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BACKGROUNDS

Most of us are vitally interested in answers to the big questions of life. Where did we come from? Why are we here? What makes us tick, or what is the nature of man? How did we get into the mess we are in? What is our future? Or what is the future of the world? We consider any literature that deals with those questions relevant and timely.

Preeminent among all literature about the big questions of life is the book of Genesis. Its name comes from a Greek word, *geneseos*, which was the title given it in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament). That title was derived from the heading of the various sections of the book, each of which begins with “the book of the *geneseos*” (meaning *generation, origin, source*; see 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2). In these sections Genesis depicts the beginning of the world by creation; the beginning of mankind and human languages; the beginning of sin in the race; the beginning of salvation; the beginning of God’s chosen people, Israel; the beginning of the Arabs (descended from Ishmael, 25:12) and the other nations of the earth; the beginning of the Arab-Israelite conflict; and the beginning of the covenant with Abraham and his descendants. The latter in its fuller statement and with its supplements spells out conditions at the end time—Jews in control of the Promised Land and their Messiah

ruling on the throne of David in Jerusalem.

As a book of beginnings, Genesis is of course a seed plot and springboard for the concepts and history of the rest of the Old Testament. But it is almost nearer in many ways to the New Testament than the rest of the Old Testament. As Derek Kidner has observed, the institution of marriage, the fall of man, judgment by flood, Esau's despising his birthright, and many of its other themes are hardly dealt with again until the New Testament. Moreover, whereas near the beginning of Genesis Satan is victorious and man is expelled from Eden, in a beautiful symmetry the New Testament ends with the serpent coming to his downfall and the redeemed walking again in Paradise.¹

Probably no other part of Scripture have so many battles been fought as over the book of Genesis. Theologians, scientists, historians, and students of literature have subjected it to minute examination and criticism. But with all their attention, they have been able neither to exhaust its contents nor destroy its message. The measure of its greatness is seen in its continuing ability to command the attention of scholars and laymen alike throughout the world.

AUTHORSHIP

One of the battles fought over Genesis has concerned its authorship. But of course the authorship of Genesis is closely tied to that of the rest of the Pentateuch (first five books of the Old Testament). Eighteenth-century rationalism launched attacks against the Pentateuch along with the rest of the Bible. Denying any supernatural origin of Scripture, it completely humanized the Bible and viewed it as a record of human experience with God rather than a revelation of God to humanity. And as the teachings of evolution made an increasing impact during the nineteenth century, the concept of slow development was applied to Scrip-

ture. Thus it was taught that the Pentateuch developed gradually: Documents and sources were collected and edited until it finally came to its present form during the fifth century BC. Mosaic authorship was denied.

Theories of literary development not employed in dealing with other literature were forced on the Scripture in a day when Near Eastern studies had not yet provided a basis for evaluating theories of biblical interpretation. In fact, construction of liberal theories did not even make commonsense allowance for variations in style and vocabulary with differences in subject matter and mood of the author, and highly subjective conclusions were reached.

Discussion of that highly technical subject is beyond the scope of this study. It is enough for present purposes to show that there is abundant support for the traditional view of Mosaic authorship. The Pentateuch itself claims that important parts were written by Moses (e.g., Ex. 24:4, 7; Deut. 31:9, 24–26). Internal evidence shows that the Pentateuch was written by an eyewitness. Those parts that involve Egypt contain many references that show the author's familiarity with Egypt and have information virtually impossible to obtain in Canaan several centuries after Moses's day, when liberals hold it was written. Egyptian names, Egyptian words borrowed by the writer, Egyptian customs and geography all indicate the author knew Egypt well.

Pentateuchal claims for Mosaic authorship are supported in the rest of the Old Testament, intertestamental literature, and the statements of Christ. As early as Joshua's day the Law of Moses was in written form (Josh. 1:7–8; 8:32, 34; 22:5). And the rest of the Old Testament follows Joshua's example (e.g., 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Chron. 23:18; 34:14; Ezra 3:2; 6:18; Neh. 8:1–8; Dan. 9:11).

