

CREATION Faith and Science

It is a mistake to seek support for belief in Creation from science. Creationists often wish to have science on their side. So holding to the 'absolute truth' of the biblical account, and faced with the geological evidence, they seem bound to give an alternative explanation of several things, for example, the existence of fossils. One might hear, as I heard recently, 'Fossils did not form over time.' I mention this simply to show that it is misguided to seek support for faith in science. The case just mentioned is an example of the distortion of science in the attempt to support a faith which is thought to require support from science. This is an example of the unsatisfactory method of interpretation which we spoke of at the outset. Other examples are easily found.

The need to appeal to science is a direct deduction from the literalistic approach to the Creation narrative of *Genesis*. Creationists must have science on their side since their claim is about the age of the earth, and the simultaneous emergence of the universe. So there must be scientific evidence for the fundamentalist claims. The literalist says. 'I require that science is on my side. But scientists say x when I say y. And y contradicts x. So I say that y can be shown to be scientifically correct. So I provide my own scientific account. The reason is that it has to be scientifically correct for my literalistic interpretation of *Genesis* to be correct. So I find an alternative explanation of the age of the earth, involving me in statements about the geology of the fossils etc.'

Did God create dogs? Or only wolves? This is a concrete way of focussing on the question, 'How from the initial emergence of the world did we arrive at the present state of the universe?' It is an interesting question if we wish to follow up the problem of how creatures developed within the context of the world. So, interesting though it is, it is a subsidiary, or even a non-essential problem as far as the Christian doctrine of Creation is concerned. Given that there were wolves, the question of how dogs developed, or were developed from them is not a religious but obviously a scientific problem. So we look to the scientist for answers. That is, if we are interested enough to inquire.

The fundamentalist chooses to be in contention with the various sciences. These are not interested in his assertion about a Creator. That is not their concern. The fundamentalist cannot claim that even if his belief that the earth is recent were correct that would show that the universe was created. It would only show that some secular, non-theistic interpretations of the world needed correction. Scientists accept, even if they do not initially welcome, alternative interpretations. Falsification of hypotheses is an established principle in science. If for good reasons the alternative is rejected, that explanation is set aside. But the criteria for such rejection and acceptance are very rigorous indeed.

An interesting point is that the creationist only gets concerned about science when discerning that there is a problem in relation to his own beliefs. Then there must be resistance.

What is quite certain is that a contemporary world-view is very different from the world view the ancient Hebrews and Christians took for granted. The acceptance of the literalness of the *Genesis* story entails adopting the three-storied world-view reflected therein. That is an impossibility, even for the creationist.

But there is no call for any such resistance. Belief in God as Creator does not entail opposition to the conclusions and methods of science. The realm of belief and theology is not threatened by science. The reason is that the pronouncements of Christian doctrine are of a different order than those of science. There can be no opposition because there is no meeting point.

This is an excerpt from the article, *The Christian Doctrine of Creation*