

Are Genesis 1-2 literally contradictory, therefore allegorical?

With special reference to Forster & Marston's *Reason, Science & Faith*
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The problem confronting evangelicals, who believe in evolution, is that Genesis says the opposite of what they would like it to say. If only Genesis 1:1 said *In the beginning God created a bit of matter and allowed it to evolve*, how much simpler matters would be! But Genesis says that God made the world deliberately, with His bare hands (so to speak, cf. Gen.2:7) and miraculously in six 24-hour days. So how can evangelical evolutionistsⁱ make it say something else?

Roger Forster and Paul Marston, in their book, *Reason, Science and Faith* argue that Genesis 1 and 2, if interpreted literally and historically, contradict each other. Therefore, they conclude that these chapters cannot be literally true: *It is silly....to take them literally.*ⁱⁱ Genesis 1, they say, is poetic in character, and, as for Genesis 2, it would be absurd to believe in a literal *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, the literal creation of Eve from Adam's rib, a literal snake, &c!

I have examined the question of the (alleged) poetic character versus the historicity of Genesis 1 in my article, *Genesis 1 is History* on this website. Here I examine the charge that Genesis 1-3 are self-contradictory, if interpreted literally, therefore allegorical, not historical.

TWO RIVAL CREATION-ACCOUNTS?

JEPD Theory

The idea that Genesis 1-3 are self-contradictory comes from the theory that much of the Old Testament is compiled from various sources.ⁱⁱⁱ The Pentateuch (i.e. Genesis to Deuteronomy) was drawn from a Jahwist 'history'^{iv} (J, in which God is 'Yahweh') dated in the 10th century BC, and Elohist 'history' (E, in which He is 'Elohim' – similar date to J), a 'priestly' document (P), which originated *after* the Exile, and a Deuteronomistic source (D), which does not concern us here. An editor, it is said, made a patch-work history from these sources to form our book of Genesis. Genesis 1:1-2:4a was drawn from P, whereas Gen.2:4b-24 came from J-E: hence the contradictions.

Contradictory Accounts of Creation

The following comparison is taken from Prof. S. H. Hook^v to show how contradictory Genesis 1 and 2 are:

<i>Gen.1:1-2:4a (P)</i>	<i>Gen.2:4b-25 (JE)</i>
Earth originally a watery chaos	Earth originally waterless
Creation over six days	No note of time
1 Light first, 1:3	1 Man first, 2:7
2 Sky, atmosphere 1:6	2 The garden, 2:8
3 Land and sea 1:9	3 Trees, 2:9
4 Plant life, 1:11	4 Animals/birds, 2:19
5 Sun, moon, stars 2:20	5 Eve created 2:22
6 Animals, finally man, 1:20	

That looks pretty conclusive. But there is another side to the story.

No Documentary Evidence

After more than 150 years of research not one of the alleged documents (J, E, P and D) has turned up. Prof. Kitchen says, ‘There is no objective, independent evidence for any of these four compositions...anywhere outside the pages of our existing Hebrew Bible’.^{vi} One might add, ‘anywhere outside the imaginations of liberal scholars!’^{vii} If someone claimed that Shakespeare had amalgamated bits from several plays by other authors to form the text of *King Lear*, scholars would wish to see the original plays.^{viii} But the idea of independent source-documents behind our *Genesis* is itself a myth. And since Genesis 1 and 2 are *not* from different sources, there is no reason why should they be contradictory. May there not be perfectly good explanations for the *apparent* contradictions?

But not history!

Forster and Marston appear to distance themselves from the JEPD-theory. Yet their argument against the literal-historical interpretation of Genesis 1-3 is precisely the old higher critical argument that, when so understood, they are contradictory! Like Prof. Hook, they say, ‘The order of events in the two chapters appears different.’^{ix} Therefore, in order to avoid contradiction – but probably even more to avoid collision between Genesis and Evolution - they throw overboard the historical content of Genesis 1-3! *Something happened – but not this!*

LITERAL INTERPRETATION INVOLVES NO CONTRADICTIONS

My thesis here is that the literal interpretation of Genesis 1-2 does not in fact involve contradiction.

Genesis 2 is a ‘narrower stage’ than Genesis 1

Derek Kidner (not a young-earth creationist) said, ‘It is a mistake to call (Gen.2:4b-25) a second creation-account, for it hastens to localise the scene, passing straight from the world at large to a ‘garden...in the east’; all that follows is played out on this narrow stage.’^x It will also be noticed that Genesis 2 says nothing of the creation of sun, moon, stars, dry land, seas, &c. Obviously Genesis 2 presupposes the creation described in Genesis 1. Prof. Kitchen remarks that ‘Not to recognise the complementary nature of the subject-distinction between a skeleton-outline of all creation on the one hand (in Gen.1) and the concentration in detail on man and his immediate environment on the other (in Gen.2) borders on obscurantism.’^{xi}

Genesis 1 and 2 are regarded as historical by Biblical writers.

