

FROM MORRIS & WHITCOMB,  
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deaths before the Fall of Adam; that many important kinds of animals had long since become extinct by the time God created Adam to have dominion over every living creature; and that long ages before the Edenic curse giant flesh-eating monsters like *Tyrannosaurus Rex* roamed the earth, slashing their victims with ferocious dagger-like teeth and claws.

But how can such an interpretation of the history of the animal kingdom be reconciled with the early chapters of Genesis? Does the Book of Genesis, honestly studied in the light of the New Testament, allow for a reign of tooth and claw and death and destruction before the Fall of Adam? If not, we have further compelling reasons for questioning the uniformitarian scheme of reading the rocks and at the same time strong encouragement for finding in the great Genesis Flood the true explanation for fossil formations in the crust of our planet.

## INTRODUCTION

If the concept of a universal Flood since the appearance of man on the earth is difficult to reconcile with uniformitarian geology, it must be confessed that the Biblical doctrine of the Fall is even more irreconcilable with this scientific hypothesis. But there is a much closer connection between the Biblical doctrines of the Fall and the Flood than the mere fact that neither can be harmonized with uniformitarian views of the earth's history. The really important connection between them consists in the explanation which a universal Flood provides for the laying down of the fossiliferous strata since the time of Adam; for once the full implications of the Edenic curse are understood, it will be seen that only within the framework of a supernatural catastrophism can a satisfactory explanation be given for these fossils. To put the issue into its sharpest delineations, a literal interpretation of the Fall demands as its corollary a thorough-going Biblical catastrophism; and the doctrine of the Flood can be fully understood only in the light of the Fall and the Edenic curse.

Uniformitarian paleontology, of course, dates the formation of the major fossiliferous strata many scores and hundreds of millions of years before the appearance of human beings on the earth. It assumes that uncounted billions of animals had experienced natural or violent

## ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE FALL

In the face of such clear-cut passages as Romans 5:12-21 and I Corinthians 15:21-22, few who accept the Bible as the Word of God will deny that Adam's sin and fall introduced *spiritual* and *physical* death into the human race. In the Romans passage we learn that "through *one man* sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all sinned . . . by the trespass of *the one* many died . . . the judgment came of *one* unto condemnation . . . by the trespass of *the one*, death reigned through *the one* . . . through *one trespass* the judgment came unto all men to condemnation . . . through the *one man's* disobedience the many were made sinners. . . ." And if such Biblical testimony were regarded as insufficient to settle the matter, we are told also in the Corinthians passage that "*by man* came death" and "*in Adam* all die."

The Bible further teaches that all human beings have descended from one human pair (Gen. 3:20, "Eve . . . was the mother of *all living*"; Acts 17:26, "he made of *one* every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth") and that these first human beings were created directly by God wholly apart from any evolutionary development of man's body from animal forms. Theistic evolutionists readily admit that man's soul and spirit were created directly by God. But

the non-evolutionary origin of Adam's body can also be easily demonstrated from the Scriptures.

In the first place, the Lord Jesus Christ stated that "he who made them from the beginning made them *male and female*" (Matt. 19:4, cf. 1:27). But would not supposed animal ancestors have been male and female already? In the second place, Genesis 2:21-23 clearly indicates that Eve came out of Adam and not from the animal kingdom by some evolutionary process. This is confirmed by the Apostle Paul: "the man is not of the woman; but *the woman of the man*" (I Cor. 11:8). If Eve received her body in this purely supernatural way out of Adam's side, why should anyone postulate an evolutionary development for Adam's body? Such a view would be completely inconsistent. In the third place, the Bible teaches that Adam's body was made "of the dust of the ground" (Gen. 2:7), not of evolved animal forms. Louis Berkhof explains:

Some theologians, in their eagerness to harmonize the teachings of Scripture with the theory of evolution, suggest that this may be interpreted to mean that God formed the body of man out of the body of animals, *which is after all but dust*. But this is entirely unwarranted, since no reason can be assigned why the general expression "of the dust of the ground" should be used after the writer had already described the creation of the animals and might therefore have made the statement far more specific. Moreover, this interpretation is also excluded by the statement in Gen. 3:19, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return." This certainly does not mean that man shall return to his former animal state. Beast and man alike return again to the dust. Eccl. 3:19-20. Finally, we are told explicitly in I Cor. 15:39 that "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts."<sup>1</sup>

Finally, the phrase "man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7) cannot permit the thought of evolutionary development. A Christian anthropologist summarizes the argument as follows:

Genesis 1:21 states that God created every "living creature" (*nephesh hayah*) which the waters brought forth, and verse 24 states that "God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature" (*nephesh hayah*) ". . . of the earth." Then Genesis 2:7 states, "And the Lord God formed man . . . and man became a living soul" (*nephesh hayah*) presumably for the first

<sup>1</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1941), p. 184.

time. So it would certainly seem from this that man was not derived from any pre-existing line of *nephesh hayah*, or living creatures.<sup>1</sup>

In the light of this Biblical revelation concerning the origin of Adam and Eve, Christians must insist upon the *essential unity*<sup>2</sup> and the *supernatural, non-evolutionary creation*<sup>3</sup> of the human race. Otherwise, there could be no such thing as human sin or eternal salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:23; Heb. 2:9,14; I John 1:5-2:2).

