

THE PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETING GENESIS 1 AND 2*

ALLAN A. MACRAE, PH.D.

PRESIDENT, FAITH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

I have been asked to discuss the principles that should govern our interpretations of the first two chapters of Genesis. The first of these I would like to state as follows:

1. THESE CHAPTERS ARE A PORTION OF GOD'S WORD.

When we take up something that we are sure is God's Word we must have a different attitude toward it than we would toward something that is merely the word of a man. What a man writes may be true or false, depending on the integrity of the man and also on his opportunity of having correct knowledge of the facts with which he deals. Some men intentionally deceive; others very sincerely lead us astray, since they themselves are mistaken.

When we examine a writing that we know to be a part of God's Word there can be no question as to the integrity of the author, nor as to his complete knowledge of everything with which he deals. Therefore we must approach it reverently and humbly, since we who ourselves are finite are approaching that which is absolute truth.

This does not mean there may not be problems in dealing with the Word of God. When the finite mind attempts to explain that which has come from the infinite, there will naturally be depths he will be unable to penetrate, and there may even seem to be contradictions which he is not yet prepared to solve. In such a case he should face the problem promptly and openly, holding the particular matter in abeyance until God chooses to give light from other portions of His Word as to the correct answer.

We must not jump to conclusions about a statement of God's Word. It is very easy to read our ideas into it. We must approach it with humility, with earnest effort, and with a sincere desire to know the mind of God. We must not deal lightly with God's Word.

The second principle that should govern our interpretation of this passage is this.

2. THESE CHAPTERS OCCUPY A VERY IMPORTANT POSITION IN GOD'S WORD.

This we can note in two regards:

a) These chapters occur at the very beginning of the Bible. All of God's Word starts with the presentation of the account of creation. This sets the foundation, lays the scene, and establishes the background for all the events that occur later. We can be sure that anything that God has put in so important a place is of great importance. We must be very careful that we treat it aright, and that we do not explain away anything that is clearly stated.

b) A second reason to feel that this occupies an important position in God's Word, is the later Biblical references to it. Just to note three examples: First, Romans 5:14: "Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come." This verse and a number of others in the book of Romans show how Paul's teaching about the Gospel relates back to the Old Testament account of Adam. Paul deals with it as fact, not parable, allegory, or fiction.

Similarly in I Cor. 15:45 we read: "And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." Here again Paul deals with Adam as a historical fact, not a figure or allegory.

In like fashion, I Tim. 2:13,14 deals with specific details about the story of Adam and Eve. These early chapters of the Old Testament are vital foundation to all the Biblical teaching.

The third principle to note is as follows:

3. WE MUST INTERPRET TO SOME EXTENT IN THE LIGHT OF PURPOSE AND LITERARY FORM.

This is a principle that can be of great importance in relation to many parts of the Bible. It is not nearly as important in relation to these particular chapters as to many others. We mention it here only for the sake of completeness. Let us look briefly at each of the two elements mentioned in it.

a) Purpose. What is the purpose of these chapters? It is quite evident from their position, from the general context, and from the New Testament references, that they are here in order to tell us how our whole present situation began, how the world started, how it comes about that redemption is needed. Their purpose is a factual purpose. It is a vital purpose, introductory to everything that follows in the Scripture. There is nothing in their purpose which entitles us to deal lightly or allegorically with anything in these chapters.

b) Literary Form. As with any other section of the Bible, we ask the question, is this allegory? Is it figure? Is it poetry?

The distinctive marks of Hebrew poetry are not found in these chapters. There is no more reason to take them as allegory than to take the story of the life of Christ as an allegory. If the account of Jesus is factual, there is no reason to believe that the account of creation and of Adam is not equally factual.

I don't quite like the way I worded the question: "Is it figurative?" We can not interpret a whole section as figurative. To do so would be to reduce it to nonsense. Figures of speech are scattered here and there throughout the Bible as throughout all literature. As a rule they add to our understanding, rather than detract from it. When we say, the man was a lion in the fight, no one thinks that we mean that he chewed the enemy with his teeth or clawed them with his fingernails. It is obvious to everyone that we mean that he fought with bravery, with tenacity, with courage. It is just as clear as literal language could possibly make it. In fact, it is probably clearer. Figures of speech do not necessarily bring obscurity. Used sparingly they add clarity as well as beauty.