It is inconceivable to an evangelical that the two chapters are contradictory since Biblical writers regard them both as historical. In Exodus 20:11 God directly (see ver.1) endorses the literal and historical accuracy of Genesis 1. Psalm 8 regards the Creator as a Craftsman, whose immediacy in Creation is analogous to the potter using His ‘fingers’ (ver.3). He does not merely initiate a process. In Psalm 33:6 and 9 creation *ex nihilo* is rehearsed.^{xii} It is this living, all-powerful Creator, whose help Hezekiah seeks in 2 Kings 19:15. What use would a mere philosophical construct have been in such a situation? The priests in Nehemiah 9:6 regard the Genesis-creation, not as some early mythological-cum-theological preface to the history of Israel (vv.7-37), but as genuine history in its own right.^{xiii} Isaiah 40:12-13, like the

Psalmist, sees God as the hands-on Creator of Genesis 1-2 *not* as the remote-control Creator, envisaged in theistic evolution. This seems to presuppose the historical nature of Genesis-creation. New Testament references to Genesis are listed by Douglas Kelly^{xiv}. These references assume the historicity of Genesis. Here is a space only for a brief sketch: in Matt. 13:35, the world had a beginning; Matt. 19:4-6, mankind was created at the beginning of the world; Acts 4:24 summarises Genesis 1; 1 Cor. 11:8-9 assumes the historical nature of Gen. 1:26 and 2:24, while 1 Cor. 15:21-22 and 2 Cor. 11:3 rest on the historical reality of Genesis 3; in 2 Cor. 4:6 the creation of light is as real as the illumination of the unregenerate; 11:3 and creation *ex nihilo* is assumed in Heb. 11:3. The onus is clearly on allegorisers (ancient and modern!) to show that Biblical writers did not regard Genesis as serious history!

Tol'doth rules it out

The clinching argument against the idea of two contradictory creation-accounts is found in Genesis 2:4, *This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created* (NIV). The Hebrew word *tol'doth* 'generations' or (in ESV) 'account' may mean 'account of a man and his descendants.'^{xv} E. J. Young said that this phrase, 'tells us that we are not going to read further about creation but about something which came from heaven and earth, and in particular, man...'^{xvi} Victor Hamilton says that the word 'describes not the process by which the heavens and the earth are generated but rather that which is generated by the heavens and the earth.'^{xvii} Genesis 2 is the *sequel* to Genesis 1, not a rival, contradictory account of creation.

NEVERTHELESS THERE ARE CONTRADICTIONS!

Even so it may be argued that there are discrepancies between Genesis 1 and 2 which demand that we abandon the literal interpretation.

The 'day' in Genesis 2:4 contradicts the 'week' in Genesis 1

Forster and Marston point out that according to the literal interpretation of Genesis 1 creation took place in six 24-hour days, whereas Gen. 2:4 says that creation occurred in one 24-hour day. They say that: (1) the two accounts may be contradictory; (2) one account may be literal in chronology but not the other; or (3) neither account is intended to be literal and chronological. Rightly they dismiss the first, but without even discussing the second option, decide that neither Genesis 1 nor 2 should be regarded as chronological. But why ignore the second option? First, they say, 'The early Hebrew-Christian view took neither Gen. 1 nor Gen. 2 as literal.' Second, they argue that 'the context... must determine literalness or metaphor.'^{xviii}

Reply

The word *day* (Heb. *yom*) in Genesis 1 is defined (as clearly as it is possible to do) so as a 24-hour day by *evening, morning, day-light, night-darkness*, and the words *first* (Heb. *echad*, 'one'), *second, third, &c.* Can it mean anything else in Gen. 2:4? Yes, like the word 'day' in English, *yom* may represent an undefined period of time. In Deut. 1:9 (*you are today as numerous as the stars of heaven*) *yom* does not mean a day of the week (say 'Wednesday') but 'the present time' (cf. Deut. 1:39). In Num. 11:31 a *day's walk* refers to a distance one may walk in the hours of day-light (cf. Gen. 7:4). After a severely chronological Genesis 1 it is obvious that Gen. 2:4 refers to the entire period of creation.^{xix} This is to treat Gen. 2:4 in context. It is not the

Hebrew, which demands two un-chronological chapters so as to avoid contradiction between them, but Forster and Marston's wish to avoid real history.

Adam precedes vegetation in the Gen.2 account

Forster and Marston argue that Gen.2:7 says that Adam arrived on an earth devoid of vegetation (*No shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up*), whereas as Gen.1:11 vegetation precedes the creation of man.^{xx} They agree with Prof. Hook.

