

A LETTER ON THE SUBJECT OF CREATION AND EVOLUTION, BY RUSSELL L. MIXTER, PH.D.
 This letter, dated March 26, 1962, was written as a reply to an inquiry from one of Dr. Mixter's colleagues. It reads as follows:

"I believe the Bible is God's Word. It was given by inspiration of God, and every word of it in the autographs was kept from error and was just the word which He had in mind. This applies to Genesis. The account of creation in Genesis is true. It is not myth nor allegory but rather sets forth a factual account of what happened. It states that before material existed God existed. God created the original elements out of nothing. Later he asked the earth to put forth vegetation and the waters to swarm with living creatures.

"I believe God specially created various kinds of living things. Genesis says God created grass, fruit trees and herbs after their kind. This means God created kinds of grass, kinds of fruit trees and kinds of herbs. I take my analysis of the phrase 'after its kind' from Professor J. Barton Payne, Associate Professor of Old Testament at Wheaton. (Journal of American Scientific Affiliation, June, 1958.)

"The phrase 'after their kind' does not rule out biological change which is clearly demonstrated or implied by a study of genetics and paleontology. The idea of the 'fixity of species' is not stated in Scripture but was accepted by Christians in the time of Linnaeus. Linnaeus himself gave up the idea of the fixity of the species but many in the church held onto this scientific dogma which is inadequate to explain the origin of the many species of the present day. The changes seen in a study of heredity imply a limited amount of variation from originally created species. For example, five kinds of thrushes which live in America could have come from one kind of thrush. Specific creation is a Biblical idea but the notion that species cannot change after creation was read into the Scriptures by those who accepted a scientific dogma which has now been abandoned by biologists.

"I do not believe in organic evolution, which claims that all species have descended from a few forms or one, as Darwin taught. Genetics shows that there is variation within the species and also indicates that similar species have come from a common ancestry. Let me make this more explicit: I believe, for example, that God created the first duck and that it has changed by mutation into a number of kinds of ducks. I believe that God created the first owl and that it has become a number of owls. This notion is well accepted in orthodox circles. I found this idea in the book, The Basis of Evolutionary Faith by Floyd Hamilton, of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. I do not believe, however, all birds evolved from only one species of bird and I specifically reject the idea that all birds are descended from an ancestor which links them by biological descent to all other forms of life.

"From the fossil record, it is evident that the creatures of the past are the ancestors of the creatures living at present. Take, for example, the well known fossil series of the horses. The horse of the Eocene epoch appears to be the ancestor of present-day horses. However, the fossil record does not show us what species is the ancestor of the Eocene horse. There are missing links or gaps in the record between the first horse and any preceding creature which because of his similarity to the horse is assumed to be the ancestor of the horse. Therefore, I conclude that there has been variation within horses but that horses have not descended from any other kind of creature.

"My belief has been called 'progressive creation.' I do not believe in theistic evolution. Theistic evolution means simply that God guided the evolutionary process so that it is not to be explained on a purely naturalistic basis. It assumes that all living things, including man, are biologically descended from a common ancestor. By contrast with theistic evolution, Scripture