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THE SWORD AND TRUMPET monthly magazine is a faith ministry directed by a Board representing various constituencies of the Mennonite Church. It is committed to defending, proclaiming, and promoting the whole Gospel of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. It emphasizes neglected truth and contends for "the faith which was once delivered to the saints." This publication exposes and opposes doctrinal error which compromises that faith and leads to apostasy.

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DANIEL A. PAYNE . . . cont'd from page 1

Closing the school on March 31, 1835, Daniel A. Payne moved to New York, and acting upon counsel, went to Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to receive more training.

Although not desiring the office, Brother Payne was licensed and then ordained to the ministry in 1837 at the age of 26.

Payne joined the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1841 and later became a pastor in that denomination. Here is where his story really begins!

Brother Payne wrote a series of articles about the need for an educated ministry. As a result, at the General Conference meeting in 1844 Payne presented a plan to implement a four-year course of study for educating ministers. Daniel felt strongly about three responsibilities of the minister. First, he should preach the gospel, not spend his time ranting, raving, and stomping in the pulpit. Second, he saw the minister's duty to cultivate Christian growth and maturity in the church. Thirdly, he believed the minister was responsible to exercise biblical discipline in the congregation when it was needed to keep the church pure. Brother Payne felt these things were only possible if ministers were educated, had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and lived a holy life with full dependence on the sufficiency of God.

From 1845 to 1850 Daniel Payne pastored the Bethel Church in Baltimore, Maryland.

In 1847, at the age of 36, Daniel Alexander Payne married Julia A. Farris, a widow from Washington, D. C. Tragically, Julia died a year later during the birth of their daughter. Nine months later their baby daughter also died.

In 1848 the General Conference appointed Payne the histographer for the conference.

From 1850-52 Brother Payne traveled and set about to finish the history of the A.M.E. Church.

In 1852, at the age of 41, Daniel was elected bishop of the New England Conference at the General Conference meeting. Seeing the ministry as a high and holy calling he felt unworthy of such a position. Once he was made bishop he not only concentrated on the education of the ministry in the A.M.E. churches but also set about to see that the lay members of the churches were also educated. He also organized Mothers' Associations to help women train their daughters.

In 1854, at the age of 43, Brother Payne married his second wife, Eliza Clark. Eliza had two younger children as well as an adult daughter who was married a few months later.

In order to continue good Christian education Payne encouraged the A.M.E. denomination to acquire Wilberforce University in 1856—becoming its first president. Wilberforce became the first college owned by African Americans.

In 1857 Daniel's married stepdaughter died.

Between 1855 and 1891 Brother Payne also wrote and published several works.

Because of his obedience to God's call on his life Daniel A. Payne will long be remembered as having a major impact on the education of ministers in African Methodist Episcopal churches.

Brother Daniel A. Payne went home to be with his Lord on February 24, 1893, at the age of 82.

— Gail L. Emerson

Person of the Month:

Daniel A. Payne (1811-1893)



Daniel Alexander Payne was born to free blacks, London and Martha Payne, on February 24, 1811, in Charleston, South Carolina. Daniel's parents were devout members of the Methodist Episcopal Church and were very interested in the spiritual well-being of their son. Before his birth the Paynes committed Daniel to God's service. After his birth Daniel Payne was immediately taken to the church by his father to be dedicated. Then his father took him back home and prayed that Daniel would grow up to serve the Lord.

Daniel's early years were marked by sorrow in the death of his parents: his father in 1815 and his mother in 1820. After the loss of his parents Payne was raised by a great-aunt who taught him the things of God.

It was a difficult time in the South for a black child to receive an education but Daniel had a good mind and was willing to study hard in order to learn. At the age of eight Daniel Payne studied with the Minors' Moralists Society. Established by free blacks, the society provided an education and other needs for orphaned and poor black children.

At the end of two years Payne became the student of a well-known tutor in Charleston. From his tutor he learned reading, writing, basic mathematics, and the history of Greece, Rome, and England. At the age of twelve Daniel Payne finished his studies with his tutor and became an apprentice to a local shoe salesman. For the next five years he also apprenticed with a tailor and carpenter. In addition to his apprenticeships he undertook the study of languages such as Latin, Greek, and Hebrew and became a voracious reader of all available books.

At the age of fifteen, having studied much in history, science, and the classics Daniel's attention was turned to spiritual things. God began working in his heart and Payne desired to please God. Not yet converted, he was accepted as a probationer in the Methodist Episcopal Church. However, three years later, at the age of 18, Daniel Payne was truly converted. Shortly after his conversion Daniel felt the Lord was calling him to receive further training so that he could educate other black people.

In 1829, at the age of 19, Brother Payne decided to leave carpentry to open a school whose first students were three children and three adult slaves. For his teaching he received three dollars a month. Not able to continue financially he closed the school but later reopened it in a larger building.

From 1830 to 1835 the school experienced much growth resulting in sixty students. Daniel carefully managed his money and used some of it to buy textbooks for his students. He also spent time learning advanced sciences, geography, and French so that he could teach it to his pupils. The future looked promising, but "dark clouds" were on the horizon.

In 1835 the South Carolina General Assembly passed a law which forbade educating slaves in reading and writing. Failure to comply with the new law meant punishment in the forms of fines, imprisonment, and whipping. Those black persons, free or slave, who *operated a school* for such a purpose would receive the same punishment mentioned above. As a result Daniel's faith was tested severely and he underwent great disappointment. However, he was soon to understand God's true purpose in His calling on Daniel's life years before. *(continued on page 37)*

God's Perfect Creation in Six Literal Days

"In six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:11).

by John R. Rice (1895-1980)

In Genesis 1 is a brief outline of the creation of the heavens and the earth. In brief, definite language, God tells what happened day by day in six days of creation.

The Bible never hints that it is a "poem" or the language is figurative and allegorical. The simple intent of the Scripture is that in six literal days God made the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1 says "heaven and . . . earth," but Genesis 2:1 says "the heavens [plural, all the universe] and the earth."

Infidels and other enemies of the Bible would like to say, as has Dr. George Buttrick, that there are "two accounts of the creation, and they do not agree" (*The Christian Fact and Modern Doubt*, page 161).

In Chapter 2 of Genesis there follows a detailed explanation of the creation of man, which is stated in Genesis 1:27: "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

But God wanted to expand that statement, so He tells us more about the creation of man and then of woman, and of their environment, their relation to the animal kingdom, their sin and their fall, and the curse and the promise involved.

So here we do not have two conflicting accounts of creation, but first the bare outline, then the important details which we need to know.

Only flagrant unbelief and wicked bias such as given by infidels Tom Paine, Robert Ingersoll, and their theological counterparts would find contradiction here in Scriptures

which millions of Bible believers have seen as perfectly harmonious.

I. WHY WE BELIEVE THE CREATION TOOK SIX LITERAL DAYS

It seems to this writer that there is overwhelming evidence that the account of creation speaks of six literal days in which God made the heavens and the earth, not six ages or eons.

1. Why Not Six Literal Days?

The simple truth is, the only reason people would claim that the days of creation were age-long periods is that they try to fit into the theories of unbelieving scientists the speculations and guesses of those who are enemies of the Bible.

Out-and-out unbelievers want to disparage the Bible. They do not want to accept direct creation as an act of God, so they labor ardently to try to prove that the earth and the universe are billions of years old. The popular idea now is that the universe is about five billions years old.

Some try to accept evolution as the method of God's creation. They want to put God into it but keep the outline of events nearly as the speculations of unbelieving scientists would have it. Thus they hope to make the Bible palatable to unbelievers and hope to have the favor of such men while they are still claiming to be Christians. But nobody who simply read the Bible ever came to believe in theistic evolution, we would think, until first the idea was put

into his mind; then he must try to adjust the Bible to fit the guesses of unbelief.

Some Christian men speak of “progressive creation,” indicating there were long ages and that perhaps at the beginning of each age God did a specific act of creation. They try to fit the progressive periods of creation they have imagined into the schedule manufactured by scientists of unbelief.

Others, like Pember in his book *Earth’s Earliest Ages*, and following the notes in the *Scofield Reference Bible*, believe in the “gap theory”—that all these ages happened between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2, and that all the “original creation” was destroyed by some awful catastrophe which they think may have been connected with the fall of Satan, and then that a new period of creation took place as recorded in the six days. So they would explain the fossils and strata of the earth as being the result of the “original creation.”

In the first place, that is not a satisfactory theory, to either unbelievers or to strict Bible believers. It does not fit into the Bible account of creation, and it does not satisfy the speculations of scientists who are enemies of the Bible. But no one would come to such a conclusion, we suppose, except in an earnest effort to reconcile the conflicting statements of the Bible and of unbelieving scientists.

But why do men set unbelievers to judge the Bible? Why accept their speculations?

2. The Terms “Day” and “Night” and “the Evening and the Morning” Indicate Literal Days

One should understand the meaning of the term *day* in this chapter in its own context. God seems to take particular pains in Genesis 1:3-5 to show that He is talking about literal days.

In literal language, when we say a day, we mean a twenty-four-hour period, generally, in which the earth revolves, with one period of light and one period of darkness; or we mean the period of light itself, the *light* part of the twenty-four-hour day.

So here God tells, first of all, of the cre-

ation of light. There would have to be light somewhere in relation to the earth so revolving of the earth would make a twenty-four-hour day of light and dark. We plainly read, then, that “God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day” (Genesis 1:5).

So here was a day which consisted of a period of light and a period of darkness, and this period is called “the first day.”

Again, in verse 8, “And the evening and the morning were the second day.”

In verse 13, “And the evening and the morning were the third day.”

And in verse 19, “And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.”

In verse 23, “And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.”

And then in verse 31, God says finally, “And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”

Six periods of light and darkness called days must mean six literal days.

3. That the Days Are Numbered Follows a Pattern Used Only About Literal Days

It is true that the word *day* can refer to a period of time, like “the day of the Lord,” that extended period which will include the return of Christ in glory, the battle of Armageddon, and the millennial reign on earth. Even in this passage in Genesis 2:4, the Bible speaks of “in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.” Here, the word *day* may include the whole period of creation, the whole six days. But in all such figurative and general use of the term *day*, meaning an extended period or epoch, no numeral is ever used.

When Jesus said, “For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40), no one supposes that Jonah was three ages or extended periods in the belly of the whale; and no one supposes that Jesus was in the grave for three extended ages. It is obvious, when the

numeral “three days and three nights” is used, that it means three literal days and literal nights, or, sometimes more briefly, three literal days.

When the Lord commands in Exodus 12:15, “Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses,” no one supposes that the Scripture could mean seven ages or that the first of seven ages men should put away leaven. When the numeral is used, the term is always literal in the Bible.

In Matthew 17:1 we read, “After six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart.” But there is no possible room for argument that “six days” means six ages.

So according to the common use of language and the Bible pattern everywhere, when the Bible says, “In six days the LORD made heaven and earth” (Exodus 20:11), it means six literal days.

4. Jesus “Rested on the Seventh Day” and So Sanctified It as the Sabbath; it Must Involve a Literal Day

In Genesis 2:1-3 we read:

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

“And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

“And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”

The Lord refers to those verses in the Ten Commandments, saying:

“But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

“For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed

it” (Exodus 20:10, 11).

If the day God rested was a literal day, then the six days He worked were literal days. The day He rested was the day sanctified and set apart as a Sabbath day.

It is true that this Sabbath was not revealed to Israel until Exodus, Chapter 16, and then was given as a part of the Mosaic Law; but still the Sabbath was a literal day, following the pattern of a literal day in which God rested.

Does anyone suppose there were six extended ages of creation, each with a period of darkness and a period of light, evening and morning? And then does anyone suppose that there was an extended period like that in which God rested? If the Sabbath Day was a literal day, then God’s day of rest was a literal day, and that means that His days of creation were literal days too.

5. Order of Events in Creation Will Fit Literal Days, but Not Extended Ages

Let me briefly give one example.

In Genesis 1:11 and 12, God brought forth grass, herbs, and trees on the earth during the third day. Now if that were an age of perhaps millions of years, how would an earth full of plants but no animals live? We now know that God has balanced things so that the plants absorb carbon dioxide and give out oxygen. Then animals absorb the oxygen and give out carbon dioxide.

God has balanced plant life and animal life on the earth. How would plants live for many thousands of years in an atmosphere without carbon dioxide?