Reply

Victor Hamilton (not a young-earth creationist) after explaining that it is unlikely that the author or compiler of Genesis has put together two contradictory accounts,^{xxi} notes there is something here not obvious to modern city-dwellers. The plants of Gen.1:11 are wild and grow by themselves, whereas the plants of Gen.2:7 are cultivated plants, *which need a man to till the ground* (Gen.2:5). You don't need a man to cultivate rosebay willow herb, dandelions and thistles, but plants such as potatoes, beans, strawberries, &c need care and attention. Unlike Genesis 1 Genesis 2 is concerned with the creation of man in the context of agriculture.

Was Adam created after the animals or before?

Does Gen.2:19 not make it clear that, contrary to Gen.1:24ff God created the animals after Adam, to provide him with companionship? Forster and Marston take Henry Morris to task to rendering the verb in Gen.2:19 as 'had formed' (*the LORD God had formed every beast of the field*). They claim that the verb is in the simple past tense, 'formed', which would show us that God had *not* already created animals but did so *after* creating man. The NIV, they allege, is the only version, which uses the pluperfect, and clearly it does so for theological, not linguistic reasons.^{xxii}

Reply

Victor Hamilton says that the pluperfect, 'had formed', is permissible. Meredith Kline agreed that, 'Had planted' would be a proper translation.^{xxiii} The ESV has 'had formed' in the margin. Another obvious instance of this is in Gen.2:2, where the Hebrew *asah* is rightly translated 'he had done' in the RSV (1971) and the ESV. Morris was right! There is no reason at all why the NIV rendering should not stand.

Adam and Eve or Adam then Eve?

Gen.1:27 gives the superficial impression that male and female humans were created simultaneously, but in Gen.2 it is clear that Adam was made first, then Eve. But Forster and Marston do not believe this. They say, 'God could...have literally put Adam to sleep and used a rib to 'build' Eve – but we do not believe that the story was intended to imply this. For one thing, the order of events would then contradict Ch.1.^{xxiv} They cannot tolerate the history. We are reading a pretty story.

Reply

Some scholars at least disagree with Forster and Marston on this. Prof. G. Ch. Aalders, a literalist, wrote: 'If we read (Gen.1:26)...exactly as it runs, it simply states that God created Man in two sexes....There is not one word to say whether they were created simultaneously or not. The additional information that they were not created together is given in chapter ii.'^{xxv} Victor Hamilton agrees with Aalders. Incidentally

Forster and Marston's objection was an old chestnut when Matthew Poole published his commentary in 1683!

OTHER OBJECTIONS TO HISTORICITY

However Forster and Marston are anxious to regard these chapters in Genesis as figurative. They do not mean what they appear to mean: *they mean something else*.

Isn't the 'Garden' figurative?

The literalness of the garden is questioned. Although 'the tree of life and the knowledge of good and evil could have been literal' and although 'man faced a real historical choice between life and the knowledge of good and evil', in fact 'the language used to describe this choice...is metaphorical. The 'paradise of Eden' was taken by pre-Reformation commentators partly as literal and partly metaphorical.'^{xxvi} As for 'the tree of life', the 'serpent' and other imagery (in Gen.2), Forster and Marston see them as 'pure symbolism (and not literally as well) in Revelation 20-22 and Gen.2-3'^{xxvii}.

Reply

Whether the Garden itself was a real place – in their scheme of things – is not clear, but certainly real events cannot occur in unreal places.

1. A real garden. It is significant that both Prof. Kenneth Kitchen (an evangelical) and Dr. David Rohl (who does not profess to be a Christian) discuss the geographical location of the garden.^{xxviii} In his *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* Kitchen argues (p428ff) that the garden was a small part of a much larger Eden, from which the river of Gen.2:10 flowed into the garden.^{xxix} That river was formed from four other rivers: the Tigris and Euphrates still jointly form the Shatt el Arab before flowing into the Gulf. The Gihon (Gen.2:13) *may* have been the Kerkheh, which today joins the Tigris from the east, while the Pishon *may* have originated in Arabia, which was in antiquity far wetter and greener than it is now. Its dried-up river-bed *may* still be visible.^{xxx} The garden itself probably lies below the Gulf. David Rohl in his *Legend, the Genesis of Civilisation*, has a different theory, but the fact that two scholars discuss the concrete details of Genesis 2:10-14 suggests that something more than poetic imagery is in view here. No one discusses the precise variety of the beanstalk climbed by Jack!^{xxxi}

2. Literary analysis. If, as pre-Reformation commentators say, the garden is partly literal, partly metaphorical, then can Forster and Marston tell us which is which? In the sentence, 'It is raining cats and dogs', we understand that it is *literally* raining, but that the expression 'cats and dogs' is *figurative* and may be replaced with the word 'heavily'. We can identify the literal and figurative elements. Can Forster and Marston do this in Genesis 2-3? For example, what are the literal and metaphorical elements in Gen.2:16-17? Derek Kidner (not a young-earth creationist) was inclined to regard the trees as literal ('naïve though it may seem'): 'the fruit...as appointed to the function and carrying a word from God confronts man with God's will.'^{xxxii} Why not?

