

REFORMED CONTINUA

Magazine of The Reformed Churches (restored) of The Netherlands

Proverbs 8:32

- Volume 22 - March 2017 -

From the editor

March 2017

Dear readers,

We are happy to present to you the 22th edition of the magazine 'Reformed Continua'. We are thankful to the Lord that He gave and gives us the strength to be able to continue with this work.

We are also thankful that the magazine is well-received, at home and abroad. In this way we can give you information about our Churches in the English language, of which there is a great shortage.

We hope and pray that also this edition may firstly be to the honour of God and also to the up-building of the Churches world-wide.

As from the next edition the expected date of issue of the following Reformed Continua will be given so that readers of the magazine will know when it can be expected.

The next synod of our churches DGK 2018 will be held in Lansingerland (formerly Berkel en Rodenrijs / Bergschenhoek).

Joh. Houweling,
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Genesis over against evolutionism *

Dr. S. de Marie

In 2015 there was some startling news. A new precursor of the human being was discovered in South Africa. A so-called hominid. A transitional form between an ape and a human being. Many bones as well as skulls were found. A reconstruction was made from them. Of course some scholars doubted whether they really were humans or just regular apes, but many spoke of a revolutionary discovery. The question that comes to us is: what significance do these discoveries have for us? Do they set the Genesis story in a different light? Or should we just dismiss this as nonsense?

Is it creation *and* evolution or is it creation *or* evolution? In other words, can we view the Bible and evolution as in *agreement* with each other? Or is there an unbridgeable *opposition* between the creation in Genesis and the discovery in science?

In the *Reformatorisch Dagblad* as well as the *Nederlands Dagblad* (two Reformed newspapers in the Netherlands) much attention has been given to this topic in the past two years. A reason was, among others, the switch that the Evangelische School ('Evangelical School') in Amersfoort (the Netherlands) made by trying to harmonize the Bible and evolution. As well, the presentation of the book *Het geheime logboek van topnerd Tycho* ('The Secret Diary of Top Nerd Tycho') by Prof. Dr. C. Dekker (co-authored by Mrs. C. Oranje), wherein this is also done, received broad attention. Can the belief in Scripture, that assumes a literal meaning of Genesis 1 and 2, still be maintained? Aren't we making it needlessly difficult, especially for the youth in the church, to still be able to play a role in science without giving up their faith?

Recently as an opponent of these efforts to adapt, a new website was created: www.logos.nl by the newly formed Logos Institute, that applies the Bible as norm over against evolutionism.

Creation and/or Evolution?

We can generally point out three approaches with regard to the origin of life.

The *first* approach is that of belief in God's Word, whereby it is believed that God created heaven and earth in six days. Thereby it is upheld that the book of Genesis describes literal historic events.

The *second* approach is whereby one does not believe in God but holds himself as norm: autonomous. One only believes what he observes in nature and from there draws his own conclusions: naturalism. Belonging to this is the assumption of a process of evolution that took place over a period of three and a half billion years. In that time-span life also came into being and higher forms of life came out of lower forms of life. The final product was the human being.

The *third way* wants to combine the first and second approach. In this approach room is made in order to believe that the Creation story of six days in reality is about an evolution spread over three and a half billion years. A theistic evolution, led by God. My two other articles in this issue deal with this topic.

Naturalism and Evolutionism

Some Christians follow the second path of naturalism and evolutionism as well. They bring a separation between, on the one hand, faith for which you need the Bible and, on the other hand, science for which you use nature. You can learn to know God from both books, can't you? The Belgic Confession (BC), Art. 2 says so as well, doesn't it?

Yes, two books are mentioned there, but it also mentions that we learn to know God *better* through His Word! With Calvin, we say: we must read nature 'through the lens of God's Word', to really know God and His deeds, also His deeds of creation.

In this second approach, there is no room for belief in supernatural miracles of God. With that the six days of creation are rejected and one comes into conflict with the BC, Art. 12. In this article God's Word is echoed, that God the Creator creates and sustains. However, one wants to rely only on human perceptions and thus places the theory of evolution above Scripture. This is contrary to the BC, Art. 7 which states that God's Word stands above all human ideas and theories. Followers of the theory of evolution state that laws of nature, such as gravity and other laws, are absolute. According to them they have always been like that, and therefore they will always be like that.