The creation of all things is inter-related. God prepared the earth for man and man for the earth. God prepared the plants for animals and animals for plants. And we are not to suppose that if in some radical way the balance that God has put in nature were violated for hundreds of thousands or millions of years, it would make no difference.

II. SUPPOSED DIFFICULTIES OF LITERAL SIX DAYS OF CREATION

It is evident that the objections to the Bible's teaching of six literal days of creation could not be nearly as serious as objections to enormous ages, to make room for natural evolution, instead of direct creation in six days. But there are apparent difficulties to some.

1. *Could This Outline of Creation Be Literal When the Sun Is Not Placed in the Heavens Until the Fourth Day?*

Years ago Dr. John R. Sampey, professor, later president of Southern Baptist Seminary, in discussing this matter said:

The fact that the creation of the sun is placed in the fourth day is proof that we do not have in this chapter a strictly scientific account of the events sketched, for no modern scientist would place the creation of the sun after that of the earth. While the scientist must admire much in this sketch of the creative process as anticipating some of the views of modern students of nature, he would not interpret the Hebrew story as a cold and scientifically accurate account of the order of events. It is a popular account with the emphasis on the religious element, attention being drawn to the Divine activity throughout the story. The long creative process is compressed within the limits of a week of days. The author evidently wished to put emphasis on the observance of the Sabbath. (From page 51 of *The System Bible Study*)

But Dr. Sampey was mistaken. In the first place, the scientists' thought, that all light and energy come from the sun, is simply not true. Genesis 1:3 and 4 show that God created light and that this light was in some way positioned in relation to the earth so that day and night followed one another as the earth revolved toward that light.

There is light today that does not come from the sun. The glowworm, the firefly, and foxfire that appears in swamps in decaying material are examples. There are marine creatures in the pitch darkness of

the deepest ocean that generate light.

But we must remember that Christ Himself is the Light. That is one of His names (John 1:7-9). On the Mount of Transfiguration He was transformed before the disciples, "and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (Matt. 17:2). About those who will so joyfully inhabit the heavenly Jerusalem, we read in Revelation 22:5, "There shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

In the preceding chapter, in Revelation 21:23 and 24, we read, "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it . . ." Then we read, "for there shall be no night there" (v. 25).

We should remember that Almighty God was doing the creating. He was not bound by laws; He made the laws. He was not limited by the opinion of scientists about celestial facts; He made those facts and controls them.

Scientists like to believe that the sun itself was the source of the planets of this planetary system. But to the simple Bible believer it becomes clear that in God's mind the earth is the center of creation and that the sun, moon, and stars were made for the earth and for mankind.

Scientists are impressed with the great mass of the sun. But in God's sight one poor sinful man was worth the awful price of Christ's death on the cross. Stone Mountain, with millions of tons of rock, is not worth one little child in God's sight.

Oh, when God created man for His own eternal pleasure, it was no wasteful expenditure for Him to make the starry heavens so there would be lights on the earth and so times and seasons and light and darkness could be provided according to God's plan.

Just as God first created the earth without form, and void, then separated the firmament above from the earth, and the

cloudy vapor in the firmament from the water on the earth, and as He separated the dry land and seas, so first God created the light, then later separated it and localized it in the sun, moon, and stars.

2. *How Would the Days Be Measured Into Regular, Literal Days Before the Sun Was Created?*

Could there be literal days before the sun was created? Yes. If God created light and had some center of light which, shining, made light on the revolving earth, then it would be day and night just the same, whether that was an indefinite mass or whether it was later divided and organized into the sun and the galaxies of heaven and the moon.

Why is it so hard to believe that God made the earth and heavens just as He said He did?

III. CREATION WAS COMPLETE AND PERFECT

The theory of the evolutionists is that man is good and getting better, that he has climbed up from savagery and even from the animal creation.

That is not what the Bible teaches.

The evolutionists would like us to think that things were imperfect and through inherent forces, animals and plants have fitted themselves with their environment and have grown more complex and more advanced through the centuries.

That is not the picture painted in the Bible.

The Bible speaks of a perfect creation and of a man made in the image of God, who, in the perfect Garden of Eden, fell into sin and brought ruin on a race of sinners.

God's creation was complete, perfect, and beautiful.

1. *Again and Again "God Saw That It Was Good"*

Note these wonderful statements about the creation:

Genesis 1:4 – "And God saw the light, that it was good."

Genesis 1:10 – "And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good."

Genesis 1:12 – (concerning grass and herbs and trees): "And God saw that it was good."

Genesis 1:18 (concerning the sun, moon, and stars): "And God saw that it was good."

Genesis 1:21 says that after the creation of whales and living creatures and all animal life, "God saw that it was good."

Genesis 1:25 says that after the creation of all earthly living creatures and animals, "God saw that it was good."

And then, climaxing it all, Genesis 1:31: "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was *very good*."

Each step in creation was complete, right and perfect.

2. *Without Waiting for Development, Earth, and Life on Earth Were Already Well Adjusted*

There were trees on the earth bearing fruit, though they had never blossomed; some were created already mature, no doubt.

The trees had rings like the annual rings the trees have today, though they had not gone through the summers and winters that now make those rings in the trees.

The soil had humus, just as if there had been the decay of plant and vegetable life through long years, to make topsoil. It was already there in good working order.

There were already seas and dry land, already rivers in well-established beds (Genesis 2:10-14). It didn't take centuries of rain falling and running off a flat earth to erode riverbeds. They were there to start with.

It is likely that salt was already in the seawater and that some fishes and sea life that require salt water had that environment to start with, without waiting for the rivers to leach out salt from the earth.

I think there were baby animals that had never been born, just created as babies.

(continued on page 14)

From the Editor's Desk



Paul M. Emerson

GUEST EDITORIAL

“And Lord, Haste the Day . . .”

by Roger L. Wambold,
General Director of Hebrew Christian Fellowship

Many people are familiar with the words to the great hymn “It Is Well With My Soul.” Fewer are familiar with the circumstances surrounding the writing of its lyrics, and far fewer yet are familiar with the connection between the author of those lyrics and an American settlement in Jerusalem in the late 1800s.

Horatio Spafford was a successful Chicago attorney and businessman who counted the great evangelist D. L. Moody as one of his friends. He and his wife Anna labored long and hard in ministry to the masses of people whose lives were devastated by the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. The Spaffords planned a much-needed vacation in Europe, so Anna and their four daughters set sail on the French luxury liner *Ville du Havre* with Horatio intending to follow soon after, upon completion of business affairs in the U.S.

On its first night at sea, November 21, 1873, the French ship collided with a British vessel and sank within fifteen minutes, claiming 226 lives, among them the four young Spafford daughters. Anna was

knocked unconscious and rescued from a floating piece of debris and taken to Cardiff, Wales, from where she telegraphed this news to her husband: “*Saved alone.*”

Shortly after, a bereaved Horatio Spafford set sail across the Atlantic to join his grieving wife. The captain of his ship notified him when they reached the very spot where the *Ville du Havre* had gone down, and Horatio immediately penned these words on a piece of stationery brought with him from a Chicago hotel:

*When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.*

Three years after the loss of their daughters, Anna gave birth to their only son Horatio, who died of scarlet fever before his fourth birthday. Two other daughters, Bertha and Grace, were born in 1878 and 1881.

In 1881, the Spaffords arrived in Israel with sixteen Christian friends from Chicago, planning an extended, but temporary visit.

Horatio expressed the purpose of the sojourn as “an attempt to seek peace and solace for mind and soul, to try to see things plainly and more in perspective.” He said, “Jerusalem was where my Lord lived, suffered, and conquered, and I wish to learn how to live, suffer, and especially, conquer.”

It was ultimately decided that the group would live permanently in Israel, establishing an “American Colony” there in anticipation of the return of the Lord. In ridicule, a Chicago newspaper described regular picnics by the Spafford group on the Mount of Olives, including full baskets of provisions “in order to be the first to offer the Lord, on His return, a cup of tea.”

That Horatio Spafford, along with many other saints through the Church Age, longed for the return of the Lord in his day, and even hoped to expedite it, is evident in the fifth and sixth stanzas:

*But, Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait,
The sky, not the grave, is our goal;
Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!
Blessed hope, blessed rest of my soul!*

*And Lord, haste the day when my faith
shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord
shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.*

Horatio’s hope to witness the bodily return of Christ was not realized, and he died in Jerusalem of malaria in 1888 at the age of sixty.

The American Colony, originally housed in a rental property in the Muslim Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, eventually moved to a purchased property in East Jerusalem, outside the northern wall of the Old City. The group grew over the years, and while waiting for the return of the Lord, they engaged in extensive works of physical relief and humanitarian aid and assistance. The Spaffords’ daughter Bertha and then her son Horatio Vester—the Spaffords’ grandson—continued this activity through the War of Independence in 1948,

Israel’s early days of statehood, and the Six Day War in 1967.

The property which was home to the American Colony since the early 1900s gradually took on the identity of a hotel, and today the American Colony Hotel boasts a five-star rating and has been the accommodation of choice to glitterati from around the world, including film and entertainment stars, high-ranking diplomats, and world class journalists and literary elite. It seems somehow incongruous that what began as a well-intentioned, albeit misguided, attempt at “hastening the Lord’s return” should be best known today as a luxurious travel destination described on the hotel’s official website as, “a landmark, fairy-tale getaway in the heart of Jerusalem.”

Perhaps the lesson to take away from Horatio and Anna Spafford and the American Colony is best articulated by the Apostle Peter in his second epistle, regarding the subject of Bible prophecy:

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation” (2 Peter 3:14, 15).

While it is entirely proper, and indeed important, to carefully study and seek to accurately understand the prophetic Scriptures, such an enterprise must always lead to holy living and diligent service. To focus solely, or even mainly, on the intricate details of eschatology (the study of “last things”) is to risk losing sight of God’s ultimate purposes in His plan for the ages, namely a demonstration of His sovereign control over all things and a display of His abundant grace and mercy in salvation, a salvation evoking the words of Spafford’s third stanza:

*My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part, but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!*

—Reprinted with permission from *Shalom Update*, a Hebrew Christian Fellowship paper, Summer 2010

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS



A Devotional Commentary



by David L. Burkholder

Introduction to Lessons From the Psalms in October and November

The Psalms are unique in the literature of the Bible. There is no particular continuity from psalm to psalm, in most cases, although major themes are repeated over and over. They are written by a variety of authors, over a period of a thousand years, from Moses to Ezra, and express a wide range of human emotions and circumstances: praise, thanksgiving, supplication, fear, confession, vindication, instruction, trust. There are personal psalms and psalms used for public worship. Both traditions continue to serve God's people to this day. We each find in these poems the thoughts, cries, and aspirations of our own heart.

As we will be studying various psalms for the next two months, it will be helpful for you to read some background explanation regarding the structure of Hebrew poetry. Use a reliable commentary to help you gain an overall picture of the Psalms and the various literary devices used in their writing. This can be a valuable study as you allow the messages in the Psalms to speak to your heart.

OCTOBER 3, 2010

God's Awesome Majesty

Psalm 8

Psalm 8 (a favorite of mine) is a psalm or hymn of praise directed to the Lord God. The Psalmist David recognizes the majesty of God displayed in the earth and exalts His glory above the heavens. God's glory fills and illuminates the earth, but is too majestic to be confined merely to earth. God's glory expands to fill the universe. It is the ultimate expression of the Creator God, the all-powerful One who inhabits eternity.

God's glory and power is so awesome that even the praise of small children can "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." Someone as insignificant as a small

child with his perfect praise can override the power and influence of God's enemies. Jesus used this verse to silence His antagonists when they raised a question over the children's hosannas in the temple (Matthew 21:15, 16).

David was a keen observer of the creative works of God. As a shepherd boy in the fields of Bethlehem he had ample opportunity to observe the night sky and ponder its vastness and the power of the One who had created it. He no doubt marveled at the expanse of the universe and the orderly and regular movement of the celestial objects. He stood in awe of the works of God.

As he contrasted the majesty and power of God with the frailty and insignificance of man he mused, Why should the Creator of such magnificence give thought to

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mankind? Man is so inferior to God. Man is sinful. God is holy. God is all-powerful. Man is limited. Yet man was created in the image of God and endowed with abilities and skills to care for the lesser creatures of God's creation (see Genesis 1:26-28). Man's glory and honor is above that of the lesser creation.