The testimony continues during the intertestamental period, notably in Ecclesiasticus 45:6 (written about 180 BC) and in Philo

(*Life of Moses* 3:39), dating about the time of Christ's birth. Those are supported by the eminent Josephus (*Antiquities* IV.8.48), who wrote about AD 90. All three declare Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

Christ on numerous occasions spoke of the Law of Moses, sometimes of the "book of Moses" (Mark 12:26), and twice of "Moses and the prophets" (Luke 16:29, 31) or Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms (Luke 24:44), obviously making Moses author of the first part of the Old Testament on a par with the other major sections. The early church, the church of later centuries, and the Jews almost unanimously accepted that view until the rise of destructive higher criticism at the end of the nineteenth century. The position is too strongly supported to be dismissed easily by a group of rationalists.

Of course the claim that Moses wrote the Pentateuch in general or Genesis in particular does not assume that Moses wrote without the use of sources. Inspiration argues only for accuracy of the written record; it does not stipulate that the writer had a mind that functioned as a blank tablet to be written on by the Holy Spirit. Abraham came from a very sophisticated background in which all sorts of records were meticulously kept. Joseph rose to a place of leadership in a very literate society; if he himself did not write, he had plenty of scribes who did. Both of these men could have contributed to the written sources available to Moses; and of course many could have contributed oral sources.

Interesting confirmation of the traditional view of single authorship of Genesis has been provided by a five-year linguistic analysis of the book, just completed in Israel. The study was conducted at Technion, Israel's institute of technology in Haifa, under the direction of Professor Yehuda Radday. It reached the conclusion that there was an 82 percent probability that Genesis was written by one author.²

DATE OF COMPOSITION

When Moses wrote Genesis will never be known, but the latest possible date is the time of his death, just before the Hebrews crossed the Jordan and attacked Jericho. The time of that event depends on the date one assigns to the Exodus. I subscribe to the early date of the Exodus (about 1440) and thus conclude that Genesis must have been written by about 1400 BC, for Moses died at the end of the subsequent forty years of wilderness wandering.

CONTENTS AND OUTLINE

The book of Genesis divides rather easily into two parts: the early history of mankind (chaps. 1–11), and the patriarchs (chaps. 12–50). The first part narrates the creation of the universe and mankind and quickly moves on through the story of the entrance of sin into the world, the extension of godless civilization, judgment on humanity by means of the flood, and further judgment by means of proliferation of languages and scattering across the earth. Then in part two God makes a fresh beginning by calling out a new people as a witness to His name in the earth. That people, the Hebrews, are led by patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) during a 215-year period in Canaan; at the end of the book they go down into Egypt to escape a famine and are cared for there through the instrumentality of Joseph.

OUTLINE

PART 1: THE EARLY HISTORY OF MANKIND (1:1–11:32)

The Creation (1:1–2:3)

The Fall of Man and the Extension of Civilization (2:4–5:32)

The Flood (6:1–9:29)

Historical Developments After the Flood (10:1–11:32)

PART 2: THE PATRIARCHS (12:1–50:26)

Abraham (12:1–25:18)

Isaac (25:19–26:35)

Jacob (27:1–36:43)

Joseph (37:1–50:26)

THE CREATION

1:1–2:3

In simple, concise, nontechnical language Moses answers one of the big questions of life: “Where did the earth come from?” Says Moses, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (KJV). Then with broad strokes of the pen he proceeds to sketch out six creative days that culminate with a description of the origin of the first human couple, thus answering another of the big questions of life: “Where did humanity come from?” These verses are truly a masterpiece, suitable for the plain people of his day and all succeeding ages. Yet they do not close the door on scientific and philosophical investigation, for they state only *that* God created, and do not describe how. Nor does Moses say when creation took place. “In the beginning,” at the outset of this phase of His creative work, God called into being the heaven and earth; at the end of the process He created human beings. If God left open the question of the date of origin, we may also.

