

indicating long periods of time first became well known--many capable Bible scholars who accepted both the inerrancy and the historicity of the Book of Genesis have reverently compared that data with the creation account. Some liberal theologians in the latter part of the 19th century made a "mad rush" to dismiss the Genesis account of creation as myth or allegory, but the conservatives did not. However, these conservative Bible scholars realized that faithful adherence to consistent methods of Bible interpretation would not allow them to restrict all of the events mentioned in the first chapter of Genesis to a few literal days before Adam and Eve were created.

Since the Hebrew word yom ("day") is indisputably used in several different ways in the Bible, and since the so-called "numerical-adjective argument" for necessarily-short creative days has no support from other parts of the biblical text, there are several possibilities as to seeing long time-periods in the first chapter of Genesis. For example the "days" of creation could have been days of divine, creative commands, with each day followed by a period of fulfillment. Or the creative days could have each merely consisted of a long period of time. (Remember that even the terms "evening" and "morning" are sometimes used figuratively in the Bible, e. g., in Psalm 90:6.) For some further comments on these possibilities, and a listing of some of the authors who have written concerning them, see Hayward, 1985, Chapter 10; Newman, 1977 and 1981, Chapters 4-6; and Wonderly, 1977, Chapters 10-11 and Appendix I. Such teachings on the agreement between the Bible and the natural record of time seen in the rock strata were approvingly taught in most of the evangelical, conservative seminaries, Bible colleges, and liberal arts colleges during the first half of the present century, and are likewise taught in a good number of comparable institutions at the present time. These institutions have strongly upheld special, divine creation, combined with a rejection of the theories of macroevolution and abiogenesis.

Thus there is no reason to suppose that we must reject the natural revelation of time which we see in the rock strata in order to be true to the Bible (compare p. 1 "Introduction," p. 9, and 26, above). With our conscience clear in this respect, let us make every effort to do something significant to meet the challenges which are outlined in this paper. In our attempt to meet this need it will be helpful to follow the advice of Dr. Alan Hayward, in the conclusion of his book Creation and Evolution (1985, p. 205). After citing the Apostle Paul's command, "Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God," (I Cor. 10:32), Hayward says:

The apostle's wise counsel is highly relevant to the creation controversy today. Unsound arguments for a young universe have stirred up a hornet's nest, and turned many scientists into bitter opponents of evangelical Christianity. Recent-creationism has given a great deal of unnecessary offence to the modern equivalent of 'Jews and Greeks'.

It has also done a lot of harm amongst believers. Many have reacted so violently against the unscientific nature of young-earth theories that they have moved to the opposite extreme, and embraced theistic evolution. And, as was shown in chapter 12, that is a position with grave implications for biblical theology.

The middle position, ancient-creationism, is not a compromise. It is a position of strength, because it accepts both the teaching of Scripture and the facts of science. And it is a position of love, because it avoids giving needless offence to scientists and Bible-believers alike.