It is well known that some of the most "ancient" human skulls have practically the same capacity as those of modern man; while many human remains have been buried in such a manner as to indicate belief in the after-life.<sup>4</sup> Did such men have eternal spirits? Did they commit sin? To these questions the Christian must give an affirmative answer, for God "made of *one* every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26) and that one was *Adam*.

What are we to say, then, concerning the Fall and the modern science of physical anthropology? We say, on the basis of overwhelming Biblical evidence, that every fossil man that has ever been discovered, or ever will be discovered, is a *descendant* of the *supernaturally created* Adam and Eve. This is absolutely essential to the entire edifice of Christian theology, and there can simply be no true Christianity without it. With only a few exceptions,<sup>5</sup> American evan-

<sup>1</sup> James O. Buswell, III, "A Creationist Interpretation of Prehistoric Man," Chapter X in *Evolution and Christian Thought Today*, edited by Russell L. Mixer (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1959), p. 186. Buswell observes: "The theistic evolutionist, if he allows man to have arisen from a non-human form, is obliged to inject some action or other upon his physical body in addition to giving him a soul, in order to make that body perfect and not subject to death. To me this is simply an additional and unnecessary complication of hypotheses to which Occam's razor (entities must not be unnecessarily multiplied) could well be applied." *Loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> See Benjamin B. Warfield, "On The Antiquity and The Unity of The Human Race," Chapter IX in *Biblical and Theological Studies*, edited by Samuel G. Craig (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., 1952), pp. 238-261.

<sup>3</sup> See Oswald T. Allis, "The Time Element in Genesis 1 and 2," *Torch and Trumpet*, VIII, No. 3 (July-August, 1958), pp. 16-18.

<sup>4</sup> See A. L. Kroeber, *Anthropology* (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1948), pp. 112-115, 625.

<sup>5</sup> Such exceptions include several prominent representatives of the so-called "new evangelicism," such as Cordelia Erdman Barber, "Fossils and Their Occurrence," Chapter VIII in *Evolution and Christian Thought Today*, p. 151; and Dr. Edward John Carnell, Professor of Apologetics at Fuller Theological Seminary, *The Case For Orthodox Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 95. For example, Dr. Carnell says: "The Genesis account implies an act of immediate creation, but the same account also implies that God made the world in six literal days;

gelicals have been willing to part company with evolutionary anthropology along these lines. But why? Certainly not because Christians have carefully studied the pros and cons of various theories of the origin of man and have concluded that the Biblical view is the most consistent with the "facts." No one ever arrives at a world-and-life view by such a purely inductive method. The true reason why Christians have been willing (with some exceptions, of course) to take their stand upon a Biblical anthropology, in opposition to an evolutionary anthropology is that they enjoy a vital spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ and accept His authority. It was none other than the Son of God Himself who taught Christians to accept the historical accuracy of the Old Testament in general (Matt. 5:18, Luke 16:17, 18:31, 24:25,44, John 10:35) and the Book of Genesis in particular (Matt. 19:4, 23:35, 24:37-39, Luke 17:29,32). Standing upon this infallible foundation, the Christian is perfectly confident that modern scientific theories (colored as they are by the presuppositions of finite and fallible men) cannot possibly constitute the final word on the subject of the origin and early history of man. And beyond that, he is perfectly sure that when all the evidence is in, his faith in the Son of God and in the verbally inspired special revelation of God will be found to have led him to an accurate knowledge and understanding of these vitally important matters.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE ANIMAL KINGDOM AND THE FALL

Now if the Christian has spiritually compelling reasons for insisting that the science of anthropology be interpreted in the light of Biblical revelation, what should be his attitude toward the science of

and since orthodoxy has given up the literal-day theory out of respect for geology, it would certainly forfeit no principle if it gave up the immediate-creation theory out of respect for paleontology. The two seem to be quite parallel . . . If God was pleased to breathe his image into a creature that had previously come from the dust, so be it." Although he does not personally subscribe to theistic evolution, Bernard Ramm insists that it is not essentially antichristian and should be viewed with tolerance. *Op cit.*, pp. 280-293.