THE PROLOGUE, 1:1–2

“In the beginning God.” God is the subject of the first sentence of the book, and He dominates the entire chapter. Called by His name *Elohim* thirty-five times in the creation narrative, He

demonstrates infinite power and transcends all material existence, as indeed the majestic name *Elohim* signifies. “Beginning” refers to the commencement of time in our universe and demonstrates that the matter of the universe had a definite origin; it is not eternal and did not start itself. “Created” translates the Hebrew *bārā’*, which Hebrew scholars commonly have understood to signify to bring into being *ex nihilo*, from nothing, without the use of preexisting material. But even some evangelical Old Testament scholars do not now believe that the case for such a position is impregnable. If it is not, support for *ex nihilo* creation may be found in the New Testament, as Hebrews 11:3 and Romans 4:17 demonstrate. “Heaven and earth” seems to mean the whole universe, not only planet Earth and its enveloping atmosphere.

Some commentators prefer to treat Genesis 1:1 as a dependent clause, and they produce translations such as “When God began to create the heavens and earth, the earth was without form and void.” Such a translation implies that the condition of verse 2 already existed when God began to create. E. J. Young argues cogently against such a view and for the position that 1:1 is an independent clause, meant to be a “simple declaration of the fact of absolute creation.”¹

In the past many have conjectured that a great catastrophe occurred between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. They could not conceive of God’s creating a chaos, and therefore supposed that something happened to spoil the original, beautiful, and perfect creation and to necessitate God’s re-creation in six creative days. Some would place here the fall of Satan and the entrance of sin into the universe to deface what God had made. In setting forth that concept, they were able to introduce a vast time span between original creation and re-creation and thus to find a way to bring about some meeting of minds between the claims of scientists about the age

of the universe and the beliefs of many Bible students.

In dealing with such a view, it should be noted first that verse 2 only describes the world as “desolate and uninhabitable,” at a stage not yet ready for man. It does not portray chaos as such. Presumably God did not determine to bring the creation to a completed state all at once, though He could have done so. Second, there is no direct or specific statement anywhere in Scripture of divine judgment between those verses. Third, there is no justification for translating, “and the earth *became* desolate.” The verb normally is rendered “was” throughout the Old Testament; Harold G. Stigers argues that the Hebrew construction does not warrant the translation “became” here.²

Darkness enveloped the primeval ocean, but the Spirit of God began to move “upon the face of the waters.” God’s creative and sustaining energy in the form of the Holy Spirit began to work on the creation in process. Thus the entire Trinity participated in the creation. It would appear that the Father was the designer and issued the decree to create; the Son effected the design (John 1:3; Col. 1:16); and the Spirit was involved in some capacity. Matter apart from God is inert and has no ability to produce a world of order and beauty, but the omnipotent and intelligent Holy Spirit imparts capacity to matter and produces an ordered world.

THE CREATIVE PROCESS, 1:3–2:3

Having accounted for the origin of the universe, Moses now concentrates on a geocentric or earth-centered view of creation. What he comments on primarily concerns the development of the earth and making it a proper habitation for humanity. Nothing is said about numerous other creative activities of God (e.g., angels, other solar systems). This process is described as taking place on six creative days.

Length of Creative Days

But immediately a question arises concerning the length of the creative days. Various answers have been given.

1. Literalists down through the millennia have assumed that they were approximately twenty-four hours in length and have supported their conclusions with an appeal to an apparent twenty-four hour cycle in the passage (day and night, evening and morning). Such references as Exodus 20:11 also have been used to uphold that position. Such views are maintained even though the sun is not mentioned until the fourth day.

2. Especially as a result of geological studies and acceptance of a belief in the great age of the earth, many have espoused a day-age theory: that the days were extended periods of time. It is argued that even in the Genesis narrative “day” may be variously construed: (a) daylight as opposed to night (1:5, 14–16), (b) a solar day of twenty-four hours (1:14), (c) or the entire six-day creative period (2:4).

A position similar to the day-age concept is that held by Davis A. Young. He argues that the Sabbath of creation week has not yet ended and therefore is to be viewed as a *figurative* day, a long indeterminate period. He concludes that the seventh day is the key to understanding creation week and that all the other six days also are figurative days. By this he does not mean that the creation narrative is unhistorical but that the days are not literal, consecutive twenty-four hour segments of time.³ Other scholars have come to a similar conclusion.