3. Symbols. Forster and Marston are on surer ground when they find 'symbolism' in the passage. Literalness and symbolism are not mutually exclusive: one's very literal house, car, school-tie, &c may possess symbolical significance, and often does. Is there any reason why a historical garden should not be a symbol?

Was Eve made from Adam's rib?

Despite saying that 'the account of the creation of Adam and Eve is one of the most important passages in the Bible',^{xxxiii} Forster and Marston seem to regard the account of Eve as unhistorical: 'Surely (this passage) is not about a lop-sided Adam or human anatomy.'^{xxxiv} They conclude: 'The Genesis account is intended primarily as a type (of Christ, cf. Rom.5:14) *rather than as a simple account of events*'^{xxxv} (Italics added). They raise the question, Was Eve in fact *not* made from part of Adam? Are we reading a theological myth?

Reply

1. Meredith Kline noted that 'Paul understood this record of the woman's origins as straightforward history' (cf. 1 Cor.11:8)^{xxxvi} and adds, '*Scripture itself thus provides us with the direction to be followed in our exegetical approach to the narrative materials of this chapter.*' (ibid. Italics added) That sums up the young-earth creationist's position: *if the Bible endorses the history, then history it is.* Otherwise we impugn the authority of Scripture, which is fundamental in evangelicalism.

2. Hamilton agrees with Forster and Marston in thinking that 'side' (Heb.*sela*) is preferable to 'rib'. But the precise translation is almost irrelevant: the creation of Eve, if literal, was miraculous, and as Calvin noted in the 16th century, 'to profane persons this method of forming woman may seem ridiculous, and some...may say that Moses is dealing in fables'.^{xxxvii} Remarkably, that is how it seems to evangelical evolutionists.

Are Adam and Eve allegorical figures?

'Were Adam and Eve actual people', ask Forster and Marston, 'or is the whole story an allegory?'^{xxxviii} Assuring us that they take a 'high view of Biblical inspiration' they suggest that the function of Gen.2:19-20 is to teach us that, 'Man alone was created...to create conceptual language' and that 'no animal can have a truly personal relationship with a human person in the way epitomised by marriage.' The historical fact of Eve's formation is allegorised with a 'spiritual meaning'.^{xxxix}

Reply

Extended metaphor.

An allegory – such as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* – is an 'extended metaphor'. Berkhof quotes Terry: 'allegory is a figurative use and application of some supposable fact or history...The allegory is continually using words in a metaphorical sense, and its narrative, however supposable in itself, is manifestly fictitious.' For example, Pilgrim's town is called 'The City of Destruction'; 'Pliable' and 'Obstinate' try to persuade him to go back home; he falls into the 'Slough of Dispond'; he is engaged by 'Worldly Wiseman', but eventually meets 'Evangelist', who directs him to the 'wicket gate', &c. However, though nothing is literal, the rock-solid facts of Christianity - regeneration, repentance, conversion, Christian life and destiny are referred to. If Genesis 2-3 form an allegory, *historical* realities must be referred to? What are they?

Dangers of allegory

In fact Forster and Marston fall into the trap described by F. W. Farrar, who said, 'When once the principle of allegory is admitted, when once we start with the rule that whole passages of Scripture say one thing when they mean another, the reader is delivered bound hand and foot to the caprice of the interpreter.'^{xl} Exactly!

With reference to Augustine, Farrar complains that allegorising in the Early Church ‘evacuated the Bible of a significance infinitely precious in order to substitute...the thinnest commonplaces of homiletic...edification.’ That is precisely what Forster and Marston have done.

But even St. Paul didn’t take Genesis literally!

Remarkably, Forster and Marston attempt to enlist St. Paul to the view that Genesis is not serious history. They say that, ‘In some instances his arguments only make sense, if some of the Genesis account is intended as a kind of allegory. If it is purely literal reporting of historical events, then why should it imply anything about how we should live now?’^{xli}

They cite 1 Tim.2:11-15 as an example: *For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived became a transgressor.* Surely, they argue, Paul is not here giving a history-lesson! Indeed, ‘It actually has more force not less if we see the Genesis account as a divinely inspired allegory to teach us truth about humanity.’^{xlii}

Reply

So the truth is out! In Forster and Marston’s view Genesis 2 is not history, but ‘a divinely inspired allegory.’ just a homily!

Paul was a historicist.