These followers also teach that each life comes about by chance. Over against this, we state that laws of nature are also subject to God. Moreover, they are ordinations of God. The BC, Art. 13 states:

nothing happens without His direction. This means that with so-called regularities changes are also possible. Think about how the sun stood still in Joshua 10:12.

Also the assumption of chance in all sorts of evolution processes directly conflict with God's providence.

Further it is stated that the similarity between animals indicates that the higher forms of life came out of lower forms of life. But we say, on the grounds of God's Word in the BC, Art. 12, that God created out of nothing heaven and earth and all creatures, when it seemed good to Him. We also confess that one animal did not develop out of another, but that 'God has given to every creature its being, shape, and form...' In other words, God immediately created animals very differently.

The similarity between different animals in build, organs and behavior points, in the light of God's Word, to the unity in the plan of creation of one and the same Creator and Architect, namely God the Father, the Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Evolutionism and ancient earth

According to the theory of evolution human beings developed out of lower forms of life via apes and hominids. The first real human being would therefore have originated some 200,000 years ago. According to calculations the oldest living people now are the aborigines (natives) in Australia, who originated some 45,000 years out of precursors, forerunners. According to their estimations, it would have been about 10,000 years ago that there would first have been any place for human beings such as Adam and Eve. In other words, according to them, there were already people on earth before people such as Adam and Eve could have been there. That is what you therefore accept with the theory of evolution!

God's Word states it very differently than the concept of evolution, as is summarized clearly in the BC, Art. 14: '*We believe that God created man of dust from the ground*'.

On the basis of the genealogy in Genesis we calculate that this took place approximately 6000 years ago.

What is 'truth' in nature?

When there are opposite teachings, the question arises: 'What is truth?' That what nature teaches

us or that what is written in God's Word? Now we must be careful to say that God's Word teaches us something different than what nature teaches us. We must differentiate between (1) observation of facts and (2) the assessment, the interpretation of those observations.

1. Observations of age-determination These are partly based on methods that are not reliable. This certainly applies to the radiocarbon method (C-14) (see for this the following website (in Dutch): <http://www.evolutie.eu/index.php/Bijbel/adam-en-eva-een-groot-probleem-voor-theistisch-evolutionisten.html>). Also people can deliberately give incorrect calculations. It can also be a miscalculation, because one has not taken certain circumstances into account

2. The interpretation, the explanation of observations is influenced by the prejudgment that you have: your faith or your world view. This interpretation is therefore not neutral. It is based on faith in God's Word or on belief in evolution. With age-determination an unbeliever will not take into account the flood, the creation and miracles. He interprets, using evolution as a background. However, a believing scientist does take these into account. In this way, a very different meaning can be attached to an observation.

We must also look at the findings in South-Africa in this way. From an evolutionary perspective you could think that these confirm evolution. But this is something quite different from what nature really teaches us.

What is 'truth' in science?

Likewise, believing scientists must be careful in calling one of their findings 'truth'. At most we can say that there are asserted truths if they are based on observations in the light of God's Word. Only God's Word itself is the absolute truth. A finding may not contradict it.

With regard to the interpretation, we must therefore say that faith in God's Word stands opposite to the unbelief of evolution. It already began with the Fall into sin, when the serpent said to the woman: 'Has God indeed said...?' (Gen. 3:1).

Faith certainly does not stand in opposition to science, so long as science submits to God's Word. Finally, it must be noted that God's Word does not deceive us about God's creation. If we cannot explain something about nature, it does not mean

that God deceives us with His Word. It points out that our intellect is darkened through sin.

Scripture speaks

If we allow Scripture to speak, we see that the Bible in its entirety always has the same message. I quote from the New King James Version. Gen. 1:1 speaks of a beginning of heaven and earth, of time and creatures: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

To accept this, faith is necessary, as we read in Heb. 11:3: *By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.*

The Lord wonderfully shows how in His creation He made all kinds of creatures, animals and humans separately, not as arising out of each other: Gen. 1: 21, 24,25:

So God created / made the animals each according to its kind.

Gen. 1:27:

So God created man in His own image.

The apostle Paul also says this in 1 Cor. 15:39:

The flesh of man, animals, fish and birds are all different.

Nothing in Scripture points to a thought of evolution. Gen. 2:7:

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

The New Testament excludes the possibility of the existence of human beings before Adam, 1 Cor. 15:45:

The first man Adam became a living being...