3. Literal days with gaps. This theory preserves the creation days as twenty-four hour periods but holds that the days need not be stacked one against the other. Between the creative intervention of God extended periods of time may have elapsed.

4. The Revelatory Day theory, or Days of Dramatic Vision,

holds that God over a period of six days revealed His creative work in a series of visions; the account is not a record of what He *performed* in six days. Few have espoused this position. What appears in Genesis 1 is not in the language of vision but historical narration.

Historicity of the Creation Account

Evolutionary and humanistic influences have encouraged a tendency to view the early chapters of Genesis as allegorical and poetic. That approach especially has been taken toward chapter 1. But it should be noted that the poetic parallelism of Hebrew poetry is missing from chapter 1 (except for vv. 26–27), and the rest of the early part of Genesis for that matter. And Genesis 2:4a connects the first verses of the book with the later genealogical orientation and presupposes the contents of chapter 1. As the reader proceeds through the early chapters of Genesis, he does not sense a change of pace or literary structure that would give any hint that he was passing from allegory or poetry or myth to history. Moreover, the New Testament treats the creation as a historical process. Paul taught that God created the world (Acts 17:24) and that man was made in the image of God (1 Cor. 11:7); Hebrews attributed creation to the “word of God” (Heb. 11:3).

The Creation Week

The creation narrative is brief and concise. No doubt much more happened on each creative day than is reported in Scripture; evidently in each case only the major categories of activity are reported. Thus, the fact that plant life appeared especially on the third day is no clear-cut evidence that some new forms of plant life did not appear on the fourth or a later day, or that some primitive forms of life such as algae did not appear on the second day. That is an important point to keep in mind when seeking to

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equate the creative days of Genesis with geologic ages or geologic information. There is remarkable general agreement between the two as currently understood. That agreement may increase with new discoveries and modifications of geologic scholarship. At least there is no scientific evidence that proves the general order of creative events in Genesis to be in error.

The First Day, 1:3-5

God *spoke* light into existence. What was that creative word? It involved the action of His will's determining what was to happen and the operation of omniscient intelligence's shaping objects in the most magnificent possible way, down to the last atom. On each of the six days God's creative word generated (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26). The writer to the Hebrews referred to that creative utterance when he said: "The worlds were framed by the word of God" (11:3). And the psalmist in alluding to the creation said, "He spoke and it was done" (Ps. 33:9).

The nature of that light is debated. Some call it a sort of cosmic light because the sun, moon, and stars are said to have been created on the fourth day. But others observe that the sun could have been in existence at that time but did not specifically begin to serve its visible functions in relation to the earth until the fourth day. Whatever the light, apparently the earth at that time first received light in order to be a fit place for the inhabitants for which it was intended.

The Second Day, 1:6-8

As God continued to give form to the world, He next brought into being a "firmament," something that according to the Hebrew was spread out, put firmly in place, that is, the "vault of heaven." That firmament He called *heaven*, not the abode of

God, but the sky, as verses 9 and 20 indicate. Reference is to the gaseous atmosphere.

The formation of the atmosphere was achieved by dividing the waters under the atmosphere from those above it. Originally the earth may have been surrounded by a “cloud-fog” condition or a “watery fluid,” which would have made life as we know it virtually impossible. Now the waters under the atmosphere were separated more distinctly from those above it, and the ocean thus was formed.

What were the waters above the atmosphere? Apparently they were ordinary rain clouds. Some have been attracted to the theory that they refer to a water vapor canopy that enveloped the earth; that was brought into being during the creative process and dissipated at the time of the Noachic flood. Davis A. Young shows that Scripture itself militates against such a view. For instance, in Psalm 148 when the psalmist calls on creation to praise the Creator God, it commands the “waters that be above” the heavens to praise God (v. 4). Those waters are still above the heavens, and verse 6 indicates they are to stay there “for ever and ever” in response to God’s unalterable decree.⁴

The Third Day, 1:9–13

The process of differentiation continued, with the water’s being separated from earth so that instead of there being a vast globe-encircling ocean, water was localized in oceans and lakes and rivers, and dry land appeared (probably by means of considerable seismic and volcanic activity). That dry land eventually would then be suitable for plant life, animal life, and human life.