The parallel drawn between Adam and Jesus Christ is striking in Rom.5. In vers.12-14 Adam is as historical as the Sinai-law, Moses and Christ (*the One who was to come*). In ver.17 the parallel between the historical Adam and the historical Christ is plain: *by the trespass of one man death reigned through that one man...those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.* This would be a lop-sided ‘parallel’, if Adam, like Hercules or Odysseus were mythical, while Jesus Christ were historical. We have already noticed Meredith Kline’s view of Paul’s historicism. Prof. C. K. Barrett – no mean judge! – said: ‘St Paul treats Adam as an historical character.’^{xliiii} Dr D. M. Lloyd-Jones agreed: ‘No one can read the writings of the apostle honestly and with an open mind without granting that he believed that what we read in Genesis 1, 2 and 3 is literal history.’^{xliv}

Historical precedent.

Legal precedents are well known facts of life: judges’ decisions in earlier years may still determine court-cases today. On 1 Tim.2:14 Donald Guthrie thought, ‘The assumption is that the original creation...must set a precedent for determining the true order of the sexes.’^{xlv} On the other hand, far from *Genesis 2* having ‘more force’ if Adam was *not* created before Eve, it would have no force at all! Once you know something is untrue (like Santa Claus) you no longer take it seriously.

Christianity is an historical religion.

This is a major plank in the cause of young-earth creationism. Truth lies in Old and New Testament history. Attempts have been made to overturn it. Sir William Ramsay set out to do so, but ended up a convert to the historical reliability of Scripture.^{xlvi} Frank Morrison set out to disprove the Resurrection of Christ, but became an apologist for it!^{xlvii} Liberals have attacked the Old Testament hip and thigh – but have met their match in Kitchen! It must also be said that evangelicals have wobbled over the historicity of Genesis.^{xlviii} But since Whitcomb and Morris’s *The Genesis Flood* in 1961, they have in growing numbers subscribed to a historical Genesis. Forster and Marston are fighting a rear-guard action!

The *Book of Revelation* regards *Genesis* as metaphor!

The crowning argument of Forster and Marston is that Genesis 2 is treated as ‘metaphorical history’ in the *Book of Revelation*.^{xlix} They examine various parallels between the two books – the creation of heaven and earth, marriage (Gen.2:24; Rev.19:ff); precious stones (Gen.2:12; Rev.21:18ff); the river (Gen.2:10; Rev.22:1ff), tree of life (Gen.2:9; Rev.22:2), &c – and say: ‘We have little doubt that...the tree of life, the ‘serpent’, and the other imagery used in these passages is intended as pure symbolism...both in Rev.20-22 and in Genesis 2-3. It deals with real events and issues but describes them in figurative terms.’

Reply

Metaphorical history.

In my article entitled *Genesis is History* (on this website) I have shown from Philip Guadella’s biography of the Duke of Wellington that historical events may be related in metaphors. *But Guadella’s metaphors can be translated into prosaic, un-metaphorical terms.* For example, when he says that Ney ‘flung away’ 4000 men, we understand that it was through his incompetent generalship that those men died. In saying that Napoleon ‘sailed before gusts of optimism’, he means that the Emperor was totally confident of victory. Now if Forster and Marston had translated the alleged ‘metaphorical history’ in Genesis into similarly prosaic language, we could have believed them. But since they do not, we suspect that their ‘metaphorical history’ is not ‘history’ in any real sense of the word.

Literal Genesis 2-3.

As we have seen Kidner and others show that Gen.2-3 form the sequel to Gen.1, the history of what happened to the ‘progeny’ of heaven and earth (Gen.2:4). After the literal and superlatively miraculous creation *ex nihilo* we are not surprised to learn how God created Eve from Adam’s rib or side. The garden was a real location, watered by real rivers, needed for agriculture. Adam and Eve were real people guilty of real sin, which involved a real human race in spiritual and physical death. The account is no more metaphorical than the facts of the Gospel.

The figurative assumes the literal.

It is because you can *literally* slip on a banana-skin that hazardous situations are described as ‘banana-skins’. The sweetness and succulence of a ripe peach make it possible to describe a lovely girl as a ‘peach’. The language of *Revelation* assumes the general literalness of the Old Testament and would be meaningless, if it did not. The ‘paradise’ or ‘park-land’ of Rev.2:7 is a metaphor, because the garden of Gen.2:8 is literal; the figurative ‘throne’ in Rev.4 would mean nothing if earthly kings had not sat on literal thrones; the metaphorical ‘lamb’ of Rev.5 refers to sacrificial animal of OT worship; the angelical, but metaphorical trumpets of Rev.8-11 are drawn from the silver trumpets of Numbers 10, &c. In fact New Testament metaphors of king, shepherd, priest, sacrifice, temple, &c would be senseless unless the Old Testament spoke literally of such things. *You cannot make a metaphor out of a metaphor!*

REFORMATION INTERPRETATION OF GENESIS

Reformed Literalism

Conspicuous by their absence from Forster and Marston’s chapter 7 – in which they enlist the support of Jewish and early Christian authors – are the evangelical exegetes of the 16th-18th centuries.¹ According to F. W. Farrar, Martin Luther, ‘Like

the other reformers...set aside the dreary fiction of the four-fold sense (of Scripture). 'The literal sense of Scripture alone', said Luther, 'is the whole essence of faith and Christian theology.' In consequence he taught six-day creationism!