It is always possible in a passage of Scripture to raise the question whether certain expressions are meant to be taken as figurative or as literal. But there is very little in the chapters under consideration that could raise the question as to whether figurative language is involved. The passage is about as factual and as literal as any section anywhere in the Bible.

4. WE MUST REALIZE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOURCE OF INFORMATION AND RESULTS.

The question where Moses got the information he included in these chapters is an interesting one. Some would hold that God gave him a vision and that he describes what he saw in this vision. Others would believe that the vision came to Abraham, or perhaps even to Adam and that its content was passed on until it reached Moses. It is not particularly important to our doctrine of inspiration to ascertain when the knowledge was received, or how it was received. The important thing is that Moses wrote the book of Genesis under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who was keeping him from error. If Moses had erroneous ideas in his mind, the Spirit kept him from putting them down in writing. The Spirit guided Moses in the selection of words from his own vocabulary in order to use them to express the truth that God wished

presented in the passage. Regardless of the question how Moses got the information that is in these chapters, what he wrote down is a true account of exactly what God wants us to know.

5. WE MUST NOT READ THINGS INTO THE NARRATIVE, NOR ASSUME THAT IT IS MEANT TO BE COMPLETE.

Nothing that was ever written was complete. A complete account of something would be impossible to a finite man. There are always additional elements and ideas that cannot be stated in the space that is available. In John 21:25 we read as follows: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." Jesus did things of which we have no record. The Bible simply gives us a selection of those that are most important for us to know. This is true about anything that we describe. It is necessary to make a selection. God caused that the writers of the Bible should make a selection in every part of it. The selection is not complete and cannot be.

If I make a statement that I came up here yesterday from Philadelphia, that is a true statement as far as it goes, but it does not tell the method I used to come. It does not say whether I walked, rode horseback, swam, took a train, a bus, or used a private car. If I mention any one of these means of conveyance, it does not tell whether I used it all the way or part of the way. It does not tell by what route I came. There are dozens of questions that could be asked. It would take a whole volume fully to describe a simple event in the life of any of us. Millions of elements and aspects entered into God's establishment of the universe as it is. We must not assume that all of this is intended to be fully explained in the account of Genesis.

The Bible is not a book of physics or chemistry. We could not write a complete physics or chemistry book from the statements in the Bible. That is not its purpose. Its purpose is to tell us about God and how we may be saved from our sins and be born into the family of God. However, wherever it touches on physics or chemistry we can be sure that what it says is correct.

The Bible is not even a book of history in the sense of attempting to give us a complete history. It does not give us a complete history of Israel. It explains those matters that are important to the account of salvation. We can be sure that whatever it states is true and dependable, but that there will be many elements that are left untouched.

Let us now look at the chapter and see how this principle enters into our interpretation. The first verse says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." What sort of beginning does this mean? Is it speaking of the creation of the universe as a whole, or of the particular earth on which we live? It may be a reference to the creation of original matter, out of which all the parts of the universe came into being. Or it may be speaking simply of the particular earth with which the Bible principally deals. In the latter case it is the beginning of this earth that is here in mind, not the beginning of the whole universe. As between these two we simply are not given material to make a decision. The Bible elsewhere clearly teaches that everything in the universe comes from God's creative power, and also stresses the fact that everything about this earth is a result of His creative activity. We cannot state dogmatically whether verse 1 relates to the universe as a whole, or to this earth and the heavens that surround it. In any event both are true. Both are true whichever of them is discussed in this particular verse.

There are many who say that between verse 1 and verse 2 there is a gap of millions of years. They consider that the life span of a pre-Adamic race, the downfall of Satan, and a chaotic upheaval on this earth, occurred between verses 1 and 2. The

Bible does not say that all this occurred at that time, nor that it did not. It is not complete in this regard, as in many others.

The existence of such a gap seems like a tremendous assumption to make without more evidence than can be found for it. On the other hand, there is absolutely no ground on which one can dogmatically deny that there may have been such a gap. It is one of the matters on which God's revelation is not complete.

A third place where the question of completeness occurs is in relation to the use of the word "day" in these chapters. The chain of events in connection with the formation and populating of this earth, is divided among six days. Exactly what does this word day mean?