As the dry land appeared, God brought into being a profusion of flora that could reproduce and crossbreed and develop new species—but within limits: “after his kind” (see subsequent dis-

cussion on evolution). It should be noted that whenever biological references appear subsequently, those limits are imposed. Any development or mutation that God permits cannot go beyond certain bounds. As the earth began to take on a more distinctive character and was filled with life and beauty, God was pleased with what was produced.

The fact that animal fossils frequently appear older than plant fossils or are contemporary with them does not particularly worry geologist Davis A. Young. As he points out, plant fossils are harder to preserve and harder to find than animal fossils, land plant fossils cannot be expected to appear in marine rocks (and a great many of the fossil-bearing rocks we possess are of marine character), and the evidence at present is very incomplete.⁵ Material that has come to light does not prove the Genesis account to be wrong in placing the origin of most plants on the third creative day and most animal life on the fifth day.

The Fourth Day, 1:14–19

The Hebrew text of these verses may not indicate that the sun, moon, and stars came into existence at this time; the word for “create” (*bārā*) used earlier in the chapter does not occur in verse 16. Possibly God created all the heavenly bodies in the earlier stages of creation (v. 1), and they developed toward their present form as the earth did. Now those light bearers are assigned their relationship to the earth as twin regulators to establish days, seasons, and years. Evidently the present arrangement of the universe operating according to natural law came into being. Alternatively, it is argued that the word used for “made” (*āsā*) in verse 16 frequently is a synonym of *bārā* and that God did indeed create those heavenly bodies at that point.

The Fifth Day, 1:20–23

As the creative process continued, the waters of the earth were now ready for marine life and the land and atmosphere prepared for fowl. Food and habitation were available to all. Seaweeds, grasses, trees, and other growing things provided for new forms of life. “Let the waters teem” indicates the rapid filling of the waters with marine life, but it may not necessarily mean that there were no lower forms of marine life (e.g., corals, sponges) before that time. If there were, there is no conflict between Scripture and science, which reports existence of fossils of elementary forms of marine life supposedly dating earlier than those of some plants. “Flying things” seems to include insects as well as birds.

“And God created great sea monsters.” The use of *bārā* (create) shows that the origin of those creatures is a result of direct divine action and not merely of some indirect control of a process of natural development. And the appearance of the monsters at this juncture shows that they came from God’s good hand and manifest the might of His power. They are not to be viewed as rivals of Deity as was true of the sea monsters described in pagan mythology. As the oceans and the earth began to fill up with wildlife God was pleased with the result (v. 21) as He was on the third day (v. 12). And as on day three, God specifically restricted reproduction (“after his kind”). Whatever crossbreeding or development might occur, divine limits were imposed and presumably a full-scale evolutionary process without divine control ruled out.

The Sixth Day, 1:24–31

On the sixth day land animals and man crowned God’s creative work. Having populated the sea and the sky and having blanketed the earth with herbage, He next turned to filling the earth itself with living creatures. In verse 24 three classifications of terrestrial

life are listed: cattle (animals capable of domestication), creeping things (reptiles or a variety of short-legged creatures that may appear to crawl), and beasts of the earth (truly wild animals that usually cannot be domesticated). All three of these categories, like other creatures previously created, reproduce only after their kind.

As the crowning event of creation week God created man. It is evident that man is to be so considered because he was given dominion over all that God had previously created, and man was created in the image of God Himself. It is interesting to note that when God spoke of creating man, He used three first person plural pronouns: "Let us make . . . in *our* image, after *our* likeness . . ." Those indicate plurality in the Godhead, perhaps a full Trinitarian relationship. And whereas God, unspecified as to person, undertook to create other details of the universe, here the Godhead together cooperated in the creation of man, giving distinction to the work in which God was now engaging.

To leave no doubt that man was a special creation, verse 27 three times states that God created man and uses the verb *bārā'*, indicating a special creation. It is almost as if He anticipated a later denial of that position by modern naturalists. He made both male and female (complementary personalities) on the sixth day, as is clear from verse 27; but the details of the creation of woman appear in chapter 2.