Of Calvin, Farrar – who was no Calvinist! – says this: 'he is one of the greatest interpreters of Scripture who ever lived.' His view of Genesis was literal and historical: light was created before the sun in a creation, which was supernatural and miraculous.

Other reformers, continues Farrar, 'were all in agreement...(paying) close attention to the literal sense.'

The great confessions of faith – the Canons of Dort, Thirty-Nine Articles, Westminster Confession, &c all rested on the bedrock of a literal, historical interpretation of Genesis 1-3. The Belgic Confession of 1563 is typical: 'We believe that the Father...created out of nothing the heavens and the earth and all creatures...giving to every creature its shape, form and several offices to serve the Creator (Art.XII)...God created man out of the dust of the earth and made and formed him after His own image and likeness (Art.XIV).

Later commentators like Matthew Poole, John Gill, Matthew Henry and Adam Clarke, were literalists to a man.

The Abandonment of Evangelicalism

The fear of young-earth creationists is that the 'allegorical' interpretation of Genesis marks a step in the abandonment of that evangelicalism which was given rebirth in the Reformation. Just as the Greek fathers kow-towed to Greek philosophy, so evangelical evolutionists kow-tow to prevailing 'scientific' orthodoxy and substitute for the historical creation of Genesis religious myths which are taken no more seriously than the myths of ancient Greece. Such an approach to Scripture, as Douglas Kelly points out, cannot logically stop at the end of Genesis 3.^{li} In the 19th century such attacks on the Old Testament were the prelude to the 20th century attack upon the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.

Forster and Marston themselves espouse 'openness theology'.^{lii} In large measure this is a latter-day Socinianism, in which God is no longer the omnipotent, all-knowing God of Genesis, who creates miraculously by mere fiat, but a totally incompetent 'god', whose historical work of creation is undetectable and unrecorded. One *suspects* that this 'god' is a philosophical construct required only to give a theological gloss to Darwinism. 'He' cannot determine the future, nor does 'he' even know it (see Forster and Marston's chapter 4). Needless to say Biblical promises of salvation and predictions of the 2nd Coming of our Lord and Saviour are totally uncertain in the mouth of such a 'god'.

Foundations

Ken Ham says somewhere that, if you destroy the foundations in Genesis, you bring down the whole edifice of Christianity. I believe he is right. Hence the need for evangelical Christians to appreciate that there are no contradictions between Genesis 1-2, which compel us to give up our belief in historical creation. The foundations of Christianity are found in a literal, historical, creation.

APPENDIX 1

Farrar on the allegorical interpretation of Scripture

Jewish Opinion

Can early Jewish interpretation of the Bible really guide our understanding of the Old Testament? The evangelical reader may feel – in view of the general Jewish rejection of their Messiah – that Jewish exegetes are not qualified to be our teachers. F. W. Farrar, a great authority on the history of the interpretation of Scripture concludes his chapter on Rabbinic exegesis with this judgment: ‘Even the most favourable estimate (of their work) must reluctantly admit... (that it is) indirectly rather than directly that... they have furnished us with anything of intrinsic value’ (p107). In other words, though useful negatively, their writings are of little positive help in understanding the Scriptures. In lecture III Farrar discusses Philo, the Alexandrian-Jewish philosopher-cum-theologian, whom Forster and Marston admire so greatly. Farrar says, ‘Philo’s... exegesis is radically false. It darkens what is so simple and fails to explain what is obscure... It fails in consequence of its... contempt of grammar... logic... history... archaeology, and most of the ordinary canons of literary expression.’ Does Jewish opinion on Genesis really deserve our respect?

Early Christian Exegesis

But surely, it may be felt, the Early Church Fathers – the great worthies rolled out by Forster and Marston to buttress their repudiation of a straight-forward historical interpretation of Genesis – must have been excellent interpreters of the Old Testament! In Lecture IV Farrar exposes their exegetical failings. With few exceptions they were – like Forster and Marston themselves – allegorisers! Farrar sums up: ‘When once the principle of allegory is admitted, when once we start with the rule that whole passages of Scripture say one things when they mean another, the reader is delivered bound hand and foot to the caprice of the interpreter.’ With this judgment we must agree. In the hands of ‘evolutionary evangelicals’ (as Forster and Marston style themselves) the text says one thing yet means something completely different. Only the ‘experts’ can tell us what to believe. ‘Evolutionary evangelicals’ are the post-Reformation allegorisers of today! Beware!