It is a rather widespread idea that the commonest use of the word day is to indicate a period of twenty-four hours. Yet a little thought will show that this is by no means its commonest use. In Genesis 1, the first occurrence of the word is in verse 5, where it says that "God called the light Day and the darkness he called Night." Here very evidently it does not indicate a twenty-four-hour period. How long is the light period of the alternation between light and darkness? There is probably no place on earth where it is twenty-four hours. At the North Pole it would be approximately six months. In northern Scandinavia in mid-winter it might not be more than an hour or two. The word day, as most commonly used, indicates a period of greatly varying length.

In our present passage there is still another use of the word. This is the one found in Genesis 2:4, where all the events of Genesis 1 are summarized in the phrase, "in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens." Here the one day includes the whole six previous ones. Sometimes in the Bible, as also in common speech, "day" indicates a long period of time. We might say that in Abraham Lincoln's day automobiles were not in use. We would not mean one particular twenty-four-hour day, but the entire period in which he lived. The Bible speaks of "the day of the Lord," which is clearly a period of many years in duration.

Thus the word day really indicates simply a period of time. It is very commonly used for a twenty-four-hour-period, but this by no means exhausts its uses. Which use is involved in the six days of Genesis 1 is nowhere clearly stated. This does not mean that we are free simply to assume anything we want. It means that we should recognize that this is a matter on which God's revelation is not complete. We can gather evidences, and suggest possibilities, but unless we find absolute proof we must leave it as an open question.

At first sight the words in verse 5, "and the evening and the morning were the first day," might seem to indicate that a twenty-four-hour day was involved. However, a little investigation will demonstrate that in such statements in this passage, the terms evening and morning are used figuratively, and simply mean beginning and ending. Evening is the end of a period of light. Clearly the first day could not begin with the end of a period of light. Moreover, Genesis 1 is written from God's viewpoint, rather than from that of any man on the earth. From God's viewpoint it would always be evening and always be morning. In Genesis 1 these terms are simply figurative expressions, and therefore give no indication as to the length of the period involved.

In the third, fifth, and sixth days we find an evidence which suggests that more than a twenty-four-hour period is involved. On the third day God did not say "Let the earth be covered with vegetation and great trees standing at full height." He said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind." We then read: "And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree . . ." Similarly, on the fifth day He did not say, "Let the waters be filled with great whales and all sorts of fish." He said, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life," etc. On the

sixth day He did not say, "Let the earth be covered with tigers, elephants, etc." He said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind," etc. All of these statements strongly suggest a long process, rather than an immediate instantaneous establishment of a completed situation. God certainly could have caused everything described in Genesis 1 to happen in one instant if he chose. He would not need six days of twenty-four hours. On the other hand, He could spread it over as long a period as He wished. It is entirely up to Him.

The account of the third day shows the trees and plants beginning to grow, and growing up out of the earth, until the earth was covered with them. If He chose, God could have speeded up the process so that a tree would grow as much in twenty-four hours as it normally does in a hundred years. For that matter, He could make it grow as much in five minutes as in a hundred years, if He chose. But there is nothing in the passage to suggest that things were done in a manner so different from the usual situation. The natural interpretation of the passage is a process which might easily have consumed thousands or millions of years.

Thus the usage in the account of the third, fifth and sixth days, suggests very strongly that these were long periods, rather than that they were periods of only twenty-four hours.

We notice that in the course of these days there are very clear evidences of certain sharp, sudden changes, constituting definite divine interventions in the course of events. This is noticeable in many places, but is most evident in connection with the creation of man. Here God made something that was sharply differentiated from anything that had existed before. Patterns of some similarity might have been used, but a distinct divine act is described, and man becomes animate only after he is man.

Thus at various places there is evidence of a new divine beginning, and the statement that the new element is to bring forth "after its kind." We are not told how much development there may be within each of these sections. There is development, growth, and progress in every phase of life, but there are also definite demarcations between the "kinds" that God has made. The Bible has not stated just how wide these "kinds" may be. Our information is not complete on this point. To deny the presence in the universe of development, progress, and change would be absurd and without any scriptural warrant. On the other hand, to assert that everything developed by natural process from one simple source is directly contrary to what is clearly stated in this portion of God's Word. Thus we must not read into the narrative, nor assume that it is meant to be complete, but we must see what is clearly stated and stand steadfastly upon it.

