

Science and the Bible

Since the book of nature and the book of revelation bear the impress of the same master mind, they cannot but speak in harmony. By different methods, and in different languages, they witness to the same great truths. Science is ever discovering new wonders; but she brings from her research nothing that, rightly understood, conflicts with divine revelation. The book of nature and the written word shed light upon each other. They make us acquainted with God by teaching us something of the laws through which He works. {Ed 128.1}

Inferences erroneously drawn from facts observed in nature have, however, led to supposed conflict between science and revelation; and in the effort to restore harmony, interpretations of Scripture have been adopted that undermine and destroy the force of the word of God. Geology has been thought to contradict the literal interpretation of the Mosaic record of the creation.

Millions of years, it is claimed, were required for the evolution of the earth from chaos; and in order to accommodate the Bible to this supposed revelation of science, the days of creation are assumed to have been vast, indefinite periods, covering thousands or even millions of years.

{Ed 128.2}

Such a conclusion is wholly uncalled for. The Bible record is in harmony with itself and with the teaching of nature. Of the first day employed in the work of creation is given the record, "The evening and the morning were the first day." Genesis 1:5. And the same in substance is said of each of the first six days of creation week. Each of these periods Inspiration declares to have been a day consisting of evening and morning, like every other day since that time. In regard to the work of creation itself the divine testimony is, "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." Psalm 33:9. With Him who could thus call into existence unnumbered worlds, how long a time

would be required for the evolution of the earth from chaos? In order to account for His works, must we do violence to His word? {Ed 129.1}

It is true that remains found in the earth testify to the existence of men, animals, and plants much larger than any now known. These are regarded as proving the existence of vegetable and animal life prior to the time of the Mosaic record. But concerning these things Bible history furnishes ample explanation. Before the Flood the development of vegetable and animal life was immeasurably superior to that which has since been known.

At the Flood the surface of the earth was broken up, marked changes took place, and in the re-formation of the earth's crust were preserved many evidences of the life previously existing. The vast forests buried in the earth at the time of the Flood, and since changed to coal, form the extensive coal fields, and yield the supplies of oil that minister to our comfort and convenience today. These things, as they are brought to light, are so many witnesses mutely testifying to the truth of the word of God.

{Ed 129.2}

Akin to the theory concerning the evolution of the earth is that which attributes to an ascending line of germs, mollusks, and quadrupeds the evolution of man, the crowning glory of the creation. {Ed 130.1}

When consideration is given to man's opportunities for research; how brief his life; how limited his sphere of action; how restricted his vision; how frequent and how great the errors in his conclusions, especially as concerns the events thought to antedate Bible history; how often the supposed deductions of science are revised or cast aside; with what readiness the assumed period of the earth's development is from time to time increased or diminished by millions of years; and how the theories advanced by different scientists conflict with one another,--considering all this, shall we, for the privilege of tracing our descent from germs and mollusks and apes, consent to cast away that statement of Holy Writ, so grand in its simplicity, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him"?

Genesis 1:27. Shall we reject that genealogical record,--prouder than any treasured in the courts of kings,--"which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God"? Luke 3:38. {Ed 130.2}

Rightly understood, both the revelations of science and the experiences of life are in harmony with the testimony of Scripture to the constant working of God in nature. {Ed 130.3}

In the hymn recorded by Nehemiah, the Levites sang, "Thou, even Thou, art Lord alone; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and Thou preservest them all." Nehemiah 9:6. {Ed 130.4}

As regards this earth, Scripture declares the work of creation to have been completed. "The works were finished from the foundation of the world." Hebrews 4:3. But the power of God is still exercised in upholding the objects of His creation.

It is not because the mechanism once set in motion continues to act by its own inherent energy that the pulse beats, and breath follows breath. Every breath, every pulsation of the heart, is an evidence of the care of Him in whom we live and move and have our being. From the smallest insect to man, every living creature is daily dependent upon His providence.

"These wait all upon Thee. . . .

That Thou givest them they gather:

Thou openest Thine hand, they are filled with good.

Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled:

Thou takest away their breath, they die,

And return to their dust.

Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created:

And Thou renewest the face of the earth." Psalm 104:27-30.

"He stretcheth out the north over the empty place,
And hangeth the earth upon nothing.
He bindeth up the waters in His thick clouds;
And the cloud is not rent under them. . . .
He hath compassed the waters with bounds,
Until the day and night come to an end."

