Grace Theological Journal 4.1 (1983) 109–117

REVIEW ARTICLE

Creation Science and Modern Biology

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What is Creation Science? by Henry M. Morris and Gary E. Parker. San Diego: Creation-Life, 1982. Pp. 306. $7.95. Paper.

This is probably the most helpful handbook on scientific creationism now available. The first three chapters of 150 pages concerning the life sciences were written by Gary E. Parker, Ed.D., Chairman of the Biology Department for the Graduate School of the Institute for Creation Research. The final three chapters of about 100 pages, dealing with the physical sciences, were written by Henry M. Morris, founder and president of the Institute for Creation Research. Each of these authors, in his own field of specialization, has attained worldwide fame for his grasp of the basic issues involved in the creation-evolution controversy of our day and for his ability to articulate these issues in public presentation and debate. The authors were evolution scientists and, by the grace of God, have entered into the marvelous realm of creation truth. Since this handbook is the end product of many years of intense research and interaction on the part of the authors and is a serious attempt to communicate clearly to the non-scientist through the use of non-technical terms and 58 helpful illustrations, it deserves the careful attention of those who have been exposed to the dogmatic claims of evolution scientists in our generation. It is the reviewer's purpose to analyze Part 2, "The Physical Sciences," by Dr. Henry Morris, together with an overview of the entire volume in the next issue of the *Grace Theological Journal.*

In his opening chapter, "Evidence of Creation in Living Systems," Parker provides a brilliant analysis of the fundamental issues involved in the creation-evolution controversy today. To begin with, what is the difference between a pebble that vaguely looks like a boot and an intricately carved arrowhead? If the softer parts of the pebble are more worn away than the harder parts and the lines of wear follow lines of weakness in the rock, it is clearly the result of time and chance operating through weathering and erosion on the inherent properties of matter (p. 2).

*The reviewer hereby expresses appreciation to Richard Jeffreys, Ph.D., Professor of Biochemistry, Grace College, for his kind assistance in the preparation of this article.

However, the arrowhead represents a radically different kind of order. Here we find matter shaped and molded according to a design that gives the rocky material a purpose, which we easily recognize as an evidence of (human) creation. "Evolutionists believe that life itself is a result, like the tumbled pebble, of *time, chance, and the inherent properties of matter.* The arrowhead represents the *creation* idea, that living systems have *irreducible properties of organization* that were produced, like the arrowhead, by *design and creation*" (p. 4). Applying these principles to the fundamental question of the origin and nature of life, Parker explains that not one molecule that constitutes the physical structure of the living cell is itself alive. Furthermore, the natural reaction between acids and bases within the cell not only cannot promote but actually prevents the use of DNA to code protein production. Thus, "chemistry is not our ancester; it's our problem. When cells lose their biological order and their molecules start reacting in chemical ways, we die. A dead body contains all the molecules necessary for life and approximately the right amount of each. What is lost at death are balance and biological order that otherwise use food to put us together faster than chemistry tears us apart!" (p. 8). But if a living cell is a collection of nonliving molecules, what does it take to make a living cell alive? The answer is—*creation*!

At this point Parker provides a superb illustration:

> Suppose I asked you this question: 'Can aluminum fly?' By itself, of course, aluminum can't fly. Aluminum ore in rock just sits there. If you pour gasoline on it, does that make it fly? Pour a little rubber on it; that doesn't make it fly either. But suppose you take that aluminum, stretch it out in a nice long tube with wings, a tail, and a few other parts. *Then* it flies; we call it an airplane. Did you ever wonder what makes an airplane fly? Take the wings off and study them; they don't fly. Take the engines off, study them; they don't fly . . . not a single part of it flies! . . . What does it take to make an airplane fly? Created design and organization (p. 11).
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> Scientists understand how airplanes fly. For that very reason, no scientist believes that airplanes are the result of time, chance, and the properties of aluminum and other materials that make up the airplane. Flying is a property of organization, not substance. A Boeing 747, for example, is a collection of four-and-a-half million non-flying parts, but thanks to design and creation (and a continuous supply of energy and repair services!), it flies. Similarly, 'life' is a property of organization, not substance. A living cell is a collection of several billion non-living molecules, and death results when a shortage of energy or a flaw in operational or repair mechanisms allows inherent chemical processes to destroy its biological order (p. 14).