Some see Messianic overtones in verses 5 and 6. However, the context would seem to favor pointing to mankind as the highest order of God's creation on earth, though in some aspects inferior to angels. Certainly some aspects of these verses do portray the experience of Jesus, and the Hebrew writer (2:6-9) does refer to Psalm 8 with reference to the work of Christ.

Man, as God's vassal, has been charged with the care of God's world. It was part of God's creation order that man should dominate and subdue animal life. As David reflects on this responsibility he nevertheless marvels at the authority God has given man over His creative works. Everything—domesticated cattle, wild beasts, birds, fish, whatever, all are under man's domination. What an awesome responsibility that should not be taken lightly.

As David concludes this short psalm, he again ascribes honor to the great and mighty God whose majesty and glory fill the earth. But note also that he recognizes Him as a personal God, "our" God, One with whom, though great and majestic, man is allowed to experience a personal relationship. Truly He is great. Honor Him for His majesty and for the trust He has placed in man as caretaker of His creation.

For thought and discussion

1. Think about, and discuss, how we as mere mortals can adequately express praise to such an awesome and beneficent God.
2. David's observation of the heavens spoke to him of God's majesty and power. What aspect of creation has especially challenged you with God's infinite design?
3. In light of God's majestic glory, who indeed is man that God should even notice him? Ponder that relationship and

the trust God has placed upon us as caretakers of His creation.

4. What responsibilities go along with man's dominion over God's creation? Discuss.
5. Allow this study to heighten your appreciation and respect of our awesome God and renew your commitment to be a faithful caretaker of His creation.

Lesson emphasis: The awesome majesty of God and man's responsibility to be faithful to the trust He has placed upon us.

Key verse: 1

OCTOBER 10, 2010

God's Perfect Law

Psalm 19:7-14

Psalm 19 easily divides into two main sections. Verses 1-6 speak of the revelation of God in nature. Verses 7-14, our text for today, explain the purpose and benefits of God's Law. This psalm is defined as a wisdom psalm, one that instructs and directs. It exemplifies the beauty of Hebrew poetry in its structure and phraseology. It is a good one to memorize and refer to often, both as an expression of praise to God for His marvelous creation and for a reminder of the perfection of God's law and the benefits of keeping it.

Verses 7, 8, and 9 give us an excellent example of parallelism in Hebrew poetry, where different words are used to describe a common concept or principle. The Psalmist David begins his discourse by referring to "The law of the Lord" in verse 7. Then in subsequent phrases he refers to this law as *testimonies*, *statutes*, *commandments*, and *judgments*. In each case he also lists a benefit of these varied aspects of God's law. We note in the first phrase that God's law is perfect, or complete, and thus covers all basic requirements of the relationship between God and man.

The first benefit of God's law is that it converts or restores the soul, thus establishing man's relationship to God. The

testimonies of the Lord are trustworthy, giving wisdom to the seeking heart. The statutes and commandments of the Lord rejoice the heart and enlighten the mind. The judgments of the Lord are altogether true and righteous. There is no mixture of error in them. These must all be kept in the fear, or reverence, of the Lord God. These phrases describe the nature of God's law in its diverse aspects.

The psalmist then describes the value of God's law, that it is more precious than gold and sweeter than honey. As one commentator stated, the Word of God is of greater value than the most valuable objects of human striving—money and fine food. In reality, there is nothing of comparable value to the law of God. It alone provides access and relationship to God and it alone directs and instructs the life in the way of holiness and right living.

David recognizes man's proclivity to sin, and that he not always even recognizes his faults and errors. However, God's law provides instruction, warning, and incentive for holy living. The reward for keeping God's law is a clear relationship to Him, and a conscience free of guilt. Man needs an external force to keep him moving in the right direction. God's law provides that.

David ends this psalm with a prayer for God's help in maintaining purity of thought and expression. He longs for the acceptance by God which comes through adherence to the principles of God's Word for daily living. David fastens himself to the Rock, his Redeemer, for salvation and stability amid the storms of life.

For thought and discussion

1. Helpful to this study are passages from Psalm 119, notably verses 9-16, 97-105, 129, and 130.
2. Describe the beauty of God's law. What are its various facets.
3. Gold and God are often in conflict. How do we get to the place where our pursuit of God outstrips our desire for gold?
4. How have you benefited from keeping

God's law, as opposed to taking your own way? Discuss.

5. There are various things that help us keep God's laws. Name and discuss them.
6. Make David's prayer in verse 14 your own.

Lesson emphasis: The importance of giving heed to God's law and applying its principles to life.

Key verses: 7 and 8

OCTOBER 17, 2010

God Our Refuge

Psalm 46:1-7

Who of us has not, in times of trouble or distress, fled to God for refuge from the encroaching storm? At times we may attempt to tough it out on our own, but only God is capable of shielding us from impending disaster and bringing us safely through the storms of life. Sometimes, to our dismay, we learn this lesson too late. The psalmist in Psalm 46 recognizes God's ever-present help and His strength and stability to protect us when the storms of life assail.

It is thought that this psalm may have been written to celebrate God's protection in a siege of the city of Jerusalem (see 2 Kings 18 and 19). But just as certain that God would not allow the physical destruction of the city where He dwelt, neither will He allow the spiritual destruction of an individual in whose life He dwells. So, while dealing primarily with physical realities, this psalm also serves as an allegory of the Christian life.

The psalmist assumes God's presence and His willingness to help in times of trouble. He is always there, always accessible, always able. Therefore, we need not fear tumult or upheaval. As *The Living Psalms* states verse 2: "We need not fear even if the world blows up, and the mountains crumble into the sea." In other words, if our trust is fully in God, there is absolutely

nothing to fear. In the midst of chaos our God is an impenetrable fortress, an immovable rock. Selah, so let it be!

The psalmist likens God's dwellingplace (v. 4) to a secure city, impervious to destruction because God is there. There is also a healing, refreshing stream of water issuing from that city, speaking of God's provision for those who seek security with Him. God's watchful care precedes the dawn. He is ever alert. He will not be taken by surprise. In the Christian life He is always present and ready to come to the aid of His children when under attack (see Isaiah 65:24).

Though the heathen "rant and rave in anger, when God speaks the earth melts in submission and kingdoms totter into ruin" (*The Living Psalms*). The kingdoms of men, their plots and schemes, all disintegrate into nothingness under the overpowering voice of God. There is no power equal to His, no one can prevail against Him. (Read verses 8-10 for further description of God's power over all.)

The psalmist concludes this section (v. 7 and also v. 11) on the confident note that the Almighty God, the Master of the heavenly host and the God of Jacob, Israel's progenitor, is our refuge. We can always be assured of protection and victory when under His care. There is security in Him and in Him alone. Read also Psalm 61:1-4.

For thought and discussion

1. What is necessary for us to do in order to find secure refuge in the Lord of hosts?
2. How is the strength of God actualized in our lives? Discuss.
3. Fear is a constant plague of humanity. How can we overcome the fears in our lives? What help do we derive from others? Discuss.
4. What are some modern examples of God bringing to naught the rage of nations?
5. Hymns such as "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" and "A Shelter in the Time of Storm" would be an appropriate part of your worship in conjunction with this lesson.

Lesson emphasis: That the Almighty God alone is a safe and secure refuge amid the storms of life, and that He is ever ready to defend us when we flee to Him for safety.

Key verse: 1

OCTOBER 24, 2010

Praise Our God

Psalm 47

Psalm 47 is a psalm of praise. It is a participatory psalm, inviting worshipers to clap their hands and shout for joy. The language of the psalm may have allusions to a military conquest. There are two main themes in this psalm, the acclamation of Jehovah as King and the declaration of His majesty. Most commentators see eschatological dimensions in this psalm: nations subdued, God's universal dominion, Gentiles worshipping God, God's return to Heaven in victory, etc. True as this may be we must remember, however, that those Israelites using this psalm as a hymn of praise in their worship in the local setting knew nothing of these overtones of a future day. Their focus was on the past and present. Their praise arose from observation of God's power, majesty, and beneficence.

The call here is to exuberant worship, clapping of hands, shouts of joy. This is in recognition of the awesome majesty and power of Jehovah God. He is the victor. He subdues nations. He rules over all mankind. He has no equal. He is to be praised with the utmost abandon. Israel rejoices over such a magnificent God. And so should we.

Israel here recognizes the fulfillment of God's promise to Jacob to give him the land promised to his grandfather Abraham generations before. God chose a good and fruitful land for Jacob's descendants (see Genesis 28:10-15). He then subdued the nations inhabiting the land and gave it to His people.

Verse 5 seems to allude to a victory

march following a successful military campaign, a shout of triumph, the blare of trumpets. The response of the people is to sing praises to this triumphant God, their King. This God by His feats of power is “King of all the earth.” There is none greater. The people’s praise is with this understanding.

This God sits on the throne of His holiness. He rules the world. All nations, including Israel, are pictured as gathered before Him in recognition of His greatness and sovereignty. All magistrates bow before His supremacy. “He is greatly exalted.” He is exalted above all the earth. As Israel recognizes the greatness, power, majesty, and supremacy of their God, it calls forth praise of the highest form.

The example of Israel’s praise is good for us today. As we reflect on God’s goodness to us, His power in subduing our spiritual enemies, His gracious providence in giving us a good land, His ministry to us in various ways, it should draw forth exuberant praise from us as well. There is no God like our God. To recognize Him as such is the highest form of praise.

“Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.”

For thought and discussion

1. Discuss acceptable forms of worship. Remember that we are in the Christian era, not the Old Testament economy. What are the differences, and why?
2. Why does it seem, at times, that evil prevails and God is silent? Discuss reasons.
3. Reflect on the awesome majesty and power of our God. This should evoke praise from you.
4. How do we praise God? Is it only with the voice? Discuss.
5. You should at least contemplate the eschatological implications of this psalm. It does hint of a glorious time to come. Are you looking forward to it?

Lesson emphasis: Heartfelt and adequate praise to God for His awesome power and greatness.

Key verse: 6

OCTOBER 31, 2010

The God Who Cares

Psalm 63

This is a psalm of David, written in the wilderness of Judah while fleeing from either Saul (1 Samuel 22–24) or Absalom (2 Samuel 15–18). However, the occasion is not as important as the setting which David uses to express his intense longing for God and his confidence in God’s goodness and protection. David had been anointed king (or was king), but due to opposition he was forced to flee for his life. Away from the security and comforts of home, he pours out his heart in longing for God.

He acknowledges God the Lord as his personal God and that he earnestly seeks Him. This shows his complete trust, commitment, and loyalty to Him even though he may question the why of his present circumstances. He longs for God as a person in the dry desert longs for refreshing water to assuage his thirst. He longs to see God’s power and glory manifested here in the wilderness just as he had seen it in the sanctuary in Jerusalem.

Nevertheless, regardless of the circumstances, David blesses God and admits that though under threat, he realizes that to experience God’s loving-kindness exceeds the joy of living. Therefore he lifts up his hands in praise to God and will continue to do so as long as God allows him to live. David knew that communion with God was better than life itself. Fellowship with God was to him like the richest of foods—filling and satisfying. Joyful praise was David’s response to God’s loving-kindness.

Undoubtedly David spent many sleepless nights, estranged from family and the comforts of home, under threat for his life. And when he could not sleep he meditated upon God, His goodness to him and His blessings. He did not count sheep, he communed with the Shepherd. And that strengthened and encouraged him in the uncertainties he faced. He knew God had helped and protected him, therefore he

trustingly placed himself under “the shadow of [God’s] wings.” He pursued his relationship with God with diligence, recognizing that God’s powerful hand had upheld him in all his past struggles and that he would need Him for the struggles ahead.

David had confidence that God would eventually vindicate him and destroy those who sought his life. No doubt he spoke prophetically in declaring that his enemies would come to a tragic end and become prey for the scavenging jackals of the field. (Remember the tragic end of Saul and Absalom.)

But, David says, he as king will rejoice in God, firmly believing that God would eventually fulfill His promise to set him on the throne of Israel. Not only would David then rejoice, but all who would swear loyalty to him would also rejoice and praise God. But liars, naysayers, would be silenced.

We have in this psalm a beautiful picture of the soul’s longing for God, the commitment of trust and loyalty to God for His goodness and protection, and the settled assurance that comes from that trust. Take a pattern from David’s life.