<sup>1</sup> It has often been maintained that God has given us two revelations, one in nature and one in the Bible and that they cannot contradict each other. This is certainly correct; but when one subconsciously identifies with natural revelation his own interpretations of nature and then denounces theologians who are unwilling to mold Biblical revelation into conformity with his interpretation of nature, he is guilty of serious error. After all, special revelation supersedes natural revelation, for it is only by means of special revelation that we can interpret aright the world about us.

paleontology? What do the Scriptures teach concerning the relationship between the human race and the animal kingdom? Have animals as well as man been affected by the Fall, or has the animal kingdom continued for countless ages, even before the creation of Adam, in its struggle for existence against a multiplicity of hostile forces?

#### The Bondage of Corruption

The first passage of Scripture which we must examine in this connection is Romans 8:19-22.

For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

It was at the time of the Edenic curse of Gen. 3:17-19 that "the creation was subjected to vanity" by God. This "vanity" (of which the Book of Ecclesiastes speaks so eloquently) is further described as "the bondage of corruption," which is the explanation for the fact that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." This passage teaches very clearly that some tremendous transformations took place in the realm of nature at the time of the Edenic curse; and therefore any scientific theory which purports to explain the history of life on this planet without taking into full account the effects of the Fall upon the realm of nature must be rejected.

#### Adam's Dominion Over Animals

But there are other passages besides Romans 8:19-22 which indicate rather clearly that the Edenic curse had far-reaching effects upon nature, including the animal kingdom. In Genesis 1:28, for example, we are told that God gave to Adam "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." This is the dominion of which we read in Psalm 8:6-8.

Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts

of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

It was on the basis of such God-constituted *dominion* that Adam "gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the heavens, and to every beast of the field" (Gen. 2:20). Likewise Christ, the last Adam, exercised *dominion* "over the fish of the sea" when He commanded a fish in the Sea of Galilee to take a shekel of silver into its mouth, and to take hold of Peter's hook (Matt. 17:27) and when He commanded 153 fishes to move into the disciples' nets (John 21:6-11; cf. Luke 5:4-7).

Daily experience teaches us that dominion of *this kind* is no longer being exercised by the human race over the animal kingdom. Something drastic has taken place in man's relationship to the animal kingdom since the days of the Garden of Eden. The subservience and instant obedience of all classes of animals to the will of man has been transformed into a fear and dread of man that often brings with it violence and destruction.

As a matter of fact, the New Testament interprets the eighth psalm as referring to a relationship that is not now in force. After quoting Psalm 8:4-6, the author of Hebrews comments:

For in that he subjected all things unto him, he left nothing that is not subject to him. *But now we see not yet all things subjected to him.* But we behold him who has been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus . . . (Heb. 2:8-9).

Since Psalm 8 refers primarily to man as originally constituted by God, and not to Christ, the author of Hebrews seems to be saying that even though we do not see man at the present time exercising his constituted dominion over the animal kingdom and the rest of nature, we do at least see *one* member of the human race, "even Jesus," who even *now* exercises such dominion and that through *Him* redeemed men shall at last regain all that they lost in Adam, and much more besides, thus bringing into final fulfillment the statements of the eighth psalm.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that the animal kingdom is not at the present subject to man's dominion is further confirmed by the terms of God's covenant with Noah after the Flood. Notice the contrast between this cove-

<sup>1</sup> See the standard commentaries on this passage in Hebrews, such as those by Henry Alford, Franz Delitzsch, B. F. Westcott, Albert Barnes, and R. C. H. Lenski.

nant and the statement of Genesis 1:28, which we have already examined. In Genesis 9:2,5, God said to Noah and his family:

The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the heavens; with all wherewith the ground teemeth, and all the fishes of the sea, into your hand are they delivered . . . and surely your blood, the blood of your lives, will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it . . .

Let it be noted that "the fear of you and the dread of you" cannot be understood as the equivalent of "dominion" in Genesis 1:28, because here we are specifically told that beasts will be capable of shedding "the blood of your lives." An illustration of how the shedding of human blood would be required "at the hand of every beast" is found in Exodus 21:28: "And if an ox gore a man or a woman to death, *the ox shall be surely stoned*, and its flesh shall not be eaten." Such a possibility, of course, cannot be imagined in the case of the first Adam before the Fall or the Last Adam during His earthly ministry! No animal could have harmed them, because God put all things under their feet.

### Vegetarian Diet Before the Fall

One of the clearest texts in the Old Testament on the transformation of animal characteristics after the Fall is that which describes the diet which God ordained for animals before the Fall. Before the Edenic curse, this was God's provision for the food of animals: "to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, *I have given every green herb for food*: and it was so" (Gen. 1:30). Under such conditions, there could have been no carnivorous beasts on earth before the Fall; for the animals to which God gave "every green herb for food" included "every beast of the field" and "every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein is life."