"The pillars of heaven tremble
And are astonished at His rebuke.
He stilleth the sea with His power. . . .
By His Spirit the heavens are beauty;
His hand hath pierced the gliding serpent.
Lo, these are but the outskirts of His ways:
And how small a whisper do we hear of Him!
But the thunder of His power who can understand?"
Job 26:7-10; 26:11-14, R.V., margin.

"The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the
storm,

And the clouds are the dust of His feet." Nahum 1:3. {Ed 130.5}

The mighty power that works through all nature and sustains all things is not, as some men of science claim, merely an all-pervading principle, an actuating energy.

God is a spirit; yet He is a personal being, for man was made in His image. As a personal being, God has revealed Himself in His Son. Jesus, the outshining of the Father's glory, "and the express image of His person" (Hebrews 1:3), was on earth found in fashion as a man. As a personal Savior He came to the world. As a personal Savior He ascended on high. As a personal Savior He intercedes in the heavenly courts. Before the throne of God in our behalf ministers "One like the Son of man." Daniel 7:13. {Ed 131.1}

The apostle Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, declares of Christ that "all things have been created through Him, and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." Colossians 1:16,17, R.V., margin. The hand that sustains the worlds in space, the hand that holds in their orderly arrangement and tireless activity all things throughout the universe of God, is the hand that was nailed to the cross for us. {Ed 132.1}

The greatness of God is to us incomprehensible. "The Lord's throne is in heaven" (Psalm 11:4); yet by His Spirit He is everywhere present. He has an intimate knowledge of, and a personal interest in, all the works of His hand.

"Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high,
Who humbleth Himself to behold the things that
are in heaven, and in the earth!"

"Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there:
If I make my bed in the grave (see Psalm 139:8, R.V.;
Job 26:6, R.V., margin), behold, Thou art there.

"If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall Thy hand lead me,
And Thy right hand shall hold me." Psalm 113:5, 6;
139:7-10.

"Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,
Thou understandest my thought afar off.
Thou searchest out my path and my lying down,
And art acquainted with all my ways. . . .
Thou hast beset me behind and before,
And laid Thine hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
It is high, I cannot attain unto it." Psalm 139:2-6, R.V. {Ed 132.2}

It was the Maker of all things who ordained the wonderful adaptation of means to end, of supply to need. It was He who in the material world provided that every desire implanted should be met. It was He who created the human soul, with its capacity for knowing and for loving. And He is not in Himself such as to leave the demands of the soul unsatisfied. No intangible principle, no impersonal essence or mere abstraction, can satisfy the needs and longings of human beings in this life of struggle with sin and sorrow and pain. It is not enough to believe in law and force, in things that have no pity, and never hear the cry for help. We need to know of an almighty arm that will hold us up, of an infinite Friend that pities us. We need to clasp a hand that is warm, to trust in a heart full of tenderness. And even so God has in His word revealed Himself. {Ed 133.1}

He who studies most deeply into the mysteries of nature will realize most fully his own ignorance and weakness. He will realize that there are depths and heights which he cannot reach, secrets which he cannot penetrate, vast fields of truth lying before him unentered.

He will be ready to say, with Newton, "I seem to myself to have been like a child on the seashore finding pebbles and shells, while the great ocean of truth lay undiscovered before me."

{Ed 133.2}

The deepest students of science are constrained to recognize in nature the working of infinite power. But to man's unaided reason, nature's teaching cannot but be contradictory and disappointing. Only in the light of revelation can it be read aright. "Through faith we understand." Hebrews 11:3. {Ed 134.1}

"In the beginning God." Genesis 1:1. Here alone can the mind in its eager questioning, fleeing as the dove to the ark, find rest. Above, beneath, beyond, abides Infinite Love, working out all things to accomplish "the good pleasure of His goodness." 2 Thessalonians 1:11. {Ed 134.2}

"The invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are . . . perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity." Romans 1:20, R.V. But their testimony can be understood only through the aid of the divine Teacher. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." 1 Corinthians 2:11. {Ed 134.3}

"When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." John 16:13. Only by the aid of that Spirit who in the beginning "was brooding upon the face of the waters;" of that Word by whom "all things were made;" of that "true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," can the testimony of science be rightly interpreted. Only by their guidance can its deepest truths be discerned. {Ed 134.4}

Only under the direction of the Omniscient One shall we, in the study of His works, be enabled to think His thoughts after Him. {Ed 134.5}