For thought and discussion

1. What does Jesus say about those who hunger and thirst after righteousness? How can we get to that place as exemplified by David?
2. Have you ever been in a situation that seemed hopeless, where things just couldn’t seem to work out as you thought God had directed? How did you come through? What was your source of security and confidence? Discuss.
3. Is your commitment to God deep enough to carry you through disappointing situations and give you a joyful, praising heart?
4. An older churchman once told a group of us younger men that the memorization of Scripture would give us substance for meditation in the wakeful night watches. Try it.
5. When you get into a discouraging situation, don’t complain. Think, rather, on the many blessings you have received from God’s hand and it will change your outlook. Guaranteed.

Lesson emphasis: Praising God in all circumstances of life and living in continual pursuit of Him and His holiness.

Key verse: 1 ■

GOD’S PERFECT CREATION IN SIX LITERAL DAYS . . . cont’d from page 6

I think there were cows heavy with calves, and mares ready with foal which had never conceived. They were created already heavy with young.

Adam had a navel. He had never had an umbilical cord connecting him to a placenta in the mother’s womb as his children would have, but he was created to look and be as other men.

The sun, moon, and stars were created. But no doubt the starlight was created when the stars were created. The sunshine didn’t need to wait to get to the earth ninety millions miles away. The great galaxies of stars, thousands of light-years away, didn’t have to wait for years before they could be seen by the eyes of the first man and woman. If God can make a sun, He can make sunshine at the same time.

We need to adjust our thinking to direct

creation, the supernatural miracle of God, who prepared this earth perfectly and declared that “it was good,” even “very good”!

Scientists have sometimes foolishly supposed that this earth had to start with nothing finished, nothing completed, so they would like to measure the age of rocks as billions of years. There is a kind of lead which is found, the result of radioactive decay. But who would say that God would not have some of that kind of lead in the original creation? The earth was already in working order, so it did not need to wait for the results of natural processes. The natural processes began, but the results of natural processes were created too, in many, many cases. ■

—Reprinted with permission from *The Sword of the Lord*, February 6, 2009.

Newslines . . .

by Hans Mast

incidents events occurrences facts illustrations episodes committees vignettes proceedings problems
experiences crises adventures transactions meetings tragedies scoops reports conferences happenings
bulletins questions reports affairs dramas encounters personages actions tidings et cetera

News Tidbits

“THIMPHU, Bhutan, July 21 – Christians in this Himalayan nation who are still longing to openly practice their faith were disheartened this month when the government proposed the kind of ‘anti-conversion’ law that other nations have used as a pretext for falsely accusing Christians of ‘coercion.’”
— *Compass Direct News*

The Coast Guard issued a preliminary report that indicates that they did not follow their own protocol (while the oil rig company is responsible for actually fighting the fire, the Coast Guard is responsible to take command of fire-fighting operations) for fighting fires on oil rigs in the BP/Deep-water Horizon Gulf spill and that chaotic spraying by six private boats may have been what actually sunk the rig (causing the spill; the pipe rupture did not happen at the explosion, but rather later when the rig sank) rather than the explosion and fire itself.
— The Center for Public Integrity

“The Defense Department is unable to account for \$8.7 billion of the \$9.1 billion in Development Fund for Iraq monies it received for reconstruction in Iraq. This according to a study published today by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction.”
— *Federal News Radio, 1500 AM*

At the California State Fair, police gunned down a rampaging, pregnant cow who would not be subdued after a 1.5-hour chase. The cow was scheduled to give birth before a large audience in an educational program.
— *Sacramento Bee*

The U.S. Navy successfully tested a ship-mounted laser that shot down four drone aircraft.
— *CBS News*

A Palestinian man has been convicted of rape in an Israeli court for a consensual encounter with a Jewish woman. The reason for the rape charge? He lied and said he was a Jew.
— *UK Guardian*

Ann Arbor, MI, is choosing to spend its city budget on a \$850,000 piece of public art at a time where the city has a multimillion-dollar budget deficit and they are laying off firemen.
— *Michigan Capitol Confidential* news service

It has been known for years that living a life without much exercise increases our risk for a whole host of health problems. It was thought, however, that regular exercise would alleviate that risk. A new study shows that long periods of inactivity cannot be solved by periods of intensive exercise. Low-intensity movement needs to happen consistently throughout the day. So get out of that chair and walk around the office every thirty minutes or so.
— *New York Times*

There are many volunteer Minutemen-type groups patrolling the U.S.-Mexico border to try to intercept illegal aliens crossing the border. J. T. Ready’s group, however, is causing concern. They’re heavily armed, wear body armor and military camouflage, and identify themselves with the National Socialist Movement, a neo-Nazi group that believes only non-Jewish, white, heterosexuals should be allowed to be U. S. citizens and that everyone else should leave “peacefully or by force.”
— *AP*

“Wielding a blow-dryer, a leading atheist conducted a mass ‘de-baptism’ of fellow non-believers and symbolically dried up the offending waters that were sprinkled on their foreheads as young children. At the annual American Atheists Convention, one of atheism’s premier provocateurs Edwin

Kagin faced the crowd and raised high a hairdryer labeled 'Reason and Truth.' For Kagin, this struggle between godless and god-fearing hits very close to home: his son Steve Kagin is a fundamentalist minister in Kansas.” —*ABC News*

Raymond Burkholder with the Institute for Global Opportunities's (Chiang Mai, Thailand - <http://IGoAsia.org>) Macedonian Teaching Ministry (<http://j.mp/IGoMTM>) was in South Asia teaching a Bible seminar to pastors about Acts 8 how that persecution spread the church, causing it to grow. The pastors got all excited and said, "That's what's happening here to us! Persecution is spreading the church and making it grow!"

* * * * *

Amish Teen Arrested After Horse-and-Buggy Chase

“Leon, NY (AP)—An Amish teenager has been charged after police in western New York say he led them on a one-mile chase in his horse and buggy.

“The Cattaraugus County Sheriff's Office says deputies spotted 17-year-old Levi Detweiler running a stop sign in his rural hometown of Leon last week.

“Deputies say Detweiler refused to pull over and led them on a chase that ended when he crashed his buggy and fled on foot.

“Detweiler has been charged with underage possession of alcohol, overdriving an animal, reckless endangerment, failure to stop at a stop sign, and failure to yield to an emergency vehicle.”

—Excerpt from “Amish Teen Arrested After Horse-and-Buggy Chase” (<http://j.mp/9VIyQh>) on *AP/Channel 13WHAM*

* * * * *

French Mother Kills 8 Newborns

A French woman has been charged with murdering eight of her newborn babies because “she did not want any more children.” The eight corpses were found buried in the couple's backyard. The couple claims that the husband was ignorant because she is a large woman and hid her pregnancies from him. She has admitted to having the babies in secret, then smothering them. They are described by neighbors as pillars

of their community.

This is the latest of a string of similar incidents in France. In March, a French lady was given a mere 15-year sentence for killing six of her newborn babies by smothering or strangling them with her bare hands. In June of 2009, a mother got only eight years for killing three of her babies, keeping two in the freezer. This is the logical result of abortion.

—Source: *UK Daily Mail*

* * * * *

SEC Exempt From Disclosure

The new financial reform legislation that Obama has said would “increase transparency in financial dealings” (increasing government transparency was one of his refrains during the campaign) actually exempts the Securities and Exchange Commission from the Freedom of Information Act, an essential act that brings a degree of transparency to government dealings of all sorts.

Fox Business News writes, “The SEC cited the new law Tuesday in a FOIA action brought by FOX Business Network. Steven Mintz, founding partner of law firm Mintz & Gold LLC in New York, lamented what he described as ‘the backroom deal that was cut between Congress and the SEC to keep the SEC's failures secret. The only losers here are the American public.’ If the SEC's interpretation stands, Mintz, who represents FOX Business Network, predicted ‘the next time there is a Bernie Madoff failure the American public will not be able to obtain the SEC documents that describe the failure,’ referring to the shamed broker whose Ponzi scheme cost investors billions.”

—Source and excerpted from “SEC Says New Financial Regulation Law Exempts It From Public Disclosure” (<http://j.mp/anmT34>) on *Fox Business News*

* * * * *

Federal Debt and Fiscal Crisis Risk

“Over the past few years, U. S. government debt held by the public has grown rapidly—to the point that, compared with the total output of the economy, it is now higher than it has ever been except during the period around World War II. The recent increase in debt has been the result of three sets of factors: an imbalance between federal revenues and spending that predates

the recession and the recent turmoil in financial markets, sharply lower revenues and elevated spending that derive directly from those economic conditions, and the costs of various federal policies implemented in response to the conditions.

“Further increases in federal debt relative to the nation’s output (gross domestic product, or GDP) almost certainly lie ahead if current policies remain in place. The aging of the population and rising costs for health care will push federal spending, measured as a percentage of GDP, well above the levels experienced in recent decades. Unless policymakers restrain the growth of spending, increase revenues significantly as a share of GDP, or adopt some combination of those two approaches, growing budget deficits will cause debt to rise to unreportable levels.”

—Excerpt from “Federal Debt and the Risk of a Fiscal Crisis” (<http://j.mp/ajY5XY>) a report by the Congressional Budget Office

* * * * *

Antibody Neutralizes HIV Strains 91%

“Will HIV eventually go the way of smallpox and polio? Earlier this month, scientists at the National Institute of Health (NIH) announced their discovery of three new HIV antibodies, the most powerful of which neutralizes 91% of all HIV strains. These are the strongest antibodies yet found, and they could hold the key to developing a vaccine to AIDS.

“HIV antibodies themselves aren’t rare, and scientists regularly find ones that are effective against a few different strains. But until last year, the most powerful antibody found only protected against about 40% of strains. New techniques for rapidly identifying antibodies have changed this, and sparked an unprecedented number of breakthroughs.”

—Excerpt from “Antibody Neutralizes 91% of HIV Strains, Strong Step Towards a Vaccine” (<http://j.mp/dvO9L6>) on *SingularityHub.com*

* * * * *

Vast Left-Wing Media Conspiracy

“When I’m talking to people from outside Washington, one question inevitably comes up: Why is the media so liberal? The question often reflects a suspicion that members of the press get together and decide on a story line that favors liberals and Democrats and deni-

grates conservatives and Republicans.

“My response has usually been to say, Yes, there’s liberal bias in the media, but there’s no conspiracy. The liberal tilt is an accident of nature. The media disproportionately attracts people from a liberal arts background who tend, quite innocently, to be politically liberal. If they came from West Point or engineering school, this wouldn’t be the case.

“Now, after learning I’d been targeted for a smear attack by a member of an online clique of liberal journalists, I’m inclined to amend my response. Not to say there’s a media conspiracy, but at least to note that hundreds of journalists have gotten together, on an online listserv called JournoList, to promote liberalism and liberal politicians at the expense of traditional journalism.

“It’s thanks to Tucker Carlson’s *Daily Caller* website that we know something about JournoList, though the emails among the liberal journalists were meant to be private. (Mr. Carlson hasn’t revealed how he obtained the emails.) In June, the *Daily Caller* disclosed a series of JournoList musings by David Weigel, then a *Washington Post* blogger assigned to cover conservatives. His emails showed he loathes conservatives, and he was subsequently fired.

“JournoList contributors discussed strategies to aid Mr. Obama by deflecting the controversy. They went public with a letter criticizing an ABC interview of Mr. Obama that dwelled on his association with Mr. Wright. Then, Spencer Ackerman of *The Washington Independent* proposed attacking Mr. Obama’s critics as racists. He wrote:

“‘If the right forces us all to either defend Wright or tear him down, no matter what we choose, we lose the game they’ve put upon us. Instead, take one of them—Fred Barnes, Karl Rove, who cares—and call them racists. . . . This makes them “sputter” with rage, which in turn leads to overreaction and self-destruction.’”

—Excerpt from “The Vast Left-Wing Media Conspiracy” (<http://j.mp/8Zixw1>) by Fred Barnes (editor of *The Weekly Standard* and a commentator on Fox News Channel) in *The Wall Street Journal*

Recommended Reading: “Diversity and the Myth of White Privilege” (<http://j.mp/akcQa3>) by Senator James Webb (D) in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Feedback: hansmast@hansmast.com



Sermon of the Month



Each month we will feature a Biblical sermon in this column. We would like to emphasize expository preaching and ask our readers to submit good expository sermons for consideration. Please send typewritten copies by “snail mail” or E-mail to: Editor, Sword and Trumpet, Box 575, Harrisonburg, VA 22803; swandtrump@verizon.net.

The Treasures of the Snow

by Harold S. Martin

“Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?” (Job 38:22).