Also, the distinction between male and female was directly applied by the Lord during His creation days: male and female He created them, Gen. 2:22:

The rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman.

This is also confirmed again in the New Testament, in 1 Cor. 11:8:

For man is not from woman, but woman from man.

In short, the theory of evolution is in flagrant contradiction with Scripture. There is no agreement at all!

Evolutionism is a human invention

There is also no hard evidence for the theory of evolution in nature. Charles Darwin did not have a single observation where evolution took place from the one type of animal to another. He simply thought this up. He saw different animals and then came with his theory. And it is still like that. There is no evidence. Yes, on a small scale there is evolution: so-called micro-evolution, that indicates variations within a species. But there is no proof whatsoever of evolution of the one animal species to another; macro-evolution. Neither is there evidence in experiments. In the laboratory there is still no way to make life out of something that is not alive.

From the evolutionary way of thinking there is not a single explanation for the emergence of things such as logic thinking, mind and soul out of lifeless matter. Neither is there an explanation for the distinction between male and female.

There are many scientific objections against this macro-evolution. I can only mention a few in short. It has been argued:

- Life itself is too complex, too complicated that it could arise from accidental developments. Think only of the genetic structure of DNA and the complex structures like cells and organs.
- It is unimaginable that something like this could develop out of nothing through a series of accidental changes.
- Spontaneous changes in genetic material are usually less favorable for the survival of an animal or plant. For land animals to receive wings, an immensely complex collaboration of many positive factors would have to occur at the same time. That alone is scientifically unthinkable.
- Followers of the evolution theory place animals in a certain sequence of similarities and call that a family tree. However, such a 'phylo-genetic family tree' is made up and does not form a single proof for the evolution of one animal out of the other. It is thinking in circles.
- No, the similarities just point to the same Creator.
- Some organs in the body of the human beings are called 'rudimentary' organs. This suggests that they are useless remnants of a preliminary stage. Examples are the tailbone and the appendix. But here too the similarity in the building plan points to one and the same Creator. Often it turns out that there is certainly a function, even though the function has been obscure for a long period

of time. Nor can there be found a single living transitional form of one species to the other.

- Finally, the theory of evolution is generally based on the Big Bang. Everything would have started in this way. But what then was there before the so-called Big Bang? For how can something spontaneously come out of nothing? One is left waiting for an answer.

Macro-evolution is 'axiom'

Despite that evolutionism is unproven, even scientifically very unlikely and as an observation not reproducible, and despite the fact that there are many refutations, and the theory raises many unsolvable questions, despite all of this, science still continues to adhere to evolutionism.

At most, the theory is adjusted a bit to refutations that are too clear. But science still declares this theory as indisputable, being the only vision permitted in science. Therefore, evolutionism is a belief, an unproven foundation, an axiom. Even though this belief of evolution calls itself 'scientific'.

Our conclusion must be that the creation according to God's Word and the theory of evolution are in opposition to each other. The prejudgment of the

evolution theory is incompatible with the faith in Scripture, that God demands from us to accept as true all that God has revealed to us in His Word (HC, Lord's Day 7). Also with regard to the book of Genesis we believe without any doubt all things contained in them (BC, Art. 5). Because God's Word is clear, perfect and complete in all respects, we therefore reject with all our heart whatever does not agree with this infallible rule (BC, Art. 7).

Furthermore, we conclude that the theory of evolution is not just scientifically unproven, but also surrounded by unsolved questions.

In the two other articles in this issue, the *third way* will be discussed.

* This article, together with the two other articles in this issue, is a slightly adapted version of the speech I held at the Church Day on September 26th, 2015.

For these articles I made use of information from several books (among which J.A. van Delden: *Schepping en wetenschap*, Buijten en Schipperheijn, 1989; P. Bédard: *In six days God created*, Xulon Press, 2013) and many articles from websites, among which: <http://bylogos.blogspot.nl/>, <https://answersingenesis.org/>, <http://evolutie.eu/>.

The third way: Genesis and evolutionism *

Dr. S. de Marie

Forms of the 'third way'

Faith in Scripture seems to be diametrically opposed to the belief in evolution.

Yet attempts have been and are being taken to reconcile the two.

We call this the 'third way'.