In discussing the important question of death in the animal kingdom in relation to the Fall, Dr. Edwin Y. Monsma, Professor and Head of the Department of Biology at Calvin College, makes the following observations:

The eating of herbs, seeds, and fruits implies the death of these plant parts from a biologist's point of view because they all contain living pro-

toplasm. But there is no indication here of destructive and natural death of whole living organisms nor of the carnivorous habit upon which so many animals are dependent at present. Indeed, nowhere in the Scriptures is there any indication of natural or accidental death before the fall of man. Even immediately after the fall the natural processes which culminate in death seemed to work much more slowly than they do now, as is evident from the great age of men during the antediluvian period. Reformed scholars have generally been of the opinion that the Bible gives no evidence of death among animals before the fall but rather that the opposite is true.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the greatest Reformed thinkers of modern times have insisted that this is the Biblical view of the animal kingdom as originally constituted by God. For example, Abraham Kuyper, founder of the Free University of Amsterdam, concluded:

Also wild beasts were not originally created as carnivores. That is substantiated by the fact that they came to Adam without devouring him. Their carnivorous condition can be explained out of the curse alone. At present we distinguish between vermin, predators, and domestic animals, but that difference is not derived from creation. Then the green herb was the food of all animals.<sup>2</sup>

In the Stone Lectures of 1930, delivered at Princeton Theological Seminary, Valentine Hepp, Professor of Theology at the Free University of Amsterdam, made the following significant statement:

Whether it is correct to say that before the fall organic life used up its life-power is a question. But we may never believe that any organic being could have suffered death by violence before the fall . . . the dumb fossils . . . cannot be placed as petrifications within the hexaemeron [the six days of creation].<sup>3</sup>

Numerous Lutheran scholars have been led by Genesis 1:30 to adopt a similar position, but the following statement by H. C. Leupold may be considered as representative:

<sup>1</sup> Edwin Y. Monsma, *If Not Evolution, What Then?* (Published by the author, 1955) p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Abraham Kuyper, *Dictaten Dogmatiek* (Kok, Kampen), II, 91-92. Quoted by Monsma, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Valentine Hepp, *Calvinism and the Philosophy of Nature* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1930), pp. 185-187. See also Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1948), p. 50; and Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1941), p. 670. Albertus Pieters, *op. cit.*, p. 59, cites G. C. Aalders, Professor of Old Testament at the Free University of Amsterdam, as finding this significance in Genesis 1:30 also.

In brief, this verse is an indication of the perfect harmony prevailing in the animal world. No beast preyed upon the other. Rapacious and ferocious wild beasts did not yet exist. This verse, then, indicates very briefly for this chapter what is unfolded at length in chapter two, that a paradise-like state prevailed at creation.<sup>1</sup>

Now it cannot be objected that this is a mere argument from silence and that animals may very well have been constituted by God in such a way that they could eat each other as well as "every green herb for food"; for in Isaiah 11:6-9 we are given God's picture of *ideal conditions* in the animal kingdom, not only with respect to relationships between animals and men, but also between the various kinds of animals:

And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like an ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain . . . (Isa. 11:6-9; cf. 65:25).

Now if this is God's ideal plan for the animal kingdom, it is quite impossible to assume that the Bible allows for the existence of carnivorous beasts, violence, and death before the Fall; for the creation account ends with the statement that "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."

Even commentators who do not hold to the concept of a literal future millennial age on the earth insist that this prophecy of Isaiah indicates the kind of conditions that existed on the earth before the Fall. For example, John Calvin states:

He describes the order which was at the beginning, before man's apostasy produced the unhappy and melancholy change under which we groan. Whence comes the cruelty of beasts, which prompts the stronger to seize and rend and devour with dreadful violence the weaker animals? There would certainly have been no discord among the creatures of God, if they had remained in their first and original condition. When they exercise cruelty towards each other, and the weak need to be protected against

<sup>1</sup> H. C. Leupold: *Exposition of Genesis* (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1942), pp. 98-99. See also John Theodore Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1934), p. 184; and Keil, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-67, for additional supporting arguments.

the strong, it is an evidence of the disorder (*ataxias*) which has sprung from the sinfulness of man . . . if the stain of sin had not polluted the world, no animal would have been addicted to prey on blood, but the fruits of the earth would have sufficed for all, according to the method which God had appointed (Gen. 1:30).<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, Oswald T. Allis considers Isaiah's prophecy to be specially significant in this connection. In commenting on Genesis 1:30, he writes:

That originally the food of man and of the animals was, and under ideal conditions will be, vegetarian is clearly taught here and suggested by Isaiah 11:9, 65:25. Many of the so-called carnivora are largely or wholly vegetarians. It was after the Fall and the Flood that the eating of flesh was permitted to man.<sup>2</sup>

Some have objected that vast structural changes would have been involved in making an herbivore into a carnivore and that such a transformation would have been tantamount to a creation of new Genesis "kinds" after the termination of the Creation Week.<sup>3</sup> But this is surely an exaggeration of the facts. Isaiah says that *lions* (not some totally new kind of animal) will eat straw like oxen; *wolves* will dwell with lambs; *leopards* will lie down with kids; *bears* will feed with cows; and *deadly serpents* will be pets for children.