Parker concludes this brilliant, basic analysis of the issues that divide creationism from evolutionism with these words:

> It's what we *do know* and *can explain* about aluminum and the laws of physics that would convince us that airplanes are the products of creation, even if we never saw the acts of creation. In the same way, it's what we *do know* and *can explain* about DNA and protein and the laws of chemistry which suggest that life itself is the result of creation. My point is not based on design *per se*, but on the *kind of design* we observe. As creationists point out, some kinds of design, such as snowflakes and wind-worn rock formations, *do* result from time and

> chance—*given* the properties of the material involved. . . . But just as clearly, other kinds of design, e.g. arrowheads and airplanes, are the direct result of creative design and organization giving matter properties it doesn't have and can't develop on its own. What we know about the DNA-protein relationship suggests that living cells have the *created kind of design* (p. 15).

Note the outstandingly helpful analysis of the differences between mechanism, vitalism, and creationism:

> Creation stands between the classic extremes of mechanism and vitalism. Mechanists, including evolutionists, believe that both the *operation* and *origin* of living things are the result of the laws of chemistry which reflect the inherent properties of matter. Vitalists believe that both the operation and origin of living systems depend on mysterious forces that lie beyond scientific description. According to creationists, living things *operate* in understandable ways that can be described in terms of scientific laws—but, these observations include properties of organization that logically imply a created origin for life. The creationist, then, recognizes the orderliness that the vitalist doesn't see. But he doesn't limit himself only to those kinds of order that result from time, chance, and the properties of matter as the evolutionist does. Creation introduces levels of order and organization that greatly enrich the range of explorable hypotheses and turn the study of life into a scientist's dream (p. 16).

With his foundations thus carefully established, Parker proceeds to tackle some of the current controversial issues that characterize the evolution-creation debate. Homologous structures in living things such as the foreleg of a horse or dog, the wing of a bat, and the flipper of a penguin are shown to be explained better by creation according to a common design than descent from a common ancestor (pp. 19–27). Parker candidly admits that in many cases either explanation will work, but that there seem to be times when the only thing that works is creation according to a common design (p. 21). A classic example of this is "convergence," such as the similarity between the eyes of humans and vertebrates on the one hand and the eyes of squids and octopuses on the other (p. 22). Evolutionary arguments based upon molecular taxonomy (e.g., hemoglobin and lysozyme) and embryonic development ("the yoke sac," the "gill slits," and "tail") are shown to be completely fallacious (pp. 24–34).

Especially troubling to evolutionists is the obviously marvelous fit of organisms to their environment, such as the dependence of certain large fish upon certain small fish that systematically clean their teeth! (pp. 34–40). Leading evolutionists such as Szent-Gyorgyi and Garrett Hardin admit that the probability of this relationship coming about by random mutation is absolutely zero (p. 38).

In the second of his three chapters, "Darwin and the Nature of Biologic Change," Parker provides additional clear, brief, and helpful discussions on *the peppered moth* (pp. 44–48); *the flicker woodpecker* with its astounding set of "drilling tools" (pp. 50–51); *the bombardier beetle* with two "cannons" that can shoot forth noxious gases at his enemies at 212° F (pp. 51–53); variations among Darwin's finches (pp. 55–57); the length of a giraffe's neck and how he did not attain it (pp. 58–59); fruit-fly mutations (pp. 51–52); drug-resistant bacteria (p. 64); and sickle-cell anemia (pp. 69–70).

Especially fascinating to this reviewer is Parker's explanation of the recent discovery that *all* the distinct racial features of mankind today could have appeared within two generations after the judgment of Babel (pp. 78–84). In the light of all of this, one of America's leading anticreationists, Stephen Jay Gould of Harvard, states that the currently popular neo-darwinian theory of evolution is "effectively dead, despite its persistence as textbook orthodoxy" (p. 74). Gould "prefers to believe instead that evolution occurs in giant steps, radical restructuring of whole DNA sets producing what he himself calls 'hopeful monsters.' But he admits that no such hopeful monster has been observed. His new theory, then, is not any sort of logical inference from observations, but a fantastic faith in the future of the theory that the facts have failed" (p. 74; cf. 84).