1. The *first attempt* is to still accept the existence of a higher power that is involved with evolution. Creation according to an 'intelligent design', an intelligent design by a higher power. This of course eases the solving of questions raised by the spontaneous coincidental events in the evolution theory. That higher power however, does not have to be the God of the Bible.

2. The *second attempt* is called 'theistic evolution', evolution led by God. The theory of evolution is accepted, but the beginning and the process are led by the God of the Bible as Creator.

3. The *third attempt* is to continue to accept Genesis alongside the theory of evolution, but in such a way that the days in it are not normal days but days of billions of years. One also likes to see the time-span between Gen.1:1 and what follows as such a very long time. In this way it is possible to proceed with the teachings of the ancient earth, which science imposes upon us.

4. The *fourth attempt* is to see everything of Genesis symbolically instead of literally.

A variant of this is the so-called 'framework

theory'. Proponents of it see the six days as 'normal days' but do see them as days in a story. Not as days in a literal account, but put down as themes portrayed in the days of Genesis. This framework theory especially poses a major threat for faith in Scripture and authority of Scripture. This theory will be dealt with in the following article.

Why a 'third way'?

What drives proponents of the third way, including the framework theory? I will mention some of their own statements. Not every proponent will recognize himself in these statements. It says something about their motives.

1. One is impressed by 'overwhelming evidence in favour of evolution and ancient earth'. See for example what Prof. J.G. Veenstra, professor of molecular development biology, wrote in the *Nederlands Dagblad* of October 13th, 2015.
2. One says: 'Denial of this evidence makes us an unworldly sect and implausible'. Thus, as a believer you cannot connect with science anymore. But also, you become implausible for society.
3. One even goes so far as to say: 'A denial of the evidence of evolution makes us deny the truth of God in nature'. This last statement refers to the evolutionary explanation of the book of nature. This explanation is then simply called 'truth of God'.

The proponents of theistic evolution and the framework theory also mention the advantages:

There would be no obstacle anymore for the world to come to Christ, and no obstacle for believers to remain in Christ. It brings reconciliation between science and faith, as the two books of nature through which we know God.

My answer to this is again: The book of nature can only be read correctly with the lens of God's Word. Then only is there no contradiction. In doing so, God's Word is not allowed to be adjusted to theories of unbelief regarding nature.

Proponents of the 'third way' can even be aggressive in their judgment of the reformed interpretation of Scripture, whereby Genesis is read fully historical.

About this they say:

This interpretation is anti-intellectualistic, the intellect is being switched off. It is traditionalistic, conservative, and does not go along with new insights. That is why 'isolationism' threatens, that is to say: you then unnecessarily put yourself into isolation. You shut yourself off from the world and then stand outside of it. Such a vision on Scripture makes you radical in the eyes of others: you are extreme, no longer suitable for this society. (source: www.bylogos.com).

Approach and Arguments

Which approach do the proponents use for their compromise?

They assume that it is not the intention of Genesis to tell how God created everything but rather that and for what purpose He created everything, namely that God's people would honor



Him instead of idols. God would have taken into account our ability to understand by adjusting ('accommodating') to it. That is why God would work with imagery (metaphors). This method of God enables us, as human beings, to understand something supernatural such as creation.

Which argument do they use for this? Firstly, there are the fossils: remains and prints of plants, animals and humans in rocks. These would be 'proof' of the existence of a very ancient earth.

Further, in other Eastern countries there are stories of creation that are similar to Genesis. Moses, as author of Genesis, would have adopted this. In addition, the Bible gives an outdated worldview, as if the earth is flat and the sun rotates around the earth. Science proves that this is not so. Therefore, according to the proponents of the 'third way', you should not take the Bible literally when it speaks about nature or science.

However, one also comes with arguments from Scripture itself. It is very important to assess these correctly. For only Scripture determines how we must read Gen. 1 and 2.

Their first so-called Biblical argument is that Gen. 1 has a high literary form of poetry. It is not just an ordinary description of history, but a poem with deeper meanings. That is why we should not take Gen. 1 and 2 literally.

Gen. 1 and 2 are considered not be consistent with each other either. Just compare the sequence of Gen. 2: 4-7 with the sequence in Gen. 1:11 and further. That is why we shouldn't really take them literally.

There is more to say about the days of creation. These arguments are discussed in my article 'Days of creation and the Framework theory' in this issue.

