such ideas and traces them to P. H. Gosse, but I have no memory of that name; cf. Ramm, pp. 192- 195, for fuller discussion of the theory that God “antiquated” His creation. This same view, called “appearance of age,” is presented as a biblical doctrine in H. M. Morris and J. C. Whitcomb, *The Genesis Flood* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books 1961), pp. 232-233.