#### *The Edenic Curse and Structural Changes*

In order to clarify this problem in our thinking, let us consider two examples of specific structural and organic changes that occurred as a direct result of the Edenic curse, according to the third chapter of Genesis, which did not involve "an entirely new creation" or the loss of identity in the creatures involved.

The first case for consideration is that of the serpent, which is introduced in Genesis 3:1 as being "more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made." Presumably, the serpent was possessed of four legs like other "beasts of the field." But the fact that Satan had used this creature as an instrument for deceiving Eve

<sup>1</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1948), I, 383-384.

<sup>2</sup> Oswald T. Allis, *God Spoke By Moses*, p. 13. See also Keil, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> See Albertus Pieters, *op. cit.*, p. 55; Edward Hitchcock, *op. cit.*, p. 81; and Brian P. Sutherland, "The Fall and its Relation to Present Conditions in Nature," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*, Vol. II, No. 4 (Dec., 1950), p. 15.

brought the curse of God upon the instrument as well as upon the deceiver himself.<sup>1</sup>

From the earliest times it has been recognized as a psychologically valid principle of pedagogy that sub-human creatures which have been used as instruments of sin be included in the punishment of the offender. Biblical examples of this are found in Genesis 6:7, 7:21; Exodus 21:28; Leviticus 20:15, 16; Joshua 7:24, and elsewhere.

But the important thing to notice, so far as our discussion is concerned, is not *why* the serpent was punished as the instrument of Satan but *how* it was punished. Observe carefully the wording here: "cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; *upon thy belly shalt thou go*, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life" (3:14). Surely to be deprived of limbs involved far greater structural transformations in this creature than would have been involved in changing herbivores into carnivores, and the serpent's transformation took place after the Creation Week. C. F. Keil concludes:

If these words are not to be robbed of their entire meaning, they cannot be understood in any other way than as denoting that the form and movements of the serpent were altered, and that its present repulsive shape is the effect of the curse pronounced upon it, though we cannot form any accurate idea of its original appearance.<sup>2</sup>

The force of this analogy as an argument for the general transformation of the animal kingdom at the time of the Fall may be judged by the efforts which some uniformitarians have exerted to escape from its clear implications. For example, Edward Hitchcock wrote:

The sentence pronounced upon the serpent for his agency in man's apostasy seems, at first view, favorable to the opinion that animal natures experienced at the same time important changes; for he is supposed to have been deprived of his limbs, and condemned henceforth to crawl upon the

<sup>1</sup> Herman Bavinck's note on the fall of Satan is helpful here: "In Genesis 1:31 it may well be that it is said of the whole work of creation and not of the creation of the earth alone that God saw what He had made, and, behold, it was very good. If so, the rebellion and the disobedience of the angels must have taken place after the sixth day of creation." *Our Reasonable Faith* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1956), p. 221.

<sup>2</sup> Keil, *op. cit.*, p. 99. Bernard Ramm completely misses the point by asking, "Are we to believe . . . that the sharp claws of the big cats and the magnificent array of teeth in a lion's mouth were for vegetarian purposes only?" *Op. cit.*, p. 335; cf. p. 209. The point is that such specialized structures appeared for the first time after the Edenic curse.

earth, and to make the dust his food. But is it the more probable interpretation of the passage, which makes the tempter a literal serpent, or only a symbolical one? . . . Hence the probability is, that an evil spirit is described in Genesis under the name of a serpent. This conclusion is supported by other parts of Scripture where the tempter is in several places declared to be "the devil," "the old serpent," and "the great dragon."<sup>1</sup>

How similar to this are the allegorizing techniques of modern Barthian theology, even Hitchcock would have been surprised to learn. But here again, the student of Scripture must make an all-important choice between authorities; for uniformitarian theories of paleontology cannot long survive in an atmosphere of consistent Biblical hermeneutics and exegesis.

However, there is yet another instance of physical changes in living organisms that took place as a direct result of the Edenic curse. It is the case of Eve, to whom God said: "I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children . . ." (Gen. 3:16). In the light of this verse, it would be precarious indeed to argue that the Edenic curse was confined to purely moral and spiritual realms; for we are clearly told here that an important *change* took place in Eve's body. Whereas she would have borne children without pain before the Fall in accordance with the Edenic command to "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28), the very structure of her body was now altered by God in such a way that childbirth would be accomplished henceforth by severe pain. While it is true that this case does not prove a similarly drastic change in the animal kingdom at the time of the Fall, it serves as an important illustration of how God could have introduced significant changes in the physical make-up of His creatures without at the same time eradicating their identity and producing thereby newly created "kinds."