One of the major attitudes which the Lord looks upon with disfavor is a murmuring and complaining spirit. We read about the Israelites in 1 Corinthians 10, who complained and murmured about their circumstances during the wandering in the wilderness—and in verse 10 of that chapter we are told not to complain *as some of them did*. Their lives were snuffed out by a “destroying angel” sent from God. The Lord God Jehovah is sovereign. He does what He does because He is who He is. The things which He allows to take place on earth are intended for our welfare, and that includes *the sending of snow* in wintertime.

Several thousand years ago, God spoke to Job out of the whirlwind and said in essence, *“Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?”* (Job 38:22). One paraphrase of the verse is translated this way: *“Have you visited the treasures of the snow, or seen where the hail is made and stored?”* (*Living Bible*). Job was a well-informed man in his day. He knew a great deal about nature and animals and human behavior. He was a deep thinker, and at times he apparently took pride in his knowledge. In Chapters 29 and 30 (of the Book of Job) we note that he used the pronoun “I,” “me,”

and “mine” 195 times. But one day God spoke to Job, and in Chapter 38 we have a record of 79 questions that God put to Job:

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Have the gates of death been opened unto thee?
Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?
Canst thou send lightnings?

When Job saw this vision of the greatness of God and the ignorance of man, he said, “I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:2, 6).

In today’s study we are interested in the question, *“Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?”* When we look at the moon and the stars, we’re inclined to say with David, “What is man that thou art mindful of him?” We are overwhelmed with thoughts about the greatness and majesty of God when we scan the heavens above—but we can also see evidences of God’s handiwork in the snow.

The *National Geographic* magazine several decades ago had an interesting article entitled “Snowflakes to Keep.” The writer

had captured (and then quickly froze) hundreds of snowflakes over the years. He described the methods used to capture and retain and photograph the flakes of snow. He said that during a single ten-inch snowfall, more than one million flakes of snow may gather on a two-foot square. And although most crystals may appear to be similar, he has never photographed two flakes with exactly the same size, pattern, and number of water molecules. That boggles my powers of comprehension!

There are some interesting facts about the snow. Many people have never seen snow, because snow falls only on about a third of the earth's surface. People in Morocco, Nigeria, and most of India have never seen snow—because it does not snow in those parts of the world. However, snow does fall on high mountains, even near the equator. The heaviest snowfall ever recorded in one year was 1,140 inches on Mount Baker in the state of Washington during the winter of 1998-99. The record previously had been 1,122 inches on Mount Ranier in Washington state during the winter of 1971-72. The greatest snowfall ever recorded anywhere within a 24-hour period was at Silver Lake, Colorado, in 1921. Seventy-six inches of snow fell in just 24 hours. The most snow that fell in just one calendar month was recorded at Tamarack, California—390 inches in January 1911. In some Arctic regions, green snow and red snow have been known to fall. This is caused by lichens and moss mixed in with the snow crystals.

What are some of the lessons we can learn from the snow?

1. Snow Is a Gift From God.

To people living in the northern climates, where snowfall is relatively heavy, and the roads become filled with drifts—snow may seem to be a nuisance and sometimes a great inconvenience. But snow is a part of God's plan in nature, and is actually quite useful. Snow is really a gift from God.

Snow is the best source of moisture for

the ground.

Rainwater tends to rush into the valleys and quickly run away—but melting snow soaks into the ground evenly, everywhere. Farmers in most areas are glad to see snow on the ground because when there is a good snow cover, there is little danger of topsoil blowing away.

Snow also forms an insulating blanket that helps to retain the earth's heat.

Those who experiment with soil temperatures have discovered that the temperature at the bottom of a snowdrift may be as much as thirty degrees warmer than the temperature at the surface. After a winter when snow cover has been deep, it is not uncommon for farmers (when plowing in the spring), to discover stray potatoes which were missed in last year's harvest—which have not been touched by frost.

Snow also has the benefit of being one of nature's best fertilizers.

Snow carries nitrogen out of the air, and it washes the nitrogen into the ground. Thus, snow not only provides moisture deep down in the earth so that crops will grow well during the warmer days of summer—but it also puts chemicals into the soil to rehabilitate the ground and prepare it for the growing season.

Snow is also a source of power. When the snow melts in the high mountain ranges, it forms into mighty rivers which are harnessed by huge dams—and the water is used to furnish most of our electric energy. This is especially significant in the western states where the Columbia River in Oregon and Washington, and the Colorado River in Colorado and Arizona provide many, many benefits.

A native from Africa was once visiting our country, and he was thrilled by his first glimpse of snow. He stood out in the open with his arms outstretched—and as the feathery white flakes fell into his hands, he kept saying, "It's a miracle; it's a miracle of God." And indeed so it is! Snow is a gift from God. Snow is an element with many beneficial values.

2. Snow Is a Mark of God's Providence.

Sometimes God in His providential dealing with humans, uses the snow and hail in extraordinary ways. One of the punishments that God sent upon the land of Egypt in the days of Moses and Aaron—was a plague of hail. The psalmist recounted the event, and says, “He destroyed their vines with hail” (Psalm 78:47). The Book of Revelation tells about the angels pouring out their vials of wrath, and says, “And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven” (Revelation 16:21). In the days of Joshua, the kings of the Amorites were gathered together against Israel, and yet the Israelites overtook the enemy suddenly. God had sent a great hailstorm upon the Amorites. Joshua says that “they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword” (Joshua 10:11).

One winter, in the days of Napoleon Bonaparte, some enemy soldiers were coming close to a small town in European Russia. In a small cottage outside the town, a little old grandmother was praying that God would build a wall around them and protect them from the ravishing soldiers. She had heard that the soldiers were coming and were not too far away. Her unbelieving son heard the prayer and said, “*Mother, your God can't build a wall around us in one night.*” But the next morning her son could hardly believe what he saw. He couldn't see out the windows, for God had sent a snowstorm, and the wind had blown a huge wall of snow against the house. It was learned later that the cruel soldiers had indeed marched right past the house without seeing it. Russian-born CMA preacher, Hyman Appelman, told the account. The point is that when God wants to do something for us, there isn't anything that can stop Him! With God nothing shall be impossible!

Charles Spurgeon was a miserable young man before his conversion. He says, “I had sinned so much against God that there seemed to be no hope for me.” The gospel was not fully preached in the church he had normally attended. He wasn't sure what to do in order to be saved and to find peace

with God. But then one Sunday morning it snowed. Without taking time and space to relate the whole account of his conversion, we know from what Spurgeon said later in a sermon, that God was providentially planning his life.

Charles Spurgeon said, “I might still be living in darkness and despair even now, had it not been for the goodness of God *in sending a snowstorm* one Sunday morning when I was about to go to the place of worship. When the storm became so bad, and I could go no further, I turned down a side street and came to a small Primitive Methodist Chapel. The minister was snowed in; there were only about a dozen people; and a poor man (a shoemaker by trade) went up into the pulpit to preach. He spoke on the text, ‘*Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth*’ (Isaiah 45:22)—and went on to briefly describe the plan of salvation.”

Spurgeon said that his grammar was poor and the sermon was not carefully prepared, but his message was clear—and that morning Charles Spurgeon was converted. It was Spurgeon who later became a prince among preachers, and every Monday morning for many years, his sermons were cabled across the Atlantic and published in several hundred newspapers all across America. Remember his words: “*I sometimes think I might still be living in darkness and despair even now, had it not been for the goodness of God in sending a snowstorm one Sunday morning.*” God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform. Snow is not only a gift from God; snow is also an instrument of divine providence.

3. Snow Is an Element of Beauty.

If a snowflake is captured and preserved, and is placed under a magnifying glass—it is a most beautiful crystal. The *World Book Encyclopedia* says that “snow crystals all have six sides, but they differ in shape. They collide and stick together to produce snowflakes.” William Bentley, from the little town of Jericho, Vermont, has been considered the world's foremost authority on

snowflakes. During his lifetime he made more than five thousand pictures of snowflakes; many of the pictures have been used by artists in decorating and designing.

Not only is each separate snowflake a miracle of beauty, but after a freshly fallen snow, the broad expanse of trees and fields have a unique beauty all their own. Most of us, who live in areas where the snow falls, have scarcely ever seen a sight more beautiful than the snow-covered trees, and the white countryside that greets our eyes on the morning after the snow has fallen. The Bible says (*Living Bible* paraphrase), “*He sends the snow in all its lovely whiteness, and scatters the frost upon the ground*” (Psalm 147:16).

James Russell Lowell wrote a poem entitled “The First Snowfall.” It starts by stating that the snow had begun in the evening, and busily all through the night had been heaping the fields “with a silence deep and white.” He expresses more of the beauty, when he says, “Every pine and fir and hemlock wore *ermine* too dear for an earl, and the poorest twig on the elm tree was edged inch deep with [white] pearl.”

The poem continues by reminiscing about a plot in the cemetery, where a small child (their little daughter) had been laid away. The little plot in the graveyard was also covered with snow. And then, in one of the later verses, James Russell Lowell says:

Up spoke our own little Mabel, saying,
“Father, who makes it snow?”
And I told her of the all good Father
Who cares for us below.

Those who have seen the snow-covered Grand Teton Mountains in Wyoming, or the high mountains in western Canada, or the Alps in Switzerland—must marvel over and over again at their beauty. Our language does not have words to describe the splendor of these places. Each mountain peak looks like a majestic high priest. There is something about a snow-covered mountain peak that compels most of us to want to communicate with our Creator.

And so, snow is a gift from God; it is a mark of His providence; and it is a remarkable element of beauty.

4. Snow Is a Symbol of Holiness.

In the Bible, snow symbolizes purity. David says in Psalm 51:7, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” The Prophet Isaiah says, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18).

The housewife soon discovers that newly washed clothes do not appear nearly as white as she thought when hanging on an outdoor washline after a fresh snowfall. Industrial cities usually have a dirty, grimy, and dingy appearance, but on the morning after a new snowfall, a remarkable transformation can be seen. Most of the dirt has been covered with clean white snow—and the city sparkles with a new beauty. A poem by Leah Faye Horst, called *Winter Splendor*, expresses that truth:

O falling snow, so soft and light,
How clean you look, so pure and white,
Your tiny flakes fall gently down
So noiselessly, without a sound.

On field and stream and leafless trees
You’re blown about, tossed with the breeze,
On places where the ground was bare,
And dirt and filth lay everywhere.

Now clothed in breathless majesty
Instead of shame—we beauty see,
O dazzling, sparkling, wondrous snow—
Your beauty’s great! God’s wonders show!

The blackened city may be taken as a picture of the heart that is darkened by sin; the city transformed by the snow may be taken as a symbol of the heart changed by the blood of Christ and made pure. A child said to King Edward VII one time: “Please, sir, can you tell me what is whiter than snow?” Children can ask some pretty tough questions sometimes, and King Edward was unprepared for the question, and thus he soon gave up. And then the child gave him the answer of the Bible—“Every soul washed in Jesus’ blood has been made whiter than the snow.”

One of our hymns says, “Would you be whiter, much whiter than snow? There’s power in the blood, power in the blood” [and then continues] “sin-stains are lost in

its life-giving flow; there's wonderful power in the blood." The very core of the gospel message is this: The human heart is black with sin, but by appropriating the blood of Jesus, it can be transformed and credited with the righteousness of Christ—and thus seen by God as pure and as white as snow.

The poet Robert Burns in thinking about the fleeting nature of engaging in worldly pleasures, wrote these words:

But pleasures are like tulips spread;
You seize the flower, and its bloom is
shed;
Or like the snow that falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts forever.

Snow is a gift from God. It is a mark of God's providence. It is an element of beauty. It is a symbol of purity. There is *one more brief*

thought for all of us to seriously consider: A snowflake is so small and so fleecy and so light—but when the snowflakes come down thick and fast, those tiny flakes stick together, and they can snap tree limbs, stall locomotives, and cut off entire towns from the outside world. Surely there is a lesson on unity when we think about the treasures of the snow. Snowflakes are frail little things—but if enough of them stick together—they can stop traffic, break down buildings, and cause people to change their plans. The challenge for all of us is to let the purity and beauty and quietness and unity move us to live more like Jesus would have us live.

"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?" (Job 38:22). ■

—Reprinted with permission from *Brethren Revival Fellowship*, Jan./Feb. 2009.

The Jesus You Can't Ignore

by John MacArthur

Let's be brutally honest: Most of Jesus' teaching is completely out of sync with the mores that dominate our culture.