For most evolutionists, as well as creationists, the ultimate question hinges on the interpretation of the fossil record in the crust of the earth which opens before us as the pages of a gigantic book. In chapter three, Parker (who has done paleontological research in North America and Australia following his doctoral studies in this discipline), deals very effectively with the fossil evidence. Beginning with the invertebrates (animals without backbones), we learn that practically all the major groups of these animals were in existence, even in greater abundance than today, at the very beginning of the geologic column. Evolutionism would predict that these "ancient animals" would be the simplest in form. But there we find that trilobites had extremely complex eyes (p. 92):

> Let's imagine we're diving in the ocean back when the trilobites were alive. If we compare life in the trilobite seas with what we see in the oceans today, what would we say? 'Look at all the new forms of life, the increased variety and greater complexity!' No, that's not what we would say at all. Rather, we might say, 'What happened? Where did everything go? What happened to all the trilobites? Where are all the lampshells?' There used to be several thousand species; now only a handful are left. We might also wonder what happened to the great nautiloids, with their long, straight shells reaching up to nine feet in length. Today the only shelled squid we have is the modest pearly nautilus. Extinction, not evolution, is the rule when we compare fossil sea life with the sort of marine invertebrates we find living today. If fact, all major groups, except perhaps the groups including clams and snails, are represented by greater variety and more complex forms as *fossils* than today. It's hard to imagine how absolutely crushing this evidence is to evolution. . . . Snails come from snails. . . . squids come from squids . . . trilobites seem only to come from trilobites. In other words, you find snails and squids and trilobites as fossils; you don't find "snids" and "squails" and "squailobites," or some other in-between form or common ancestor. The "missing links" between these groups are still missing (p. 94).

Creationists are not the only ones who have insisted that the fossil record is deadly to evolutionism. Charles Darwin himself asked: ". . . intermediate links? Geology assuredly does *not* reveal any such finely graduated organic change, and this is perhaps the *most obvious and serious objection* which can be urged against the theory [of evolution]" (p. 96). Well over 100 years have passed since Darwin wrote those words and paleontologists today face an even greater dilemma. David Raup, curator of the Field Museum of Natural

History in Chicago, admits, ". . . ironically, we have even fewer examples of evolutionary transition than we had in Darwin's time." Parker concludes: "Genetic studies suggest that mutation-selection *could not* lead to evolutionary change; the fossil evidence seems to confirm that *it did not*" (p. 98).

The message we learn from fossil plants is identical. Darwin considered the problem of the origin of flowering plants as "an abominable mystery" (p. 99). In our own day, E. J. H. Corner, Professor of Botany at Cambridge University, has stated: ". . . to the unprejudiced, the fossil record of plants is in favor of special creation" (p. 101).

But what about the vertebrates (animals with backbones)? Evolutionists usually point to the archaeopteryx, a winged, feathered bird, which had certain features of a reptile. Our author successfully demonstrates the impossibility of this creature being a missing link between reptile and bird. Furthermore, the entire debate has been rendered irrelevant by the discovery in 1977 of "the femur of a typical bird in the same rock unit in which archaeopteryx is found" (p. 103).

"Thanks in large measure to the fossil evidence," scientific creationists have been winning debates with evolutionists in major universities across North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. Dr. Joe Felsenstein at the University of Washington confesses that we now have a "generation of evolutionary biologists who . . . can be reduced to babbling by any creationist debater in possession of more than two facts" (p. 106). Parker comments that when that statement was made (1978) "there were only two, Dr. Henry M. Morris and Dr. Duane T. Gish. Apparently all it took to level 'mountains of fossil evidence for evolution' was Morris or Gish and three facts!" (p. 106). In its analysis of a conference of the world's leading evolutionists held in Chicago, *Newsweek* (Nov. 3, 1980) concluded:

> The missing link between man and the apes . . . is merely the most glamorous of a whole hierarchy of phantom creatures. In the fossil record, missing links are the rule . . . The more scientists have searched for the transitional forms between species, the more they have been frustrated. . . . *Evidence from fossils now points overwhelmingly away from the classical Darwinism which most Americans learned in high school* (p. 108).

Many of the young paleontologists at the Chicago conference have pushed for a new concept of evolution called *statis* (static). As Parker humorously describes it: "the most fundamental fact of their theory of change is that everything stays the same!" (p. 110).

This new evolution concept, most vigorously promoted by Stephen J. Gould of Harvard, is known technically as "punctuated equilibrium." More popularly, it is know as the "hopeful-monster theory," a theory that was introduced back in the 1930s by Richard Goldschmidt of the University of California, and others. This view maintains that the reason we find no missing links between reptiles and birds, for example, is because the first bird simply hatched out of a reptile egg! This supposedly happened as a result of "radical chromosome rearrangements or cataclysmic mutations in regulatory genes" (p. 112). Unfortunately for this new theory, however, no hopeful monster has ever been seen to appear as a result of mutations or chromosome rearrangement. Gould himself also wonders what such a hopeful monster

could mate with (p. 114). But if creation is unthinkable, and no one seems to be finding evidence of in-between creatures in the fossil record, some such absurdities must be imagined by modern evolutionists!