There is a sixth principle that we should note:

6. WE MUST ASSUME THAT THE WRITER HAD NORMAL INTELLIGENCE, AND INTERPRET HIS WORK AS FITTING TOGETHER.

In almost any writing it is possible to interpret sentences or even paragraphs in somewhat different ways. Verbal contradictions are easy to find in even the most coherent of works. Unless it is completely proven that two sections of what appears to be a unified writing come from different sources, one should first make the attempt to interpret them in such a way as to fit them together reasonably.

This particular principle comes into sharp relief when we note the relationship between Genesis 1:1-2:4, and Genesis 2:4 to the end of the chapter.

It is very common today for unbelievers when told that a person believes the Genesis account of creation to say: "Which account of creation do you believe? After all, we know that Genesis starts with two contradictory accounts of creation."

Of course if this is so it immediately destroys all possibility of believing that Genesis was written by one author, whether he had sources or not. It also destroys the

possibility of believing that it is a part of the inspired word of God. God would not give us two contradictory accounts of the same thing. He might give complimentary or supplementary accounts which would overlap and which at first sight might seem to contradict one another, but we can be sure that if it is from God the apparent contradictions will disappear on close examination.

A very little attention to the details of Genesis 1 and 2 shows immediately that we do not have here two different accounts of the creation of the universe. Genesis 1 tells about the creation of light. There is no mention of the creation of light in Genesis 2. Genesis 1 tells of the creation of the firmament. There is no mention of the creation of the firmament in Genesis 2. Genesis 1 tells of the making of birds and fish. There is no specific mention of birds and fish in Genesis 2. Genesis 1 tells how the sun, moon, and stars were caused to appear. There is no reference to the beginning of the sun, moon, and stars in Genesis 2. Genesis 1 states that God made grass and herbs. There is no mention of grass and herbs in Genesis 2. Genesis 1 mentions the making of fish and reptiles. These are not mentioned in Genesis 2.

What kind of a story of the creation of the universe do we have if there is no mention of the creation of sun, moon, and stars, firmament, light, grass, herbs, or fish? Clearly Genesis 2 is far from a complete story of creation. Even a slight examination shows that it never intended to be such a thing. The relation of Genesis 1:1-2:4 and Genesis 2:4ff can be compared to two maps in an atlas, one being a map of the world and the other a map of the United States. The two would overlap to some extent. The position of the United States is indicated on the map of the world. A few of the most important cities in the United States might be named on the map of the world. But most of the detail of the United States would be lacking on the map of the world. Contrariwise, all the continents of the world except North America, and a good bit of that one, would be missing on the map of the United States. It is exactly the same with Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. Genesis 1 is a general treatment of the creation of the world, mentioning the creation of man in its proper place. Genesis 2 gives more detail about the creation of man and the events immediately before and after.

It is frequently said that Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 contradict each other because Genesis 1 begins with a watery chaos and Genesis 2 begins with an arid waste. This is indeed a sharp contradiction, if the two are parallel pictures of the same thing. We might have an account of the history of the United States which would begin with a picture of a wilderness, inhabited only by a few Indians, and subject to colonization by European countries. Another book, an account of the history of the United States in the 20th century, might begin with the United States as an independent nation, strong and prosperous, and already, as a result of the Spanish-American War, a factor in world affairs. The beginnings of the two accounts would sharply contradict each other, until it was noted that they started at different times. Then it would immediately be seen that this was not a contradiction at all. Similarly, in the time near the beginning of the creation of the world a certain situation would be found. In the time shortly before the creation of man an entirely different situation would probably exist. Once we note the difference in the purpose and subject matter of the two accounts, the apparent contradiction is seen to be no contradiction at all.

Some critical books state that the order of the steps of creation in Genesis 2 sharply contradicts that in Genesis 1. They say that in Genesis 1 we find the following order: creation of vegetation, creation of animals, creation of man and woman. In Genesis 2, they say, we find, first, the creation of man; next, the creation of vegetation; next, the creation of animals; last, the creation of woman. In other critical books, this alleged contradiction is very considerably shortened by the elimination of all reference to vegetation. This second type of critical book has examined the material a little more carefully than the first type.