Worldview in the Bible

What can we now say about the worldview that the Bible offers? Does the Bible say in so many words that the earth is flat and that the sun rotates around the earth?

No, God's Word does not give a scientific statement about the shape of the world globe and the position of the earth in relation to the sun. It gives us a perspective image from the position of man in everyday *linguistic image*. When the Bible states that the sun rises, it just describes what we see. That is clear and it speaks for itself. It is not changeable; it applies as truth for all times. It does

not give a scientific description, but neither does it conflict with science, as long as this is based on God's Word as norm. Science is not allowed to contradict the Bible. That is why the Bible does conflict with evolutionistic science.

What type of worldview does science then give? It does not describe so much what you see with your eyes. But with the help of all kinds of means and calculations it comes to a construction, a model of reality. But that scientific construction, that model, is not absolutely unchangeable. It can change again if there are new scientific insights. It remains man-made and in principle, changeable. God's Word however, is divine and absolute, no matter how simply the things are described in it.

Evil consequences of evolution and ancient earth

When people combine evolution and ancient earth with God's account of His Creation, is God, as Creator of heaven and earth then not dishonored? Do we sacrifice God's Word for human inventions (BC, Art.7)?

Some proponents of theistic evolution are still willing to hold onto the fact that Adam really existed. Yet, together with an ancient earth, people accept that death and evil existed in the world before Adam was created. For there were already human beings on earth before Adam. Forerunners that had died already before Adam. Think of the aborigines (see first article). But this would imply that death did not come into this world as a curse on Adam's fall into sin, Rom. 5:12. For death already existed in the process of evolution.

How is this consistent with texts such as Rom. 5:14, 1 Cor. 15:22? And how can Christ then be called the 'last Adam' in 1 Cor. 15:45? Or can we make any progress by also using metaphors here?

How, when death and evil already existed in nature, can the creation - in which Adam was created - be called 'very good' (Gen. 1:31) in God's own judgment?

Other proponents of theistic evolution deny that Adam really existed. He is nothing more than a character in the story of Genesis 1 and 2.

But then there would not have been the fall into sin by Adam, in Genesis 3, and therefore no protevangelium - no promise of the Seed either!

If these followers do not believe in a God who works miracles, how can the resurrection be believed?

But then, with this doctrine, we as believers are 'of all men the most pitiable', as Paul says in 1 Cor. 15:19.

If we impair the divine authority and the infallibility of the Bible in its obviousness, then in the end we will lose everything. This is not an idle prediction, but we see this literally happening before our eyes.

Church and evolution

In the last century, more room was made for theistic evolutionary thoughts in reformed churches. We mention Dr. J.G. Geelkerken, whose ideas were rejected at the synod of Assen 1926. Later on, the evolutionary range of thoughts of Prof. Dr. J. Lever (1958) and Prof. Dr. H. Kuitert (1968) were accepted in the synodical-reformed churches. Partly through this, authority of Scripture was impaired in such a way, that room was created for parting from the atonement through satisfaction by Christ, such as in the alternative doctrine of reconciliation of Dr. H. Wiersinga (1971).

A similar process can be recognized in the Gereformeerde Kerken vrijgemaakt (GKv), since approximately the year 2000. This occurred especially through Drs. J.J.T. Doedens and Dr. A.L.Th. de Bruijne in the book 'Woord op Schrift' (2002), through Prof. Dr. J. Douma with his statements in his book *Genesis* (2004) in which he asks for room for the Big Bang, and through Prof. B. Kamphuis, who sees everything metaphorically including the days of Genesis (2013).

A survey held by the *Nederlands Dagblad* in 2009 already concluded that a mere 15% of questioned ministers of the GKv support a literal interpretation of the days in Genesis 1.

Also in the GKv we see this process of departure from the Word have its effects right into the impairment of the atonement through satisfaction, as recently illustrated by Dr. J.M. Burger's contribution in the book *Cruciaal* (2015). A sad and appalling development in the Netherlands. Also in countries abroad there is much conflict regarding this point, particularly in North-America.

A positive exception in this trend was the proposal of the Classis East, March 2015, of the Canadian Churches (CanRC), to adapt the reformed confession over against the teachings of the theistic evolution. The proposal is to include, at the beginning of Art.