In the light of this, we can understand why Gary Parker feels that "sometimes it's kind of fun to be a creationist. The 'rear-guard' neo-Darwinian evolutionists like to point out the apparent absurdity of hopeful-monster evolution and claim that *evolution could not happen fast*. The punctuational evolutionists point to genetic limits and the fossil evidence to show that *evolution did not happen slowly*. The creationist simply agrees with both sides: evolution couldn't happen fast and it didn't happen slowly—because evolution can't and didn't happen at all!" (p. 115). Thus, concludes Parker:

> This new concept of evolution is based on the fossils we *don't* find and on genetic mechanisms that have *never* been observed. The case for creation is based on thousands of tons of fossils that we *have* found and on genetic mechanisms (variation within type) that we *do* observe and put into practice every day. As a scientist, I'm inclined to prefer a model that's based on what we *do* see and *can* explain (creation), rather than one that's based on what we don't see and cannot explain (evolution) (p. 116).

The crucial issue of human origins is adequately presented in this handbook. Some of the popular ape-men specimens of two generations ago, such as the Piltdown Man, the Java-ape Man, and the Nebraska Man, are shown to have been complete hoaxes (pp. 118–19). Even the most recent finds, such as "Lucy" and other Australopithecines, turn out, upon closer inspection, to be exactly what the name implies, namely, "southern apes." Like the modern pygmy chimpanzee, "*Pan paniscus*," they may have been able to walk upright, but *not in the human manner* (pp. 121–24). Even more significantly, Richard Leakey found "bones virtually indistinguishable from those of modern man" *beneath* the bones his father, Louis Leakey, had unearthed and named Zinjanthropus (p. 124). Thus, "the Australopithecines could not have been our ancestors, of course, if people were walking around *before* Lucy and her kin were fossilized." For example, the fossils of ordinary people in "Mid-Tertiary" rock have been found in Castenedolo, Italy, and Charles Oxnard ("Human Fossils: New View of Old Bones," *American Biology Teacher*, May, 1979) calls attention to the "*Kanapoi hominid*, a human upper arm bone found in rock strata in Africa laid down *before* those that entomb the australopithecine remains" (p. 125). Then follows a fascinating discussion of fossilized footprints that are obviously human, not only in east Africa, but also in the Paluxy River bed near Glen Rose, Texas. Some of these footprints actually cross the tracks of dinosaurs (pp. 125–29). Parker answers the common objection that these footprints could have been carved, by stating:

> The carved tracks are usually *obviously* carved and, in any doubtful cases, carved and natural tracks can be distinguished because the fine lines in the natural limestone cement will be cut through in a carving but will follow the pressure ridge in a print pushed up as the original sediment—with both manlike and dinosaur tracks—hardened (p. 128).

This, of course, raises the entire question of the validity of the "geologic column."

> Now the geologic column is an idea, *not* an actual series of rock layers. Nowhere do we find the complete sequence. Even the walls of the Grand Canyon include only five of the twelve major systems (one, five, six, and seven, with small protions here and there of the fourth system, the Devonian). . . . According to creationists, the geological systems represent different ecological zones, the buried remains of plants and animals that once lived together in the same environment. A walk through Grand Canyon, then, is not like a walk through evolutionary time; instead, it's like a walk from the bottom of the ocean, across the tidal zone, over the shore, across the lowlands, and on into the upland regions (pp. 129–31).

In parts of the Grand Canyon, Mississippian rock rests paraconformably on Cambrian rock—a gap of 125 million years of hypothetical evolutionary time with no evidence of a time break at all. These imagined Ordovician, Silurian, and Devonian ages simply vanished! But "we simply can't imagine just sitting there for [125] million years, neither eroding or depositing, then picking up exactly where it left off" (pp. 132–33).

In addition to this, fossil trees (called polystrates) have been found extending through many rock layers or strata. Such fossils cry out for catastrophic burial! Through the research of Steven Austin and others, we now know that the massive coal seams in North America and elsewhere must have been formed rapidly from plant debris deposited under mats of vegetation floating in sea water (pp. 134–36). Thus, "*massive flooding and catastrophic upheaval*" is the key that unlocks the mystery of the origin of coal and other fossil fuels.