I'm talking, of course, about the Jesus we encounter in Scripture, not the always-gentle, never-stern, über-lenient coloring-book character who exists only in the popular imagination. The real Jesus was no domesticated clergyman with a starched collar and genteel manners; he was a bold, uncompromising Prophet who regularly challenged the canons of political correctness.

Consider the account of Jesus' public ministry given in the New Testament. The first word of His first sermon was "Repent!"—a theme that was no more welcome and no less strident-sounding than it is today. The first act of His public ministry touched off a small riot. He made a whip of cords and chased moneychangers and animal merchants off the Temple grounds. That initiated a three-year-long conflict with society's most distinguished religious leaders. They ultimately handed Him over

to Roman authorities for crucifixion while crowds of lay people cheered them on.

Jesus was pointedly, deliberately, and dogmatically counter-cultural in almost every way. No wonder the religious and academic aristocracy of His generation were so hostile to Him.

Would Jesus receive a warmer welcome from world religious leaders, the media elite, or the political gentry today? Anyone who has seriously considered the New Testament knows very well that He would not. Our culture is devoted to pluralism and tolerance; contemptuous of all absolute or exclusive truth-claims; convinced that self-love is the greatest love of all; satisfied that most people are fundamentally good; and desperately wanting to believe that each of us is endowed with a spark of divinity.

Against such a culture Jesus' message strikes every discordant note.

Check the biblical record. Jesus' words were full of hard demands and stern warnings. He said, "If any man will come after

me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?" (Luke 9:23-25). "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26).

At one point an unthinkable Roman atrocity took the lives of many Galilean pilgrims who had come to worship in Jerusalem. Pilate, the Roman governor, ordered his men to murder some worshipers and then mingled their blood with the sacrifices they were offering. While the city was still reeling from that awful disaster, a tower fell in the nearby district of Siloam and instantly snuffed out eighteen more lives.

Asked about these back-to-back tragedies, Jesus said, "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:2-5).

Ignoring the normal rules of taste, tact, and diplomacy, Jesus in effect declared that all His listeners were sinners in need of redemption. Then, as now, that message was virtually guaranteed to offend many—perhaps most—of Jesus' audience.

Those with no sense of personal guilt—including the vast majority of religious leaders—were of course immediately offended. They were convinced they were good enough to merit God's favor. Who was this man to summon them to repentance? They turned away in angry unbelief.

The only ones not offended were those who already sensed their guilt and were crushed under the weight of its burden. Unhindered by indignation or self-righteousness, they could hear the hope implicit in Jesus' words.

For them, the repeated phrase "unless you repent" pointed the way to redemption.

Elsewhere, Jesus made the promise of life and forgiveness explicit: "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:27, 28).

That, of course, is the glorious message of the gospel, just as potent and just as relevant today as it was then. But the promise is for those who are weary of sin; those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matthew 5:6); those who come to Christ with repentant hearts, not those who are convinced they are fundamentally good.

Proud people, including lots of religious people who call themselves Christians, don't really believe Christ's message at all. He said, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17).

So what would Jesus say to a pluralistic, tolerant, self-indulgent society like ours? I'm convinced His approach today would be the very same strategy we see in the New Testament. To smug, self-satisfied, arrogant sinners (including multitudes on church rolls) His words would sound harsh, shocking, provocative. But to "the poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3)—those who are exhausted and spent by the ravages of sin; desperate for forgiveness and without any hope of atoning for their own sin—Jesus' call to repentant faith remains the very gateway to eternal life.

This is a particularly hard message in cultures like ours that elevate self-love, self-esteem, or self-righteousness, but Jesus was absolutely clear, and these words do still speak to us: "Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:14). ■

—First appeared in *The Washington Post*, opinion section, August 14, 2009. Reprinted with permission from *The Master's Mantle*, Winter 2010



Song of the Month

Douglas A. Byler, Music Editor

“ . . . singing with understanding!”

“Come, Thou Fount”



Lyrics: When, at age fourteen, Robert Robinson became too much for his widowed mother to handle, she apprenticed him to a barber in London. The temptations present in the city were more than he could handle, and he soon found himself leading a life of drunken debauchery. One night, he and some friends attended a meeting conducted by the great evangelist George Whitefield, intending to cause trouble. Instead, the seventeen-year-old Robinson found himself more convicted than amused by the service. Although he did not make a commitment that very evening, the memory of that sermon went with him. When he was twenty years old, he committed his life to Christ.¹

Soon after becoming a Christian and joining the Methodists, Robinson felt the call to the ministry, and within a few years was the pastor of a church in Norfolk, England. He wrote the text of this hymn to complement a sermon that he preached on Pentecost Sunday.

In a sense, this hymn tells the story of Robinson’s own spiritual pilgrimage, in ways that he himself did not know at the time. The first stanza speaks of the present joy and security that we find in knowing Christ and being fixed on the “Mount of God’s unchanging love.” The poet uses this verse to request the ability to adequately express his feelings in songs of praise. In the second verse, Robinson looks back over his life and recognizes God’s handiwork. He sees this point in his

early years of ministry as somewhat of a milestone of God’s work in his life, an “Ebenezer” (literally “stone of help”). The last verse looks toward the future, recognizing that it is God’s grace that keeps us and enables us to live as God wants us to. Even at this point in his ministry, Robinson understood the power of sin, and his human tendency to wander from God. His wish was that God would chain and seal his heart in the right place so that it could never wander.

An important thing to learn from this hymn is that while God does give us the grace and strength to live in relationship with Him, He does not chain us to Him in a way that makes it safe for us to let down our guard completely. It is vitally important that we maintain a vibrant, living relationship with Him, and allow the “streams of mercy” to continually refresh us. Robinson’s fear of wandering was realized later in his life, when he again wandered from the “fold of God,” and died a very unhappy man.²

Music: This hymn tune has been attributed to two different men, John Wyeth and Asahel Nettleton, neither of which was known to compose music, although both men compiled and published hymn collections. Many hymnals list this tune as a folk hymn, although it still bears Nettleton’s name. ■

1. faithclipart.com
2. songsandhymns.org

Come, Thou Fount

Folk Hymn

JOHN WYRETH's *Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second, 1813*

ROBERT ROBINSON †, 1758

1 Come, Thou Fount of ev - ery bless - ing, Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
2 Here I raise my Eb - en - e - zer; Hith - er by Thy help I'm come;
3 O to grace how great a debt - or Dai - ly I'm con - strained to be!

Streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, Call for songs of loud - est praise.
And I hope, by Thy good plea - sure, Safe - ly to ar - rive at home.
Let that grace now, like a fet - ter, Bind my wan - d'ring heart to Thee:

Teach me some me - lo - dious son - net, Sung by flam - ing tongues a - bove;
Je - sus sought me when a stran - ger, Wan - d'ring from the fold of God;
Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love;

Praise the mount; I'm fixed up - on it, Mount of God's un - chang - ing love.
He, to res - cue me from dan - ger, In - ter - posed with pre - cious blood.
Here's my heart, O take and seal it; Seal it for Thy courts a - bove. A - men.



Counseling From the Word

Diagnosis or Ministry?

by James Rudy Gray

We live in a time when a psychological diagnosis carries a tremendous amount of credibility.

However, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* has been and continues to be revised. It seems that much of so-called secular diagnosis is more political than it is actual or practical. What is a Christian counselor or pastor to do in a climate like this? The question boils down to our purpose: diagnosis or ministry?

Books like the *DSM* can help us gain insight and understanding into the “symptoms” someone may present. The problem comes when we give this grouping of symptoms a name. Then, it seems, the person who needs help could simply be getting a label that potentially gives them an excuse for behavior they could change.

Dr. William Glasser noted that the “perception of mental illness in others is mostly a stress reaction in the mind of the beholder.” His point was that when a counselee is persuaded to accept a diagnosis, they almost automatically assume a “sick person” or “victim” mentality.

The overwhelming treatment of choice in the secular culture is drug therapy. The problem with mind-altering drugs is that they do just that—they alter our minds. The side effects of many of these drugs are either overlooked or casually discredited by both patient and doctor. Dr. Glasser has noted, “It was cocaine that was first hailed as a miracle drug and panacea for psychic

ills by Sigmund Freud at the turn of the century. That was until he personally discovered its physically destructive and addictive qualities.” He further observes that “Prozac was released onto the market with only six weeks of clinical trials.”

Is there a better way to help people? While not discrediting the need that some people have for medication, let us not disregard the damage these drugs have on people in this age where biological reductionism seems to be the norm. The idea is to diagnose and then treat with drugs. The problem is that nothing is cured. Again Glasser writes that in the many revisions that have come to the *DSM*, “the more ‘mental illnesses’ are found, the more drugs are needed to treat them.”

We do know that how we think will determine to a large degree how we feel. Feelings follow thoughts. If we want to help people with emotional problems, we need to start with helping them to discover how they think. An excellent book to read is *Telling Yourself the Truth* by William Backus and Marie Chapien. There are many other helpful resources, but this one presents the thought processes of people from a biblical Christian perspective.

How can we help people to change? We cannot change them—that is God’s work—but we can be agents of change. That is our responsibility as counselors. The Christian faith is a thinking faith. It certainly does not exclude feelings. However, our feelings follow our faith. If “ye

shall know the truth," Jesus said, "the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). You must believe that in order to experience the liberating power of the truth. Believing in and of itself does not set us free—the truth sets us free. But unless we believe the truth, we will not see the truth at work in our lives.

Backus and Chapien write in their book, "Other people, circumstances, events, and material things are not what make you happy. What you believe about these things is what makes you happy or unhappy. The amount of suffering we experience due to sustained bouts of negative thinking and battered emotions is outrageous."

Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." A person's feelings, passions, and behaviors are influenced and conditioned by the way he or she thinks. Jesus said He was the truth and that His

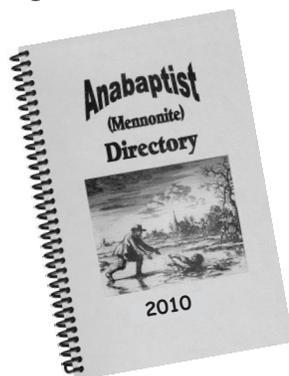
Word is truth. People easily fall prey to our culture and are conditioned and even held in bondage by bad thinking. Diagnoses are then made based on the clustering of symptoms, and a prescribed course of treatment is recommended. Everything seems to move forward, yet for most people, nothing of lasting, substantial change takes place.

There is a better way. The ministry of truth trumps the dilemma of diagnosis. God has called His people who counsel to minister to others. We may use the research of the social scientists, but we must have as our authority the Word of truth and the Author of truth. God completes people; people do not. People complement each other, but only God can make us complete—that is a lifetime journey of growth. ■

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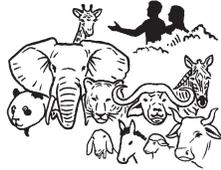


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Beginning Issues



Did Ancient Man Have an IQ Problem? Part 2

by John Mullett

In the last issue I discussed an overview of human intelligence and its course through history. I tried to help us develop a grid through which we could evaluate whether the common evolutionary view (man is continually improving) is correct or if the biblical view (natural man and creation is degenerating) is correct. Biblically we should expect that man was very intelligent from the beginning and that the intellectual abilities in “modern” man are diminishing. On the surface this may seem contrary to what we’ve observed in the development of technology over the last century, but to judge accurately we need to discern the difference between intellectual ability and knowledge. The former has more to do with the ability to process data while the latter is an accumulation of data. Most likely current generations have a greater accumulation of data or knowledge than at any other time in history and the development of technology in recent history may be the best indicator of that. However, that does not mean our intellectual abilities are improving. The advancement of technology requires periods of uninterrupted data accumulation in the right environment. The absence of advanced technology may simply be an indicator of the lack of such opportunities. There are many examples of the intelligence of early man that should cause us to realize the inaccuracy of the commonly held evolutionary view. Many

artifacts have been discovered by archeologists and labeled OOPArts (acronym for Ot Of Place Artifacts) because of their unexpected place of occurrence in the context of the evolutionary view. In this article I want to look at some ancient architectural marvels and some of the so-called OOPArts.

I’ll begin with the Egyptian Pyramids. There is no indication of any experimentation, evolutionary style improvement or breakthroughs in technology leading to better and better quality in the construction of the pyramids. In fact what has been found is exactly the opposite. The earliest pyramids were of the best quality and the later ones inferior; quality steadily declined until pyramid building ended. Even today with our advanced technology we don’t know or understand how the pyramids were built, not to mention their precise alignment with astronomical objects.