14, BC, in italics, behind the words 'God created', the words: '*... man by forming Adam from dust (Gen. 2:7) and Eve from Adam's side (Gen. 2:12-22). They were created as the first two human beings and the biological ancestors of all other human beings. There were no pre-Adamites, whether human or hominid ...*'. And then in Art. 14 it carries on to read: God made and formed Adam etc.

Finally

The belief in creation according to God's Word stands over against the unbelief of evolutionism. We cannot combine the two. Otherwise we will lose the substance of God's Word.

This faith in Scripture holds fast to the infallible Word of God, which clearly states, against evolutionism, that the things that are seen are not made of things that are perceptible.

This faith in Scripture assumes the obviousness of Scripture, the clarity of Scripture, in which the complete book of Genesis reveals itself as factual history. In it Gen. 1:1 is the beginning of time and history. In this faith, God is worshipped in a pleasing manner as the Creator of heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them.

In the explanation of Genesis, the entire Scripture must be involved, also the New Testament (see the above mentioned texts). In this way, the historicity of creation, of Adam and Eve, and of the Fall into sin are particularly confirmed. The explanation of more difficult passages is made easier by comparing with clearer passages. For example, when explaining Gen. 2:4-7 put Gen. 1 next to it. Indeed, there can be no real contradictions in God's Word. God Himself is the one primary Author.

If we let go of Genesis, we lose everything, for everything in the Bible is necessary for our salvation, also and particularly Gen. 1. It is forbidden to add or take away anything from the Word of God (BC, Art. 7). Also Christ refers to the beginning of creation, when He presents to us the will of God (Matt. 19:4). The apostles do so as well (2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:13).

Therefore the following also applies for the beginning of God's Word:

Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown (Rev. 3:11).

* See the comments in the footnote of the first article.

The days of Genesis and the framework theory *

Dr. S. de Marie

Proponents of the so-called 'third way' (see previous article) often make adjustments in explaining the days of creation to create room for their teaching of theistic evolution.

This applies especially to the proponents of the so-called framework theory. Among these proponents are Prof. A. Noortzij, Dr. J.J.T. Doedens and Prof. Dr. J. Douma.

In this article this theory will be elaborated upon.

Days are days, but not literally?

Let us first summarize the issues on the days of Genesis that would advocate the 'third way', either with or without the framework theory.

(1) One has particular difficulty to scientifically explain that on day 1 light was created (Gen. 1:3), while on day 4 'light-bearers' ('lights') such as the sun, moon and stars were created (Gen. 1: 14-18). It is asserted that the absence of the sun on day 1-3 means that it could not have been solar days of 24

hours. This also argues against normal days. This would be an argument for a non-literal conception of 'days'.

(2) It is also argued that the Hebraic ordinal numbers for day 1 and day 6 (where it says day 1 and day 6) are different than of day 2-5 (where it says second day, third day, etc.) Therefore, this would not be about a normal arrangement.

(3) As well it is claimed that day 7 would be a day without ending. For in the description about day 7 (Gen. 2:1-3) it does not say that there was evening and morning such as is mentioned with other days. That too would be a reason not take all the days literally.

All things considered, in the eyes of proponents of the 'third way' there is enough evidence in the Bible to conclude that the days in Genesis 1 are mentioned as normal days in a narrative, but not as factual historical, not as literal days such as we know them.



Days and their refrain

I would like to give the following answer to this.

(1) With the days 1-3 the refrain already sounds: So the evening and the morning were the first day, the second day, the third day. The day is then already divided in light and darkness, in day and night. Taken together this is just called 'day', whilst there is not yet a sun. Light is separately created by God on day 1, apart from the known light-bearer such as the sun. He, God the Almighty, created light without help from the sun! Thereby God demonstrates that all honor goes to Him, not to the sun, that is often honored as a god in Eastern countries.

Day 4-6 have the same refrain: So the evening and the morning were the fourth day, the fifth day, the sixth day. From the fourth day onwards the created sun is included. The sun is added to the existing light, as light-bearer to reign from now on over day and night. The difference that already existed is now continued with light-bearers.

Therefore, the same refrain after each day. The days 1-3 without sun, the days 4-6 with sun. In this way God demonstrates the progress of creation over the six days. From global to specific, from less to more. The conclusion is therefore that the days 1-3 were of the same kind as the days 4-6. All had a period of light and dark, of day and night, and were joined together by evening and morning.

(2) The different use of ordinal numbers also occurs elsewhere in God's Word. It is not an argument to deny the arrangement of the days of Genesis.