Such evidences are bringing about a significant change of thinking on the part of scientists who confront the realities of the fossil world. An entire group of evolutionary geologists now call themselves "*neo-catastrophists.*" Derek Ager, past president of the British Geologic Associaiton, looking at geologic evidence around the world, was reminded of the life of a soldier, full of "long periods of boredom and short periods of terror" ("The Nature of the Fossil Record," *Proceedings of the Geological Association* 87:2 [1976] 131–59). Parker brilliantly comments:

> It seems to me that the "long periods of boredom" are the contact lines between the strata (the *absence* of deposits where, presumably, all the evolution has occurred); the "short periods of terror" formed the fossil-bearing deposits themselves. It is rapid, large-scale processes that form the fossil-bearing deposits we actually observe (pp. 136–37).

Evolutionists are usually deeply frustrated to find creationists using quotations like these to their own advantage in creation-evolution debates and writings. (See *Newsweek*, March 29, 1982, p. 46.) Derek Ager himself is no exception:

> Ager knows that the creationists ("California sects," he calls them) are going to make use of his work, and he's absolutely right. We're not arguing our case on the strength of his opinion, however, but upon the evidence that he knows so well. The evidence suggests rapid deposition on a large scale—catastrophism. . . . As I write this, evolutionists seem to be stepping all over themselves to see who can come up with the right worldwide catastrophe to explain the sudden, worldwide extinction of the dinosaurs. . . . (p. 137).

In the present debate, it is important to recognize the extreme rarity of conditions for massive fossilization:

> Nowhere on earth today do we have fossils forming on the scale that we see in geologic deposits. The Karroo Beds in Africa, for example, contain the remains of perhaps 800 billion vertebrates! A million fish can be killed in red tides in the Gulf of Mexico today, but they simply decay away and do not become fossils. Similarly, debris from vegetation mats doesn't become coal unless it is buried under a heavy load of sediment (p. 138).

Parker is convinced that catastrophism not only explains the cause of massive fossilization, but also helps us to understand patterns of extinction we see when we compare living forms with their fossil relatives:

> A catastrophe would wipe out creatures regardless of their environmental fitness. . . . That would explain why present forms appear to be no more fit to survive than their fossil relatives. At best only a few of each type would survive, and these would possess less of the original created gene pool. That would help to explain why most groups existed in greater variety in times past than they do now. . . . Worldwide climate changes, brought on by massive flooding and other catastrophes, might also help us to explain patterns of survival. Fossil plants and living plants include both spore-bearing and seed-bearing types. Both types have been hit by extinction, but the spore-bearing plants have been much more hard hit by extinction, and those are the types of plants that would find it harder to migrate throughout an earth with climate extremes like we have today. Similarly, animals can be described as warm-blooded or cold-blooded. Again, it's the cold-blooded, those less likely to adapt to climate extremes like we have today, that have been most strongly devastated by extinction (pp. 140–41).

Parker concludes his half of this remarkable volume by an appeal to the sad experience of Galileo three hundred years ago. This is particularly significant because Galileo's case is generally used by evolutionists as leverage against the supposed threat of Christian theologians to the academic freedom and open inquiry of scientists today!

> When Galileo first presented the evidence against Ptolemy's earth-centered view of astronomy, leaders of "the establishment" refused to even look through his telescope. The leaders in those days were both churchmen and scientists who had, unfortunately, made the thinking of an early Egyptian astronomer an article of faith (a warning against making a particular theory an "article of faith" in the "establishment" today?). Today it's too often the evolutionist who hides behind thought-stifling ridicule and cliche (e.g., misinterpreted "separation of church and state") and refuses to even "look through the telescope" (or microscope!) at the evidence of creation (pp. 141–43).

Paradoxically, the Galileos of our day turn out to be creation scientists! It is evolutionism that blinds and binds the inquiring mind of man.

> But for one whose mind is open to the possibility of creation, there is freedom indeed! Nature becomes a scientist's dream. Everyone, scientists included, can tell the difference between a pebble and an arrowhead—one shaped by time and chance acting on the inherent properties of matter, the other with irreducible properties of organization resulting from design and creation. If scientists can't

> study created objects, they can't study arrowheads or airplanes. If they are open to creation as a possibility, then they are free to explore both kinds of order, and to test predictions and inferences against observations" (p. 148).

Parker is to be commended for this concise and fascinatingly written up-date of the creationist perspective in "The Life Sciences."