APPENDIX 2

A young-earth creationist view of Genesis 1-3

- Creation in six 24-hour days was supernatural, miraculous and totally inaccessible to scientific investigation. (Given
- Genesis 2-3 record the sequel to the six-day creation. There are not two ‘creation-accounts’.
- Adam^{liii} was not created *ex nihilo* on Day 6, but formed a mature man from the ‘dust of the earth’ (Gen.2:7), i.e. his chemical constituents are found on the earth.
- Wild vegetation was already growing (Gen.1:11-12), but Adam brought the beginnings of agriculture to the Garden (Gen.2:8), which was real (Gen.2:11-12) and prepared for his arrival.

- Adam was commanded to obey God by literally not eating the fruit of one particular tree (Gen.2:16-17). He was warned of the consequences of disobedience. He could not lose eternal life by eating fruit in general but through an *act of disobedience* in particular. (Conversely he could not retrieve eternal life through eating fruit (Gen.3:23), but only through trusting the Saviour.)
- The animals had been formed before the creation of Adam (Gen.1:24-25). Adam's first job was to name them (Gen.2:19-20).
- The creation of Eve follows miraculously (Gen.2:21ff). Was this the sixth day of creation? It may have been, but conceivably, woman was only created *in principle* on Day 6 and *in fact* subsequently. The chronological details are not important in Genesis 2.
- The 'serpent' (Gen.3:1) is a form of the devil (cf. 2 Cor.11:14) and his interview with Eve occurs literally as described (Gen.3:1-5). Balaam's ass gives us reason to believe that the literal, historical nature of the serpent.
- The exclusion of Adam and Eve from the Garden was both literal and symbolical.

ⁱ We should perhaps distinguish *evangelical* evolutionists (who profess to believe Scripture) from *liberal* evolutionists (who don't). However see Dr. D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *What is an evangelical?* Banner of Truth, 1992 Chap.3.

ⁱⁱ Forster and Marston *Reason Science and Faith* Monarch 1999 p243

ⁱⁱⁱ In his *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 2003). See also Kitchen's *Ancient Orient and the Old Testament* Tyndale 1966.

^{iv} In recent years 'minimalists' have argued that the OT has no historical value whatever. In his *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* Prof. Kitchen provides an opposite and highly erudite point of view.

^v Peake's Commentary on the Bible, Nelson, 1961 Art. *Genesis*.

^{vi} Op.cit.p492.

^{vii} See Kitchen's *Ancient Orient and the Old Testament*, Tyndale, 1966, chapter 6. In the light of practices in the ancient orient, it is clear that the criteria on which source-analysis was based were mistaken.

^{viii} In the case of King Lear other dramatised versions of the story are well known. See Hunter (ed) *King Lear*, New Penguin Shakespeare, 1972 p9.

^{ix} Op.cit.p263

^x Derek Kidner *Genesis* Tyndale 1967 p58. Prof. E. J. Young asks, 'Can we seriously think that the writer intended us to understand that God formed man (v7) before there was any place to put him?' See also Douglas Kelly, *Creation and Change*, Mentor, 1997 chapter 2; E.J.Young, *Introduction to the Old Testament* Tyndale p55.

^{xi} Kitchen, op cit. AO&OT p117.

^{xii} On this Kidner says, 'To know that nothing came into existence but by God's command...is to be confronted by pure creation, not iron necessity', Kidner *Psalms 1-72* Tyndale 1973 p136.

^{xiii} Derek Kidner notes the apparent influence of OT reading upon the Levites' prayers, cf. his *Ezra & Nehemiah* Tyndale 1979 p111.

^{xiv} Douglas Kelly, op.cit. p130ff.

^{xv} Brown Driver and Briggs *Hebrew-English Lexicon*.

^{xvi} Quoted in Douglas Kelly op.cit. p46

^{xvii} Op.cit.

^{xviii} Op.cit.p267

^{xix} Unger & White (eds), *Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Nelson, 1980, p89. Dr. Francis Humphrey says, 'in Genesis 2:4 *yôm* is part of an anarthrous prepositional compound *beyôm* meaning not 'in the day', but simply 'when''. See his 'The meaning of *yôm* in Genesis1:1-2:4' *Journal of Creation* Vol.21(2) 2007 pp52-55

^{xx} Op.cit.p269

^{xxi} Kenneth Kitchen remarks, 'In translating any ancient text the first assumption is that the writer intended it to make sense; a rendering or exegesis that imports a contradiction is unsatisfactory', Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and the Ancient Orient*, Tyndale, 1966 p118.