Let us notice this feature. The only reference that can be found in Genesis 2 to creation of vegetation is the statement that "the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he placed the man whom he had formed." (Gen. 2:8). Verse 9 specifically mentions the trees in the garden. There is no mention of grass or of herbs. Actually the account says nothing about creation of vegetation; it simply speaks of the planting of some trees in a garden. To say that the statement that God planted a garden and placed man there is an account of the creation of vegetation, is as if one were to say that the account of a man building a wooden house for his bride is an account of the creation. Genesis 2:8-9 is really only an account of the preparation of a place for Adam, and most critical writers recognize this fact and omit it from their list of alleged discrepancies.

As a matter of fact, if the writer is credited with normal intelligence, even the planting of the garden should not be thought of as following the creation of man. It is rare indeed that a man will take a wife, and only thereafter begin to look for a place where she could live. God can be expected to have as much intelligence in planning as a normal human being. We are not told that God caused a garden of great trees suddenly to come into existence. We are told that he planted it. The account pictures a long slow process of preparing the garden to be a fit place for Adam and Eve to live. Are we to think of God as such a poor and clumsy worker, that having first created man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, he would then lay him aside to dry while he would plant a garden and wait 50 or 100 years for the trees to grow to reasonable size and for things to get into proper condition to receive the man whom he had created. When it says, "and God planted a garden," the meaning of the verb "planted" is clearly that of our English pluperfect. God had planted a garden in preparation for His creating of man and had given the garden time to grow to the proper size before he created man and put him in it.

It would be possible to translate the Hebrew: "and God had planted." However, this is not necessary, for even the word "planted," as commonly used in English, would not necessarily indicate that what is described came later than the previous events. It is a mention of the preparation that God had made for the proper place for Adam to live. Though chronologically it comes earlier, it is altogether logical to mention it later.

So we do not have here a contradiction in the order of the creation of vegetation. We have no mention of the creation of vegetation but merely of the planting of a garden. But even this planting of a garden does not occur, as the critics allege, after the creation of man. Perhaps we should say, it does not so occur unless we presuppose that we have here an extremely primitive document containing the ideas of very primitive and naive individuals, unable to use normal intelligence in interpreting conditions of the world which they are describing. If one approaches the Bible with such a presupposition as this, naturally he will find it full of contradictions and confusion. If, however, he approaches it on the assumption merely that the writer has normal intelligence, and that the courtesy which is extended to all other writers should be given to him, to interpret his words as fitting together rather than to seek to import unnecessary contradictions, this problem is eliminated.

There remains, however, the alleged contradiction in the order of the creation of animals. Most critical writers maintain that Genesis 2 has man created, then animals, and then woman, in contradiction to the order of Genesis 1 which represents the animals as being created first.

Now it is true that in verse 19 we find the statement that "out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field," and that this statement occurs after the account of the creation of man. Yet, if we give the writer credit for normal intelli-

gence, we find that in the context the purpose of this statement is clearly not to tell how the animals came into being (as is shown by the lack of reference to so many other elements of the creation), but simply to deal with an important problem in relation to man. God wished to show man his need of a companion. He wished to demonstrate to him that it was necessary to create another being like himself. In order to demonstrate this He brought all the animals before Adam, and we read that there was found among them no help meet for Adam (v. 20). In describing this incident, it is only natural for the writer to refer back to the fact that God created the animals. To take the story as an account of the order of creation is to miss its purpose altogether, as even a cursory examination of the context should make abundantly clear. It is only reasonable to consider that the author is referring back to the fact that God had already created the animals, rather than to interpret his words as meaning that they were only then created. In forming the animals God had other purposes in mind, as had already been suggested in chapter 1. Here only their relation to man's need of a proper companion is under consideration.

What sort of primitive mind could invent a story in which animals came into being simply as the result of a series of unsatisfactory attempts to satisfy man's need. After God created man, according to such a view, He wanted man to have a helpmate, so He created a rhinoceros. The rhinoceros did not prove to be a satisfactory helpmate for man, so God created a hippopotamus. When this did not prove to be a satisfactory helpmate, he created a giraffe, then a crocodile, then an elephant. Thus one animal after another was created. After it proved unsatisfactory, it was not destroyed, but allowed to continue—perhaps even a second one was created, so as to produce posterity.

All these animals having thus proved unsatisfactory, but having begun to fill the earth with their descendants, God thought of a new idea. Instead of making still more animals, he finally hit upon the expedient of taking a part of Adam and making a woman out of it!