Discoveries confirmed by reliable historical documents show that the Minoans (a civilization along the Mediterranean Sea) had knowledge of electric batteries (made of copper and iron as electrodes) and sophisticated mechanical computing devices or analog computers. One such device, used for accurately calculating a ship’s position at sea, even used differential gears which we did not rediscover how to make until modern times; and such accurate navigating techniques were not rediscovered until relatively recent times.

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SWORD AND TRUMPET

The Stonehenge found on Salisbury Plain in the British Isles is made of large stones quarried over 75 miles away with some of them weighing more than 100 tons! They were transported and set accurately—even accounting for the weight of the stone and how much it would depress the ground it sat on. Their astronomical alignment is so accurate that it was not until 1962 with a modern digital computer that we understood how precise their alignment was.

From the ancient civilization of the Nazcas from South America we have evidence of solar hot air balloons being effectively used in burial services to bury their dead at sea. An OOPArt, cast in pure gold and thought to be around 1,000 years old, was found in a grave in Colombia, South Amer-

ica, and is now located at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D. C. It is often called a “stylized insect,” but clearly resembles an airplane. The only real reason for us to question its appearance is the belief that older civilizations were more primitive and could not have known of such technology.

In the next issue I will continue with more from the Nazcas as well as the Incas and Mayans. Let’s continue to learn how to think “biblically” as we interpret the world around us. ■

PLEASE NOTE: Most of the data and information for this article is taken from *The Puzzle Of Ancient Man—Advanced Technology in Past Civilizations?* by Donald E. Chittick. I encourage you to read his book for a more complete reading on this subject.

Is the Day-Age Progressive Theory of Creation Heretical?

by Arthur F. Williams

The title of this paper carries with it serious implications. The word *heretic* is a loaded expression. It is sometimes used uncharitably and even untruthfully. It is the sincere desire and prayer of the writer of this paper to be guided by a genuine love for my brethren with whom I conscientiously differ, and also by a love for the truth of God which He has committed to us all as a sacred trust.

The word *heresy* is one which needs to be used cautiously, and with the recognition of the fact that NOT ALL “HERESY” IS EQUALLY DANGEROUS AND DESTRUCTIVE. *Webster’s Dictionary* defines *heresy* as “religious opinion opposed to authorized doctrinal standards of any particular church, and tending to promote schism.”

This definition of heresy is very unsatisfactory. It states that whatever religious opinion is opposed to the authorized standards of any particular church is heresy. This is not true. So-called “heretics” have often been more true to the Word of God than those who persecuted them. No

individual, no church, no denomination has the God-given authority to set up a doctrinal standard, disagreement with which deserves the brand of “heresy.” Nothing less than the infallible Word of God, interpreted in accordance with sound principles of hermeneutics, must be accepted as the “authorized standard” by which all religious opinion must be evaluated.

It is our conviction that the Day-Age Progressive Theory of Creation is heretical when adjudged by the Divine Standard, and that it does tend to promote schism. However, its dangerous and destructive character is not apparent to many who profess great concern for fidelity to the Word of God. The reason for this very probably stems from the fact that many who hold to this view are willing to subscribe their names to a doctrinal statement which includes the verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture, its infallibility and authority, and this is regarded as ample evidence of orthodoxy.

It does not apparently occur to some that a person may subscribe to such a statement

of faith, and yet by a method of interpretation of these very Scriptures teach a doctrine which is heretical. ***In the pursuit of a knowledge of the truth of God, interpretation is as important as inspiration!***

One thing should be obvious to the logical mind: namely, contradictory interpretations of God's Word cannot both be true! Evangelical Christendom has long been divided on such doctrines as believer's baptism versus baby baptism; salvation by grace and salvation by works; eternal security and the admissibility of losing salvation; premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism; the imminent coming of Christ and the deferment of His coming.

The Holy Spirit cannot be made responsible for such contradictory interpretations of the Word of God. An appeal to scholarship does not resolve the problem, for men of recognized learning may be found on both sides of all these controversies. The same holds true with reference to the record of creation. What, then, must the bewildered Christian do in the face of such confusion? Careless indifference will yield to the stronger influence which surrounds it. Those who take the Word of God seriously will seek the illumination of the Holy Spirit and His guidance into the truth, and will stand upon what they believe to be the truth regardless of the consequences.

THE ISSUE

In the providence of God He has given us a record of the origin of the universe and of man. The language is not ambiguous; it is simple and concise. We are told that "in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is . . ." We are told that each day had its evening and its morning. We are also told what God did within each creation day.

The record of the fourth day is especially interesting, for it informs us as to God's purpose in creating the sun and the moon and the functions which they were to perform. They were to divide *the day* from *the night*; they were to be for signs and for seasons, and *for days*, and *years*. The greater light was to rule *the day*, and the lesser light was to rule *the night*, and they were to divide *the light* from *the darkness*. The

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fourth day also had its *evening* and its *morning*. ***This language does not call for interpretation; it calls for simple faith and acceptance!***

We utterly fail to see how such language can yield what those who hold to the Day-Age Progressive Theory of Creation think they find in this record—a progressive process of creation extending over millions and perhaps billions of years. ***Surely, if one of these positions is true, the other must be regarded as false. If one is biblical, the other is heretical.***

How both of these positions can be endorsed as equally true defies comprehension. Two absolutely contradictory propositions cannot both be true. The logic which would endorse both "the literal account of creation" in "six days" and a "parabolic" account of creation in four billion years could with equal justification approve both believer's baptism and infant baptism; salvation by grace and salvation by works; eternal security and the admissibility of losing salvation; premillennialism and amillennialism; the imminent coming of Christ and the deferment of His coming.

It does not require astute intelligence to recognize that if any one of these positions is true, its opposite must be false, and therefore heretical. If the language of Genesis 1:1-25 is not to be understood literally, what reason have we for supposing the language of Genesis 1:26-2:25 may not be poetic? One is left to wonder at what point in the record the parabolic, figurative, or poetic terminate and sober history begins!

HOW ARE WE TO INTERPRET THE LANGUAGE?

We confidently assert that the Day-Age Progressive Theory of Creation cannot be established on the sole basis of Scripture when interpreted by the application of sound principles of hermeneutics. There is positively no more grammatical justification for interpreting the word *day* in the creation account in terms of millions of years than for interpreting the same Hebrew word *yom* in terms of millions of years in Genesis 7:24, where we read, "And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty *days*."

Some motive other than fidelity to the

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grammatical considerations of sound exegesis must be attributed to those who insist that the Hebrew word *yom* has a meaning in the Genesis account of creation which is not given to it in any other passage in the writings of Moses. What that motive is with some may become evident later in this paper.

Nor is there any more justification for interpreting the word *day* in Genesis 2:4 parabolically than for doing the same in Numbers 7:84. In both instances we are presented first with a detailed account of events; in Genesis 1 the detailed account of creation covering a period of SIX days. In Numbers 7 we are first presented with the detailed events of TWELVE consecutive days in which the princes of Israel dedicated the tabernacle and the altar. This is concluded with the statement in verse 84, "This was the dedication of the altar, in the day when it was anointed, by the princes of Israel." From a study of verse 1 it is evident that the word *day* as used in verse 84 is comprehensive of the entire *twelve dedicatory days*, even as in Genesis 2:4 it is comprehensive of the *six creation days*.

THE GEOLOGICAL COLUMN: IS IT FACT OR FICTION?

It is our conviction that the Day-Age Progressive Theory of Creation has its origin, not in the Word of God, but in an attempt to harmonize the Word of God with evolutionary geology. It is asserted by evolutionary geologists that the age of the rocks can be easily and confidently determined by the fossils which they contain. It is on the assumption of an irreversible process of evolution that the so-called "Geological Column" has been constructed.

Evolutionary historical geologists assert that there have been five major periods of geological history which began with the ARCHEOZOIC, which they tell us was approximately one billion, five hundred million years in duration. This was followed by the PROTEROZOIC period which lasted another 500 million to one billion years. Then came the PALEOZOIC period of 300 to 400 million years. The MESOZOIC came next, a period of approximately 150 million years. And finally, the CENOZOIC period which began about 200 million years ago.

Thus the earth, according to evolutionary geologists, is at *least* four billion years old.

The Day-Age Progressive Theory of Creation is built upon this evolutionary hypothesis as if it were a substantially proven fact. One wonders how the Progressive Creationists relate the details of the Biblical record with their theory as to God's creative activity.

For instance, what would be the significance of "*evening and morning*" with a continuous process extending over millions of years? What would be the significance of "*darkness and light*" in relation to such an extended process? What would be the significance of "*day and night*" in relation to a period of time extending into millions of years?

Further, what would be the significance of the numeral "*six*" in any attempt to correlate the "days" of Genesis with the geological column of evolutionary historical geologists? What relevance could it possibly have to the geological column of the evolutionary historical geologist? According to evolutionary geologists, there appear to be **only five major divisions of geologic history**, but each of them is subdivided until we are presented with a grand total of **twenty-three distinguishable periods** of time in lengths ranging from 25,000 years in the quaternary to one billion, eight hundred thousand years in the Keewatin period. It would be interesting to see how the Day-Age theorists relate the SIX days of creation of the Biblical record with the **twenty-three divisions of evolutionary geologists**. Or should we regard the numeral "six" as superfluous and without significance?

The Bible gives us not the slightest hint that the creation "days" were of unequal length. Each day had its evening and its morning. In an attempt to relate six creation days of Genesis with the time scale of evolutionary geology we would be compelled to conclude that ***each of the six days was approximately 664 millions of years long***. This leads us to a very important question—*How long has man been upon earth?*

Let us examine various possibilities based upon the varied estimates as to the age of the earth.

HOW LONG WERE THE CREATIVE DAYS?

The answer to this question varies with scientists and theologians. Some suggest two billion years, others four billion, and some as long as seven or more billions of years. How long was each Creative day? The answer to this question may be best set forth by the following diagram:

Various estimates as to the age of the earth

Created, *six days*, Exodus 20:11

<u>Six days total:</u>	<u>Each day:</u>
1,000,000,000 yrs?	166,666,666 yrs
2,000,000,000 yrs?	232,000,000 yrs
4,000,000,000 yrs?	664,000,000 yrs

It would not be inappropriate to ask at what approximate time of the sixth day God created man. The reader of this paper is free to formulate his own judgment as to the answer to this question.

THREE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

I make no claim to being a scholar, but even an unlettered layman should be permitted to ask questions. My first two questions are scientific in character, and my third, which is by far the most important to the believer in God's Word, is theological and involves the doctrine of Divine Inspiration.

1. My first question may be called **cosmological**. Most men believe it to be axiomatic that every effect requires an adequate cause. It is doubtful if many philosophers today would agree with Leibnitz, who propounded the concept of "preestablished harmony," denying any causal relationship between one event and another. The question I would like to ask is this: What must we assume to have been the cause of such phenomena as "evening and morning," "light and darkness," "day and night"? If it was not due to the *rotation of the earth upon its axis* in relation to some God-given source of light, what was it?

We are not told what this source of light was from Day 1 through Day 3, but we are told that it was the sun from Day 4 until the present. Is there any scientific reason for believing that the rotation of the earth was different from Day 1 to Day 3 than at the present time? Or, did it not begin to rotate

at all until the fourth day? How any intelligent person can read Genesis 1:14-19, in which God makes known His purpose in the creation of the sun and of the moon and functions which they were designed to fulfill, and come up with an interpretation that the "day," distinguished from the "night," may have been a period of millions of years, is beyond our comprehension.

2. My second question is **biological** in character. I would like to know how grass could grow and fruit trees produce after their kind for even one "day" if it were at least 166,666,666 years long, without sunlight to produce chlorophyll, and without the presence of insects as agents of pollination. Was it during this extended period before the sun was created that vegetation was so prolific as to constitute the foundation for coal deposits in the earth?

3. My third question is by far the most important. It is **theological** in character, and has direct bearing upon the question of inspiration. It relates to the question as to the genealogical record from Adam to Abraham recorded in Genesis 5 and continued in Genesis 11. Is this record worth the paper on which it is written?

The answer to this question can only be determined by reference to the length of the sixth "day" and the time within that "day" in which God created Adam, and subsequently, Eve. If the entire creative period of six days was only ONE billion years, then each "day" would be approximately 166 million years. If God created Adam at the beginning of the sixth "day" according to the Day-Age Theory, then man must have been on the earth for 166 million plus years! If God did not create man until the middle of the sixth day, then he has been on earth for approximately 83 million plus years.