#### THE PLANT KINGDOM AND THE FALL

Turning our attention now from the animal kingdom to the plant kingdom, we read of further important effects of the Edenic curse: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground . . ." (Gen. 3:17-19).

<sup>1</sup> Hitchcock, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

Once again, it becomes evident that uniformitarianism can find no place in its scheme of things for such a transformation of nature at the time of the Fall; and, therefore, its advocates have been compelled to eliminate this curse from the text of Scripture by various stratagems of exegesis and logic. A recent example of such an effort may be found in the following statement by Bernard Ramm:

Part of man's judgment was that he was turned out of that park and into the conditions prevalent in the rest of the creation . . . Ideal conditions existed only in the Garden . . . Outside of the Garden of Eden were death, disease, weeds, thistles, thorns, carnivores, deadly serpents, and intemperate weather. To think otherwise is to run counter to an immense avalanche of fact. Part of the blessedness of man was that he was spared all of these things in Paradise, and part of the judgment of man was that he had to forsake such a Paradise and enter the world as it was outside of the Garden, where thistles grew and weeds were abundant and where wild animals roamed and where life was only possible by the sweat of man's brow.<sup>1</sup>

The principal objection to this approach to the problem is that it lacks a single shred of Scriptural support in its favor and runs counter to an immense avalanche of revelation. Let it be carefully noted that the text in question reads: "Cursed is *the ground* for thy sake . . . thorns and thistles *shall it bring forth to thee*." This is certainly an opposite concept from that advocated by Dr. Ramm and others of like persuasion, who presumably could wish that the author of Genesis had written the verse in the following manner: "Cursed art thou from the Garden; from henceforth shalt thou be removed to the thorns and thistles." But the Bible states that *the earth outside of the Garden* had to be cursed by God before it could bring forth thorns and thistles *for Adam's sake*. Uniformitarians insist that the earth has experienced such conditions for hundreds of millions of years and thus did not need to be cursed by God subsequent to the appearance of man in order to become overrun with thorns and thistles.

But in opposition to this view, we not only have the testimony of Romans 8:19-22 but also an important statement by Lamech, the father of Noah. Speaking many centuries after the Edenic curse, Lamech looked upon his new-born son with a hope implanted in his heart by the Lord Himself that Noah would somehow be instrumental in bringing to men a measure of release from the awful drudgery and toil of life:

<sup>1</sup> Ramm, *op. cit.*, pp. 334 f., cf. p. 209.



This same [Noah] shall comfort us in our work and in the toil of our hands, *which cometh because of the ground which Jehovah hath cursed.* (Gen. 5:29).

Now if this statement be not robbed of all its meaning, it indicates rather conclusively that the earth *outside* of the Garden of Eden had experienced a stupendous transformation as a result of the Fall. As a matter of fact, it implies quite clearly that the Flood was to bring a measure of relief from the bitter effects of the Edenic curse. For these reasons, among others, Christians have been entirely justified in thinking of the whole earth before the Fall in terms of Edenic conditions.

### THE BALANCE OF NATURE AND HARMONISTIC THEODICY

One argument that has frequently been advanced against the concept of an herbivorous animal kingdom before the Fall is that such an arrangement would have thrown the cycles of nature out of balance. It is claimed that no other balance of nature than the one with which we are familiar can be imagined, for it is necessary that certain types of creatures be devoured by others to prevent the earth from being overpopulated. Albertus Pieters expresses the argument as follows:

So far as we can see now, the existence of carnivorous beasts (including insect-eating birds) is necessary to preserve the "balance of nature." Without insectivorous birds, insect life would soon destroy vegetation, and even apparently harmless little animals like rabbits may become a scourge if there are no foxes and other carnivora to keep their numbers in check, as was abundantly illustrated in Australia some years ago. This "balance of nature" is essential to the perfection of God's creation and we are not to reckon it a blemish or an afterthought.<sup>1</sup>

But who are we to say that God is limited to the "balance of nature" which now prevails in the earth? Even if Edenic conditions had persisted for centuries, could not God have prevented the overpopulation of the earth with insects, fish, and other animals through a different means than by mutual extermination? Such reasoning reminds us of the pessimistic and fatalistic views of Thomas Robert

<sup>1</sup> Albertus Pieters, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

Malthus (1766-1834), who "proved" that a certain number of people simply *had* to starve to death or be killed in wars each year to prevent the earth from being overpopulated. After all, God *can* take care of His creatures, and mutual extermination does not happen to exhaust the possible methods at His disposal.