How unworthy is such an interpretation of the sublime and lofty picture of God that fills these chapters! God knew what He was about. He planned it all, for His great purposes. He brought to Adam the animals He had previously created. He did not create them to see if they would do for a helpmate for man. He brought them before Adam to show him that they would not fill his need. The animals were already in pairs—a fact that made even clearer to Adam his own need of a companion.

If one wishes to assume that a most rude and childish intelligence produced this part of Genesis, he can easily populate the entire Bible with contradictions and absurdities. If he merely gives the writer credit for normal intelligence, and makes a modest effort to interpret his writing as fitting together, most of the alleged contradictions immediately disappear.

For the English reader, it would be simpler if v. ¹⁹24 began with a pluperfect tense. Hebrew has no pluperfect. The verb might just as well be translated as pluperfect here. But this is not really necessary. Order of statements is often logical rather than chronological. There is no necessity of interpreting this passage as meaning that animals were created after man, and thus importing absurdities into the story, as well as making it contradict Gen. 1.

Thus we see that the alleged contradictions between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 completely disappear on close examination of the passages. We have an account of the creation of the universe; then we have a more detailed account of the creation of man. There are certain overlappings between the two supplementary accounts, but there is no contradiction between them.

This sixth principle is extremely important in interpretation of the Bible, or, in fact, of any other literary work.

The seventh principle is also an important one:

7. WE SHOULD NOT MAKE IT OUR PRIMARY AIM TO LEAD PEOPLE TO ACCEPT THE STORY OF CREATION BUT TO BRING THEM TO CHRIST. Then, as Christians, they should accept it.

Christian people sometimes make the mistake of thinking that in order to lead people to salvation it is necessary to prove to them that there are no mistakes in the Bible. The Bible is a long book. It is the product of the infinite mind of God. God used complex processes in bringing it into existence. The end result of these processes is a book which perfectly expresses His mind and His Word for us. But we cannot expect the finite mind to judge the work of the infinite and to prove that every detail of it is true. It is a work from which we learn truth, not one that merely contains what we already know to be true.

One can understand all that the Bible teaches about the creation of the world and still be lost. One can understand all that is taught about the Trinity and still be lost. One can understand the orthodox doctrine of salvation through Christ and still be lost. The primary purpose of Christian work is not to lead people to a correct understanding of these matters, but it is to show them their need of a Saviour, and to lead them to the foot of the cross where they can be saved from their sins through the all-sufficient work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is very important that this be kept clearly in mind or we may vitiate a large portion of our Christian work.

When a man has accepted Christ, the situation becomes somewhat different.

Every Christian should realize that it is not enough to lead people to Christ, though that need is primary. God wants us not only to be saved; He wants us to go on after we are saved to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord. He wants us to come to understand the ideas that are vital for our Christian life. These ideas are expressed in the Bible. The finite mind is in no position to say: "This is spiritual truth: this I must accept; this is historical truth: this I need not accept." The entire Bible is God's Word. It is all true.

Thus in order to lead people to Christ it is not necessary nor wise that we confuse them with long arguments about the details of the story of creation. If an inquirer is particularly bothered by such matters, it may be necessary to examine his particular difficulty and to show him that there is a reasonable answer to the matters that are troubling him. However, we should make sure that the emphasis is kept where it belongs, on the sinful nature of man, on his need of a Saviour, and on the sufficiency of Christ and His readiness to save. After one is saved we must show him how to grow in the Christian life. Unless his growth is to be stunted and warped, he must accept the Bible in its entirety as God's Word. He must approach it, not as a book that he is to judge, and from which he can select what he wishes, but as a representation of the mind of God which he should accept as true in its entirety, and feed upon, that he may grow thereby.

God's Word was not written to tell us all about physics, or chemistry, or biology. It was written to give us an understanding of the truths of salvation. But whenever it touches upon these fields which deal with matters that God has created, what it clearly says cannot be wrong.

The creation of the world is a vital subject, and comes at the very beginning of God's Word. Let us humbly and carefully examine God's book to see what it teaches. Let us not try to explain away anything we find there. Let us accept what we find and go on to enjoy the great spiritual treasures that our Lord has placed there for us.

*Faith Theological Seminary
Elkins Park
Philadelphia 17, Pa.*