As a special creation of God, human beings were produced in His image and likeness. Apparently that likeness to God involved both a natural and a moral likeness. By nature, man was like God in that he was a personal being possessing self-consciousness, self-determination, and knowledge or intellect. Man's moral likeness consisted of his sinlessness. On the basis of both the moral and natural likeness, man could have fellowship with God. When man sinned, he lost the moral likeness, and fellowship with God

was severed. But man still possesses a natural likeness to God, and therefore deserves the respect of other human beings (James 3:9). Would it make a difference in human relations if we recognized that all with whom we come in contact are human beings truly created in the image of God?

As a consequence of the divine image, man was to exercise dominion over all creatures, and fallen man still largely exercises it (James 3:7). His commission to subdue the earth called forth all his powers of wisdom and energy. Natural obstacles had to be overcome. Mineral wealth had to be discovered and processed. Unfortunately, in our sinful state we too often fall into the evil of exploiting the earth, its resources, and its creatures, rather than assuming the responsibilities of stewardship.

Man also was to multiply and “fill” the earth, not “replenish” it as in the King James Version. There is no basis here for the theory that the earth once had been populated and now needed to be repopulated after some catastrophe (e.g., between vv. 1 and 2). Filling the earth would require adaptation to various climates and geographical conditions.

Finally, God gave “every green plant for food” to man and to the other living beings He had created. It is questionable that this means no animals were carnivorous or that man was to be vegetarian. And it probably does not mean that all plants were edible. The primary point is that God had made provision for all living creatures.

At the end of the creative process God surveyed what He had made and pronounced it “very good.” Coming from the hand of God, it could not be otherwise.

The Seventh Day, 2:1-3

Having completed the work of creation, God “rested” or “ceased from work.” Then He determined to set aside that sev-

enth day as a special day for Himself. His resting became the basis for the commandment to man to observe the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8–11). “The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27–28). God does not need it, for “the Creator of the ends of the earth faints not, neither is weary” (Isa. 40:28). Thus the creation week, whatever its length, became a prototype of a division of time not suggested by nature; rather it is of divine appointment. By contrast, the day, month, and year result from the dictates of nature.

Creation or Evolution

In the foregoing discussion of the creative process, the position has been taken that the Genesis account is factual and historical. The events did occur in the sequence indicated and God was responsible for bringing into being the earth and all that is on it.

That position is of course in direct conflict with the commonly accepted monophyletic evolutionary hypothesis. According to that view, beginning with self-reproducing chemicals and one-celled forms, there was a slow development over a very long period of time through plant and animal stages until man finally appeared on the scene. The process is thought to work by mutation and natural selection. That is to say, living organisms change (mutate) and may pass on those mutations to forms they generate. Those forms best able to adjust to their environment (the “fittest”) survive and reproduce; others simply die out. Nature itself determines which are the most fit (natural selection). It is popular to deny that there has been any divine influence on those processes.

At first glance, contemporary scientific theory and the Bible seem to be at direct opposites. And they are as far as basic philosophy is concerned, because the one postulates a purely natural process and the other a development with God’s taking the ini-

tiative and being in supervisory control. But the result of the two positions or the outworking of the process may not be at such great odds.

In trying to effect a reconciliation between the two positions, it is well to observe that Genesis first of all does not say *how* God created but only *that* He did. Nor does it say how long He took to get the job done. As cases in point, the biblical account declares that God separated earth and water and formed the oceans of the world. He could have just spoken and achieved such a result, it is said, or He could have moved through an extended geological process during which mountains were elevated and basins depressed and continents brought into being. He brought into existence plants and animals. He could have created large numbers of species or just a limited number of primordial forms from which the others developed.

An important means of coming to terms with contemporary scholarship concerns itself with the “kinds” of Genesis 1. All of nature is said to reproduce “after its kind” (Hebrew, *min*), not to cross certain divinely fixed boundaries. No one knows exactly what *min* should be equated with in our biological classification—genera? families? or something else? In other words, there seems to be some room here for mutation (or change) and even natural (or supernatural) selection.