(3) On day 7 there is no creation anymore, but rest. God's workdays come to an end. No refrain sounds anymore. That is not to say therefore that day 7 had no ending. For day 7 is set apart by God: sanctified! Upon this basis, God formed a week of seven days, of six days plus one. As a creational unity that must serve the entire duration of the world, allowing the Sabbath day to be a sign of the eternal Sabbath rest that is coming (Heb. 4).

How can this be possible if this seventh day also now continues as a day without ending?

Framework theory

There are some specific characteristics that only apply to the framework theory. This theory assumes that every day of Genesis 1 is a kind of photo frame that displays something of the great story of creation.

Most proponents of the framework theory maintain that the 'images' of days 1-3 correspond with the 'images' of days 4-6. And in such a way, that what is created as space in day 1, is subsequently filled with the creatures or formations of day 4. Day 1 and day 4 therefore describe the same events which took place in a long period of time. This also applies for the combination of days 2 and 5, and the combination of days 3 and 6.

The days in this theory are 'normal days' but not literally historical and not even in chronological order, in time sequence. They are pictures in a frame, that have something to say. The order of it is less important.

In this way, room is created for theistic evolution and an ancient world of billions of years old. Room: I do not say that all proponents per se believe in this. But they claim that Genesis does offer room for this. Exegetical freedom is asked for this.

Answer to the framework theory

In opposition to the symbolic explanation with room for evolution, Genesis serves as a fully historical book. Genesis 1:1-2:3 forms an introduction to a further explanation of what follows in the rest of Genesis, namely the toledoths, literally, the histories. Starting from Gen. 2:4 the history of heaven and earth is described. Followed by the history of Adam, etc. right up to that of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 37 - end). Not only Genesis 2:4 and further, refers back to Genesis 1, also Gen. 5 does so. In Gen. 5 a step back in time is also taken, at the beginning of a history.

Nothing in Gen. 1-2:3 indicates that it concerns something different here than a literal history. Also the literary form that God allows to be used in Gen. 1 and 2 does not make any difference. This is equally apparent when in 1926 it was determined by the churches regarding the speaking of the serpent in Gen. 3. Indeed, this is about supernatural miracles of God, which require faith. But they did take place in the time that started in Gen. 1:1.

The framework theory wants to declare the days of Genesis as literary adaptation (accommodation) by God towards man. But on the other hand, God asks of us that we indeed adapt to Him and His literal days. The fourth commandment in Ex. 20 says this very explicitly:

Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but

the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work ... For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.

The consequences of the framework theory

The framework theory argues that the purpose of Gen. 1 and 2 is to honor God in the covenant by Israel. That is what the narrative form would be focused on. In this way Moses would have given the Israelites a sketch of God as the faithful covenant God. Also and especially with the intent to come to the celebration of the Sabbath as a day consecrated to God.

But surely there is much more to say about Gen. 1 and 2? Shouldn't we start with the fact that God was pleased with His works? Compare Ps. 104:24 with Gen. 1:31 - 2:3.

Christ and His apostles also refer back to this beginning with regard to the Sabbath (Ex. 20: 8-11; Mark 2: 27; Heb. 4:4), being the image of God (Gen. 1:26; 1 Cor. 11:7; James. 3:9), marriage and the husband-wife relationship (Gen. 2: 18-25; Matt. 19: 4-6; 1 Cor. 11:8; 1 Tim. 2:13), hetero- and homosexuality (Rom. 1: 26, 27), nakedness and shame (Gen. 2: 25), the 'test commandment' (Gen. 2: 16,17), the curse of sin (Gen. 2:17), the situation of the Fall into sin (Gen. 3), and God's associated protevangelium.

When the days of Gen. 1 and 2 are reduced to a 'narrative form', then all of God's creation is just a 'story', not factual history and the firm foundation underneath all of this falls away.

* See the previous article about the 'third way' for the consequences of holding onto this theory.

REFORMED CONTINUA

Magazine of The Reformed Churches (restored) of The Netherlands

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Subscription is free of charge, and can be obtained by adding your e-mail-address to our mail-list on the following website:

www.reformedcontinua.nl

Via this website you can also unsubscribe.

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This magazine is issued by the 'Deputies for Contact with Churches Abroad' and is distributed automatically via the website:

www.reformedcontinua.nl

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