The human mind has a wonderful capacity (in its fallen state) for interpreting God's ways in its own finite terms and limiting the Supreme Being to its own little world of experience. Notice, for example, in the quotation cited above how the author leaps from his own present experience of things to the formulation of a law by which God must presumably operate in every age:

*So far as we can see now, the existence of carnivorous birds and beasts (including insect-eating birds) is necessary to preserve the "balance of nature" . . . This "balance of nature" is essential to the perfection of God's creation.*

Edward Hitchcock, one of the outstanding uniformitarian apologists of the last century, committed the same logical fallacy when he wrote:

It would require an entirely different system in nature from the present, in order to exclude death from the world. To the existing system it is as essential as gravitation, and apparently just as much a law of nature . . . The conclusions from all these facts and reasonings are, that death is an essential feature of the present system of organized nature; that it *must have entered into the plan of creation in the divine mind originally, and consequently must have existed in the world before the apostasy of man.*<sup>1</sup>

Actually, however, there is a very dangerous principle involved in this type of reasoning. By denying that the Fall and the Edenic curse had anything to do with the "bondage of corruption" under which the whole creation now travails in pain, these scholars are driven logically to the position of ascribing the conditions of evil which we see around us, so far as the realm of nature is concerned, to the hand of the Creator. Bernard Ramm states this position quite clearly:

The universe must contain all possible ranges of goodness. One of these grades of goodness is that it can fail in goodness . . . If there were nothing corruptible, or if there were no evil men, many good things would be missing in this universe. The lion lives because he can kill the ass and

<sup>1</sup> Hitchcock, *op. cit.*, pp. 77f. Italics are ours.



eat it. Avenging justice could only be praised if there were injustice; and patient suffering could be a virtue only in the presence of injustice. . . . Bacteria destroy the carrion of the earth for Nature's own good, but unfortunately the same bacteria can kill a living creature. . . . The entire system of nature involves tigers and lions, storms and high tides, diseases and parasites. It is part of our probation to learn how to capture or control the tiger and the lion. . . . If we fail in this probation innocent and sinful suffer alike. The baby dies of infection and the mother of fever; the young man of appendicitis and the prophet of pneumonia.<sup>1</sup>

It is quite astonishing to see how closely this philosophy of nature fits Professor Berkouwer's description of the "harmonistic theodicy" of the Stoics and of the German philosopher Leibnitz (1646-1716). In this type of theodicy,<sup>2</sup> which Professor Berkouwer vigorously opposes, the attempt is made to demonstrate that the world as we now see it is *the best possible world*. He sets forth the view as follows:

We must view everything in the world as part of the whole, part of the cosmic unity. We shall then discover that there is in all things a pre-established harmony. Naturally, we still hear some dissonant notes within the harmony, but these are not essential. . . . If we keep the interrelationship of things continually before us, we shall, says Leibnitz, learn to recognize God's goodness in creation. We shall then no longer allow evil and suffering to form a stumbling block to our faith in the righteousness of God's government. . . . Evil is inherent in the nature and structure of this world. It functions as an accessory to the whole, as an atonality which is blended into the beautiful harmony of the cosmos.<sup>3</sup>

It is true that Dr. Ramm would not want to trace human sin back to God; but he does refer with approval to Thomas Aquinas' idea that "if there were no evil men, many good things would be missing in this universe,"<sup>4</sup> which is dangerously close to that. This whole uniformitarian philosophy of nature richly deserves, in our opinion, the severe judgment pronounced by Berkouwer:

<sup>1</sup> Ramm, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-95. Ramm is here paraphrasing the "plenitude of being" concept of Augustine and Aquinas, which he attempts to qualify by adding the ingredients of divine probation and judgment. But it is difficult to see, from the standpoint of uniformitarianism, how "probation" and "judgment" could be expected to shine through the disharmonies of nature before Adam and Eve fell into sin, and especially in the supposed millions of years of animal life on earth before their creation.

<sup>2</sup> A "theodicy" is a vindication of the justice of God in permitting evil to exist.

<sup>3</sup> G. C. Berkouwer, *The Providence of God* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1952), pp. 256f.

<sup>4</sup> Ramm, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

This theodicy rests principally on a relativizing of sin. God's goodness shines only as the grim clouds of sin and evil are dispelled. . . . Recall, in contrast, how the Scriptures speak of sin as having "entered into the world" (Romans 5:12), as "enmity against God" (Romans 8:7). The basic error of this theodicy is its fundamental assumption that reason can find a proper place for sin in creation. . . . a fundamental failure to appreciate the awful reality of sin, suffering, and death. Oversimplification typifies it, and the self-evidency of this oversimplification has contributed to modern man's profound distrust of every attempt at a theodicy.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Christian scholars who attempt to fit uniformitarian paleontology into the framework of Genesis are not only forced into the use of unsound principles of hermeneutics and exegesis but also are in danger of stumbling into the quicksands of rationalistic philosophy. Surely, this is too high a price to pay for the perpetuation of a mere scientific theory!

