

Book Review

Did God Create in Six Days?

Edited by Dr. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and Rev. David W. Hall

Southern Presbyterian Press, P.O. Box 690, Taylors, SC 29687. 1999, 339 pages, \$18

There is an ongoing debate over the interpretation of Genesis 1 in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). The issue was raised by a number of Presbyteries and individuals in the church following the publication of an annual report from the denominational seminary (Covenant, Saint Louis) noting the latitude of beliefs regarding the Genesis account of creation within the faculty. The seminary administration and faculty rightfully protested that nothing at the seminary has changed in forty years. Their stasis has been overtaken by an awareness in the denomination at large that this issue is important. Those who want to accept both the Bible and modern science reference many post-1800 reformed scholars for their overly-tolerant views of evolution and the supposed great age of the earth, a position unfortunately (but not uniformly) common to the reformed academic elite this century. Too little has been heard of defenders of Genesis such as Dr. Robert L. Dabney and their able sons, such as Dr. D. James Kennedy. Since the issue has been raised to the highest church court, the General Assembly, the governmental structure of the PCA must force a resolution of the issue, in spite of any discomfort. A study committee has been appointed and we should all pray that God would lead the PCA into a more faithful position on these important issues.

Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (GPTS) in South Carolina has responded to the issue by taking a strong theological stand for the sequential, chronological interpretation of Genesis 1 and its corollary of a young earth. In order to clarify arguments from both sides for the study committee, the seminary recently sponsored a disputation, inviting prominent theologians advocating non-literal interpretations to debate the seminary faculty. The proceedings of this symposium have just been published and released by the seminary as the book, *Did God Create in Six Days?* Although scientists of CRS may not all be greatly interested in the wealth of material specific to the Presbyterian tradition in this book, they should enjoy the presentation and critiques of the “day-age” position, the “Framework Hypothesis”, and a new style of interpretation called “Discourse Analysis”. Theological critiques of major non-literal views of Genesis 1 are ably provided by the seminary faculty. The contribution by Dr. Pipa, “From Chaos to Cosmos: A Critique of the Non-Literal Interpretations of Genesis 1:1–2:3” is especially helpful and thor-

ough. Although scientists tend to easily get bogged down in the apparent minutiae of theology, they would be well advised (as would anyone else) to spend a little time in this book. After all, not everyone is a scientist, but everyone is a theologian.

Two other contributions of special note are one by Rev. David Hall of Oak Ridge, Tennessee and another by Dr. Stuart Patterson, former Dean and Chemistry Department Chairman at Furman University. Rev. Hall has researched the position of pre-nineteenth century theologians, and does a masterful job of refuting the false claims of those theistic evolutionists (e.g., Hugh Ross) who seek company with the great theologians of the past. Rev. Hall shows that these giants of the past are often misunderstood and sometimes deliberately misrepresented. The great debate of the 17th century about the time of creation was not millions of years, but millionths of a second! Augustine of Hippo had concluded that God had created instantaneously; seventeenth century theologians opted for a literal interpretation of Genesis 1. This debate obviously had nothing to do with uniformitarianism, a fact lost on those who today see old earth views in the ancient church fathers. Rev. Hall’s conclusions will carry great weight with the PCA, a confessional church that has adopted the theology and polity of the 17th century Westminster standards. Written records from the Westminster divines, available at present, are shown to be unanimous in their support of the 24-hour day, young earth interpretation of Genesis. Finally, for those who can survive the theological tidal wave of the first few hundred pages, Dr. Patterson provides a concise summary of the scientific evidences pertinent to the age of the earth.

Although I freely admit a built-in bias towards this book because of a long association and friendship with both Dr. Patterson and Dr. Pipa, I would encourage the readers of the *Quarterly* to see for themselves how helpful and timely this book is, and to contradict the statement of Rev. Hall who stated that after ministering for some time in a highly scientific community he found “that most (not all, fortunately) practicing scientists were as philosophically sophisticated as most NFL players.” Reading this book would be a good start away from being a “Super Bowl Socrates”.

John K. Reed
915 Hunting Horn Way
Evans, GA 30809