For instance, we may observe that there are many varieties of cats or dogs or cows, and those may have descended from one parent “kind” that existed in Eden or on the ark of Noah. Thus, there may have been mutation from the parent dog, and selection to produce the many varieties now known; but dogs always produce dogs—“after their kind.” Likewise, the Bible refers to only one human pair, but there are many races and subraces in the world today. Obviously there had to be some changes to produce those

anthropological differences, but man cannot crossbreed or hybridize with any animals and can produce only man—"after his kind."

All this adds up to saying that Bible believers may accept a certain amount of variation in nature and, in that way, achieve some degree of a meeting of minds with modern science. But the extent of that change or diversification appears to have fixed limits (within "kinds"), according to Scripture and science. The "missing links" are numerous indeed.

Another way of achieving a meeting of minds with contemporary scholarship is through a form of polyphyletic evolution. The common evolutionary hypothesis follows monophyletic evolution, development from one-celled forms up through plant and animal forms to man. But there is a minority view called polyphyletic evolution. That position holds that there were several phyla, orders, or families, proceeding side by side in independent development. If a Bible student were to accept the view, for instance, that God created spermatophyte groups (flowering plants) or mollusk categories (shellfish and octopuses), from which all the individual varieties in those classifications developed; and if a student of natural science were to accept the view that such groups did exist and develop independently side by side, there would be little basic conflict in the process of development taught by each. But of course the moving power in the one case would be supernatural and in the other natural.

It should be stressed, however, that at present polyphyletic evolution is held by few. The common position is monophyletic evolution. In dealing with that form of evolution, several observations are in order.

1. Such evidence as natural scientists have marshaled for evolution has been for micromutation rather than macromutation, for minor departures from parent types rather than major ones

that might cross family or genus lines. There is no evidence for the crossing over from plant to animal life or for moving from one type to another except in a microevolutionary sense. To put the matter in another way, there is lack of sufficient intermediate forms (“missing links”), and scientists are unable to prove genetic continuity among various organisms living and extinct. Some might consider hybrids to be an exception, but they occur only between similar members of the same group.

2. Whereas the evolutionary hypothesis builds on movement from simple to complex in an upward curve, all mutations are detrimental except within a narrow range of environmental conditions.

3. The hypothesis does not satisfactorily explain the origin of simple life in the universe but usually assumes spontaneous generation of life from inorganic chemicals.

4. So-called vestigial remains, organs supposedly left over from a previous stage of evolutionary development (e.g., appendix or tonsils in man) often prove their usefulness and therefore are no firm evidence for macroevolution.

5. In regard to man, the evolutionary hypothesis fails to account satisfactorily for the origin of his spiritual nature (Gen. 2:7), and the argument of the survival of the fittest does not account for the artistic talents of man. Moreover, much of the anthropological evidence is very partial—partial skeletons and the discovery of skeletons without tools or primitive tools without skeletons. Skeletal reconstruction often is conjectural and sometimes open to considerable question.

Genesis and the Babylonian Creation Myth

Higher critics commonly have taught that the Genesis account of creation is a purified version of the Babylonian account, known

as *Enuma Elish*, a cuneiform text of about one thousand lines on seven clay tablets. Although there are some similarities, the differences are vastly greater; the following should be especially noted.

1. *Enuma Elish* is not primarily a creation account. Its purpose is political: to advance the cause of Babylon in her bid for supremacy by portraying the preeminent place of her patron deity Marduk among the gods. It is essentially a hymn to Marduk.

2. *Enuma Elish* is grossly polytheistic; various gods share in the origin of things; Marduk himself is brought into existence by another god. Genesis posits an exalted monotheism with God as the creator of all things.

3. The gross mythology and inferior morals of *Enuma Elish* have no parallel in Genesis.

4. There is little parallel between the seven tablets and the seven creative days of Genesis. For instance, tablets 2 and 3 do not deal with any phase of creation.

5. In starting its account of creation with the existence of matter, *Enuma Elish* implies eternity of matter; Scripture teaches that God is a spirit who is the Author of all matter-energy.

Anyone who makes even a cursory comparison of the two accounts will be tremendously impressed with the wide differences between them. It seems best to hold that any similarities arise from the fact that both accounts came from the same Semitic context and may be due to the fact that the human race once occupied a common home.⁶