^{xxii} Op.cit.p269

^{xxiii} Meredith Kline 'Genesis' *New Bible Commentary Revised* Tyndale 1971 in loc. Kenneth Kitchen says, 'The proper equivalent for the first verb in Genesis 2:19 is the pluperfect ('...had formed...')', Kitchen *Ancient Orient &c* p118.

^{xxiv} Op.cit.p283

^{xxv} G. Ch. Aalders *Short Introduction to the Pentateuch* Tyndale 1949 p45

^{xxvi} Op.cit.p280. It was pre-Reformation theologians (with their allegories) who had lost the Gospel, and it was the Reformers (with their literalism) who recovered it.

^{xxvii} op.cit.p281

^{xxviii} Kline remarks, 'The narrative's concern with real earthly history is apparent in the geographical notes', Op. cit. p84. This was the remark of the man who popularised the Framework Hypothesis, a theory designed to avoid contradiction between Genesis and science, by treating Gen.1 as metaphor! He is an invaluable witness for the literal view of Gen.2!

^{xxix} Kidner said, 'The river, fine symbol though it would be...is presented as quite literal.'

Op.cit. p63

^{xxx} Kidner anticipated Kitchen's conclusions, op.cit.p64

^{xxxi} Other scholars also discuss the geography of Gen.2:10-14. See R.K.Harrison, *Introduction to OT*, IVP 1969 p554ff; Westermann says, 'an ancient bit of geography has been inserted', Westerman, *Genesis T&T* Clark 1987 p19; Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* Word 1987 p66ff.

^{xxxii} Op.cit. p62.

^{xxxiii} Op.cit.p283

^{xxxiv} Op.cit.p284

^{xxxv} Op.cit.p286

^{xxxvi} Op.cit. p84

^{xxxvii} Calvin *Genesis* Banner of Truth 1965 p132. The origin of sex is a biological mystery! How extraordinary that two different organisms should evolve *simultaneously* in a *complementary* manner. Biologist Ariel Roth calls it 'the queen of problems in evolutionary biology'; Roth *Origins* Review and Herald, 1998 p110.

^{xxxviii} Op.cit.p283

^{xxxix} op.cit. p284. On p285 Forster and Marston attempt to bolster their anti-historical thesis by quoting Gordon Wenham, who says that in Gen.1-4 the word 'Adam' (Hebrew meaning 'man' or 'mankind') is ambiguous – 'making it difficult to know when the personal name 'Adam' is first mentioned.' But working backwards from Gen.5:3, when the individual Adam, *not* the human race, died, it is clear that the same individual was the father of Seth (compare Gen.5:3-4 and Gen.4:25) and also the father of the individual Cain (Gen.4:1). But if so, Adam and Eve in Gen.2-3 are two individuals. Indeed Gen.2:21-21 demands that they are! Therefore the man created in Gen.1:26 is Adam, the individual. Of course, inasmuch as he was the first man, he represented the human race: he is Adam *and* Mankind. The argument of Romans 5:12-21 hinges on this historical fact.

^{xl} F. W. Farrar, *History of Interpretation*, Dutton 1886 p239

^{xli} Op.cit.p285

^{xlii} op.cit.p286

^{xliiii} C. K. Barrett, *1 Corinthians* A. C. Black

^{xliv} Dr. D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Romans 5* Banner of Truth 1971 p196. Prof. John Murray was also convinced of Paul's historicism. On Rom.5:12 he writes, 'It is exegetically monstrous to say with C. H. Dodd, 'Thus Paul's doctrine of Christ as the 'second Adam' is not so bound up with the story of the Fall as a literal happening that it ceases to have meaning when we no longer accept the story as such.'So basic to Paul's doctrine is the one trespass of the one man Adam that any interference with this datum wrecks Paul's whole argument.' *Romans*, New London Commentary, Marshall, Morgan, Scott, 1960 Vol.1 p181.

^{xlv} Donald Guthrie *Pastoral Epistles* Tyndale 1957 p77

^{xlvi} William Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1893 p viii.

^{xlvii} Frank Morrison *Who moved the stone?* Faber & Faber 1958, preface and chapter 1.

^{xlviii} Ernest Kevan was an excellent man but he was unsure of himself in his commentary on Genesis in *The New Bible Commentary* IVF 1953 pp76-77.

^{xlix} Op.cit.pp280-281

^l Geoffrey Bromiley expounded Reformed Doctrine as the true evangelicalism in the *New Bible Commentary* (IVF Ed. Davidson 1953) pp17-19. WYCG agrees with that view.

^{li} Op.cit. p115

^{lii} See *The Openness of God* Pinnock and Others, IVP/Paternoster 1994