To be sure, Dr. Ramm seeks to evade the force of Genesis 1:31 by the rather dubious observation that "God did not say that creation was perfect, but that it was good."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, we feel that another writer has penetrated to the heart of that text when he says:

What does this mean? . . . the original creation is considered as having been free from sin and its effects. There were no destructive forces at work; no disease, no sudden death, no animals preying upon others, no violent storms or destructive floods. The destructive forces which we see in nature are in the Bible traced back to the fall of Adam. It is because of the sin of man that nature has become disruptive. *Any other view has its source in the rationalism of modern thinking which considers pain and suffering, death and destruction as natural aspects of creation.*<sup>3</sup>

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Living in an age of science and materialism, the church of Jesus Christ finds itself now faced with some of the most perplexing problems of theology and apologetics in its entire history. There is increasing

<sup>1</sup> Berkouwer, *op. cit.*, pp. 257ff.

<sup>2</sup> Ramm, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> Monsma, *op. cit.*, p. 42. Italics are ours. In the light of the entire discussion above, it is disappointing to see the following statement by N. H. Ridderbos (the successor of Dr. G. Ch. Aalders in the field of Old Testament studies at the Free University of Amsterdam): "When did death make its appearance? . . . Would not animals have died apart from the fall? Was man carnivorous before the fall? . . . We cannot avoid the question whether there is not a conflict with utterances like those of Genesis 1:31, 3:14ff., Romans 8:19ff. It cannot be denied that on the basis

ing evidence from every side that the modern mind, characterized by dogmatic claims to finality in the realms of metaphysics and epistemology, has little patience with those who insist upon finding the criteria for ultimate truth within the covers of a supernaturally-inspired Book.

Perhaps the most obvious clash between these two world-views is in the field of anthropology, where modern science, because of its materialistic presuppositions, is forced to establish a continuous genealogy between man and the lower forms of life. But most evangelical scholars, recognizing the immense importance of the doctrines of Creation and the Fall so far as the plan of salvation is concerned, have been willing to part company with evolutionary anthropologists on this question and have insisted that the Genesis account of the creation of Adam and Eve be interpreted literally.

When we come to the question of the animal kingdom in relation to the Fall, however, we discover a much greater hesitancy on the part of such scholars in taking a united stand in opposition to the claims of uniformitarian paleontology. They seem to have been overawed, to a large extent at least, by the unanimous voice of modern paleontologists to the effect that death and violence reigned in the animal kingdom for hundreds of millions of years before the appearance of man on the earth.

But the Scriptures contain powerful testimonies to the contrary. For example, Romans 8:19-22 speaks of the stupendous transformation experienced by the entire creation, when, at the time of the Fall and as a result of the Edenic curse, it entered into a "bondage of corruption" from which it still longs to be delivered. This is strikingly confirmed by what we read in Genesis 1:28 of the original "dominion" which man exercised over God's creation and by the inspired commentary on Psalm 8 which is provided for us in Hebrews 2:8-9. Further support for this doctrine is found in the terms of the Noachic Covenant, in Isaiah's prophecy of ideal conditions in the animal

of these texts we form for ourselves a picture of conditions before the fall which is different from that offered by natural science. Must we then reject the results of natural science in this respect? We cannot answer too quickly in the affirmative. Cannot the world have been very good in the eyes of God even though there were catastrophes and though there was what we humans would call cruelty? *Is There a Conflict Between Genesis 1 and Natural Science?* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1957), pp. 70-71. For a refutation of the entire "framework hypothesis" of Ridderbos, see Paul A. Zimmerman, ed., *Darwin, Evolution, and Creation* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), pp. 63-64.

kingdom, in the cursing of the serpent, the inflicting of birthpangs upon the woman, and the cursing of the ground. So powerful, in fact, are these Biblical evidences that many of the greatest modern theologians have been willing to incur the intense opposition of modern uniformitarians rather than attempt to mold the text of Scripture into conformity with current scientific theories.

But those evangelical scholars who *have* been willing to allow uniformitarian theories to shape their thinking concerning origins have not only been forced to reinterpret these Biblical passages but also have found it necessary to construct a system of "harmonistic theology" to explain how the present balance of nature could be characterized by God as "very good." Dr. Berkouwer has shown that such a philosophy of nature is both shallow and unscriptural. It neither satisfies the human heart nor fits the Biblical world-view.

In conclusion, we find ourselves faced with an important alternative. We must accept either the current theories of paleontology, with an inconceivably vast time-scale for fossils before the appearance of man on the earth, or we must accept the order of events as set forth so clearly in the Word of God. Both views cannot be true at the same time, any more than can a Biblical anthropology and an evolutionary anthropology be true at the same time. But if the "bondage of corruption," with all that such a term implies for the animal kingdom, had its source in the Edenic curse, then the fossil strata, which are filled with evidences of violent death, must have been laid down *since* Adam. And if this be true, then the uniformitarian time-table of modern paleontology must be rejected as totally erroneous; and a Biblical catastrophism (centering in the year-long, universal Deluge) must be substituted for it as the only possible solution to the enigma of the fossil strata.