Of course, if the earth is about 4 billion years old, which Bernard Ramm and some scientists and theologians insist, each "day" of creation would be greater by four times 166 million.

HOW LONG HAS MAN BEEN ON EARTH?

Now the Bible purports to give us a serious genealogical record as to the time from Adam to Abraham. For instance, we are told

exactly how old each man in the genealogical record was at the time he “begat” a certain person in the genealogical sequence. The record is as follows:

1. Adam was 130 years old when he begat Seth (Genesis 5:3).
2. Seth was 105 years old when he begat Enos (Genesis 5:16).
3. Enos was 90 years old when he begat Cainan (Genesis 5:9).
4. Cainan was 70 years old when he begat Mahalaleel (Genesis 5:12).
5. Mahalaleel was 65 years old when he begat Jared (Genesis 5:15).
6. Jared was 162 years old when he begat Methuselah (Genesis 5:18).
7. Methuselah was 65 years old when he begat Enoch (Enoch had no recorded posterity).
8. Methuselah was 187 years old when he begat Lamech (Genesis 5:25).
9. Lamech was 182 years old when he begat Noah (Genesis 5:28).
10. Noah was 500 years old when he begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Genesis 5:32).
11. Shem was 100 years old when he begat Arphaxad (Genesis 11:40).
12. Arphaxad was 35 years old when he begat Salah (Genesis 11:12).
13. Salah was 30 years old when he begat Eber (Genesis 11:14).
14. Eber was 430 years old when he begat Peleg (Genesis 11:16).
15. Peleg was 30 years old when he begat Reu (Genesis 11:18).
16. Reu was 32 years old when he begat Serug (Genesis 11:20).
17. Serug was 30 years old when he begat Nahor (Genesis 11:22).
18. Nahor was 29 years old when he begat Terah (Genesis 11:24).
19. Terah was 70 years old when he begat Abram (Genesis 11:26).

This is a total of less than 3,000 years from Adam to Abraham.

The reader of this paper is invited to determine for himself whether Adam was created at the beginning of the sixth “day” (of 166,666,666 years), at the middle of the sixth “day” (or about 83 million years ago), or late in the sixth day—put in your own figure! The question must be faced—*and that seriously*—how long was the sixth “day” in

which God created Adam, at what time in the sixth “day,” and hence, how long has man been on earth? But more than this—is the genealogical record in Genesis from Adam to Abraham of any value whatever? Why did the Holy Spirit think it sufficiently important to include it in the divine record? Is this to be interpreted “parabolically” too?

There is one basic principle of Bible interpretation which governs all others. It is this: *If the Bible is truth in its entirety, it must be harmonious in all its parts.* No portion of Scripture can be legitimately interpreted which introduces conflict with other clear statements in God’s Word.

Now let us illustrate this by reference to the 20th chapter of Exodus, verses 8-11. In this passage God commanded Israel to observe the Sabbath, **a solar day which began at sunset**, a day in which no work was to be done. And in verse 11, He gave as His reason for this command, “FOR in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day.”

SCIENCE OR SCRIPTURE?

We stated earlier in this paper our conviction that the motive for interpreting the word *day* parabolically to mean millions of years was other than fidelity to the Scriptures. We now present the authority to which appeal is made for such an interpretation.

I am sure that no one who is familiar with the position of Dr. Edward John Carnell of Fuller Seminary would accuse him of prejudice in favor of a literal interpretation of the creation account. For this reason I quote from his book, *The Case for Orthodox Theology*, the following: “The Genesis account **implies** an act of immediate creation, but the same account **implies** that God made the world in six **literal** days—since orthodoxy has given up the literal day theory **out of respect for geology**, it would certainly forfeit no principle if it gave up the immediate creation theory **out of respect for paleontology**. The two seem to be quite parallel” (emphasis added). There you have it—the Bible implies a literal-day theory, but we are asked to give up this unmistakable implication **out of respect for geology!**

Here is the very crux of the issue. What is to be our attitude toward “science”? Has science established certain “facts” which necessitate our reinterpreting the Bible to bring its truths into harmony with scientific conclusions? If this principle is applicable to the record of creation it should be valid in our interpretation of all of the miracles which the Bible records. What scientific evidence do we have for Joshua’s long day? for the reversal of the sundial in the days of Hezekiah? for even the virgin birth of Jesus Christ? Shall we give up our faith in the Biblical record of these events “out of respect for” the so-called “laws of Nature”? Should we question the veracity of God’s Word for want of scientific evidence?

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Whether the Day-Age Progressive Theory of Creation is heretical or not must be judged from a number of particulars in which it is at variance with the historic understanding of the Scriptures. Lack of intellectual erudition and a woeful ignorance of scientific evidence is charged against those who do not follow Neoevangelicalism in its interpretations of Scripture, which are admittedly designed to effect a harmonization of Scripture with the “consensus of intellectual scholarship.”

Let us examine some of the areas of divergence from what have been historically understood to be the plain teaching of God’s Word. We shall quote from Bernard Ramm’s *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, since he is fairly representative of those who hold to the Day-Age Progressive Theory of Creation.

First, this theory makes God’s *creative* activity to extend over a period of millions if not billions of years. It represents God, at widely separated intervals of time, as creating a few fundamental forms of life which are regarded as ancestral types of the wide divergency in the forms of life which are observable in the world today. If we are to think of this theory in terms of the taxonomist we would classify these ancestral types as the organisms from which the classes, orders, families, genera, species, and varieties have arisen over the course of millions of years by a slow process of evolution.

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Ramm refers to this process as “horizontal radiation,” but Dr. Russell L. Mixer of Wheaton College [*he served on the Wheaton faculty for over 50 years and is the individual credited with changing the school from a biblical creationist position to theistic evolution—Editor*] is forthright and calls it “evolution.” He says, and I quote, “As a creationist I am willing to accept the origin of species from other species called microevolution.” Goldschmidt, an evolutionary geneticist, presents us with a statement which is difficult to reconcile with “microevolution.”

He says, and I quote, “It ‘is true that nobody thus far has produced a new species or genus, etc., by macromutation. It is equally true that nobody has produced even a species by the selection of micromutations. In the best known organisms, like *Drosophila*, innumerable mutants are known. If we were able to combine a thousand or more of such mutants in a single individual, this still would have no resemblance whatsoever to any type known as a species in nature.”

In the second place, the Day-Age Progressive Creationist informs us that man was a very latecomer in God’s creative process. Plants and animals were here millions if not billions of years before man’s arrival on the scene. This, Ramm tells us, explains the existence of fossils which antedate man by millions of years. He tells us that disease and death were part of the benevolent design of the Creator to prevent the overpopulation of the earth and to preserve the balance of Nature.

This leads us to a consideration of the third area of divergence from the historic Biblical understanding of Scripture. Day-Age Progressive Creationists present us with a very different view of man’s original position and of the judgment which God brought upon him because of his sin. Ramm tells us that the Garden of Eden was something like a Park in the midst of a world in which diseases and death, thorns and thistles, carnivores, deadly serpents, and intemperate weather existed for perhaps millions of years before man was ever created.

The Garden of Eden was a Paradise in which man was not exposed to these divinely

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created elements. According to this view, God did not curse the ground for man's sake, as the Bible says; in fact, what we have interpreted as a curse upon Nature was not such at all. It was part of God's original design that disease and death should serve as His instruments for preserving the balance of Nature. God's judgment upon man was not of the nature of a curse.

The judgment of God upon Adam was simply that he now was expelled from the Park in which he had enjoyed immunity from disease, death, thorns and thistles, carnivores, deadly serpents, etc., and was now exposed to these surroundings which were part of God's benevolent provision for preventing an overpopulation of the earth and for preserving the balance of Nature! When we read 1 Corinthians 15:21, "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead," we are not to conclude that man is in any way responsible for the presence of death in the world. It was here millions of years before his arrival on the scene!

Ramm tells us that this verse simply means that physical death came into *human* experience as a partial penalty for sin. Nor can we even now consider it in terms of a curse, for it is a part of the plan of a Benevolent Creator for preserving the balance of Nature! Death is not an enemy; it is a friend which appears in disguise to prevent overpopulation!

WHAT ABOUT THE MILLENNIUM?

If this be true, if God created the lion to slay the ass and eat it, if this was God's original plan for the sustenance of life and preservation of the earth from overpopulation, then it would seem probable that such a divinely ordained plan will continue in the millennium. Therefore we cannot take the language of Isaiah 11:6-9 literally.

This must receive the same parabolic treatment given to the word *day* in Genesis 1. We must also give up our naive interpretation of Romans 8:18-23 which anticipates the removal of what we thought was of the nature of a curse from the groaning creation. Apparently the lion will not literally eat straw like the ox, nor will the child be safe in putting his hand upon the cockatrice

den. They will continue to hurt and to destroy as beforetime, fulfilling their mission to preserve the balance of Nature.

NEO-EVANGELICALISM AND THE GENESIS FLOOD

The Genesis record of the Flood in the days of Noah also receives very different treatment at the hands of the Neo-evangelicals of our day. The descriptive language of Genesis 6 and 7 conveys one concept to a Biblicist and quite another to those who hold to the Day-Age Progressive Theory of Creation. In Genesis 7:19-24 we read, "And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and **all the high hills**, that were under **the whole heaven**, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And **all flesh died** that moved upon the earth, both of fowl and of cattle, and of beast, and of **every creeping thing** that creepeth upon the earth, and **every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land**, died. And **every living substance was destroyed** which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; **they were destroyed from the earth**; and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days" (emphasis added).

Again, in Genesis 9 we are presented with the record of God's covenant with Noah in which He repeatedly refers to "**all flesh**" as covered by His promise never again **to destroy the earth**.

Bernard Ramm tells us in his *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* that "the waters carried the ark **up to** the Ararat range. The Hebrew text does not mean that the ark was **deposited on** the 17,000 foot summit of the peak, but that the ark rested on the Ararat range It would have taken a special miracle to get Noah and his family down from such dizzy heights where the cold would have been extreme." In speaking of the various views as to a local flood, Ramm tells us, "A third view, and the one to which we hold, is that the **entire record** must be interpreted phenomenally."

Again he says, "The universality of the flood simply means *the universality of the experience of the man who reported it.*"

Again we read, "There is no known *geological data* to support those who defend a *universal flood.*" THIS STATEMENT HAS BEEN ABLY REFUTED BY MORRIS AND WHITCOMB in *The Genesis Flood*. I would like to ask, *What right have we to demand empirical evidence in support of anything which God's Word asserts to be true?*

If the Genesis Flood was simply a local inundation, then the covenant which God made with Noah has ceased to have any practical or prophetic significance, for there have been many local floods since Noah's day. Not only so, but the Genesis Flood cannot be regarded as a significant type of the universal judgment awaiting this world, as the Holy Spirit led Peter to declare. Since the judgment of God upon the whole human family in the days of Noah is interpreted as a local inundation and not anthropologically universal, we might logically conclude that God's judgment prophesied by Peter (2 Peter 3:4-7) will not be universal either!

CONCLUSION

There will doubtless be those who will not agree with the conclusions set forth in this paper, that the teaching of the Day-Age Progressive Theory of Creation is heretical. We readily concede that a person may be a Christian who holds this view, but we are

concerned for the young people who come under the influence of the mental attitude toward Scripture which is reflected in this theory.

It is an attitude toward "science" which takes precedence over clear statements of God's Word. Such an attitude cannot fail to have its effect upon young impressionable minds, and to promote disharmony where a spirit of unity should prevail. Not only so, but it tends to foster a rationalistic attitude toward any portion of Scripture for which scientific evidence is lacking. This we regard as a very serious trend which is increasingly prevalent in our day.

It is our earnest prayer that all who claim to believe the Bible to be the very Word of God may be willing to accept the language of the Scripture as meaningful in the ordinary sense in which words are employed in Scripture, giving proper attention to context, and not attempt to read into it what evolutionary and rationalistic scholars would impose upon the text in our attempt to make the Bible acceptable to intellectuals.

There are many questions for which we do not at present have the answers, but we are content to wait the hour of translation, when the dark things shall be made plain. Let us not bow at the shrine of an intellectualism which either rejects or reinterprets any portion of Scripture for which science fails to lend its support. ■

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