

SEVERAL SIGNIFICANT DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN THEISTIC EVOLUTION AND THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT†

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It is the purpose of this article to demonstrate that it is impossible to accommodate theistic evolution to the Biblical account of creation. Furthermore, as many publications of the Institute for Creation Research (as well as others) have shown, all the real scientific data support literal Biblical creationism, so that such compromises are self-defeating, as well as dishonoring to God's Word.

Introduction

In discussing a model for the origin of the universe and the earth, it is important to remember that there are basically only two positions possible: "In the beginning God created" or "In the beginning everything happened by itself." Each position has its variations, but it is really a theistic/nontheistic question. If one rejects the former, he has no alternative but to hold to the latter, for there is no third choice.

Within the "In the beginning everything happened by itself" framework fall the various attempts to explain origins apart from divine intervention: the nebular hypothesis, big bang, expanding universe theories, etc. These differ from each other in the mechanics of how things started, but they are all merely variations of the naturalistic or non-theistic explanation of origins.

Within the theistic or "God created" framework there are two quite different positions, each with its distinct hermeneutical approach (method of interpretation) to the Biblical record. The first is held by those who call themselves scientific creationists. The hermeneutical presupposition here is that the words of the Scriptures are to be understood in their literal sense, unless the context clearly demands otherwise. Since there are no compelling Biblical reasons for abandoning this hermeneutic in Genesis 1, the picture we get, with an unbiased, straightforward reading, is that of a relatively young earth created within the span of 144 hours, or 6 normal days. Those who hold this view appeal to the growing body of scientific data being amassed which confirms their position that the age of the earth is to be numbered in thousands, rather than billions, of years.

The second group of theists have constructed a system that is a curious blend of Biblical data and evolutionary speculation, set within a basically uniformitarian framework. The classical designation for this group is "Theistic Evolutionists": that is, God is responsible, to some extent, for creating the universe, but He did so over a time span of billions of years and in the general sequence suggested by the so-called "geologic column." A very similar approach is taken by those who call themselves "Progressive Creationists," but the difference is largely in name only. It is currently fashionable for theistic evolutionists to go by the title of "Progressive Creationists" in order to avoid the popular resentment in Christian circles against evolution and its non-theistic orientation.

In practice, however, both views are essentially the same. The difference merely concerns the amount of God's intervention within the evolutionary process. Theistic Evolution is more uniformitarian, deistic, and naturalistic, in that it keeps God's creative involvement in His universe to a minimum. Evolution is assumed to be a valid principle of science, and this mechanism is quite capable of carrying on the required processes without help. Progressive creationism is likewise uniformitarian and evolutionary in its framework, but it sees God coming down at various intervals during the evolutionary process to give a slight direction to an otherwise blind process.

The hermeneutics of theistic evolution and progressive creationism are highly questionable, however, for they claim that the Biblical word "day" really means "billion of years," "created" really means "evolved," and so on. If our spoken and written words no longer mean what they say, then all communication becomes hopeless. Likewise, the Biblical record: if we cannot trust Genesis I to convey meaningful and accurate information, why should we give heed to the words of salvation in John 3? In other words, if God did not mean what He *said*, then why did He not say what He *did* mean?

Biblical scholars have long recognized the absurdity of Philo's and Origen's allegorical interpretations of Scripture, and it is time we also took a stand against this twentieth-century scientific allegorism. The words of Scripture are not suspended in isolation from each other, and subject to a lexicographical shell game; they are always set in *context* which, in each case, determines the definition of any particular word.

II. A Study in Contrasts

It is the thesis of this article that theistic evolution and progressive creationism both require a scenario that is so totally at variance with the Biblical record that neither can be harmonized with Scripture. The points below will contain first an item that is an important part of the evolutionary scheme, paralleled by a fact from the Biblical record. The order is generally that which appears in Genesis 1:1 and following.

QUOTABLE QUOTE

"It is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts."

Sherlock Holmes, in the story
A Scandal in Bohemia

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