

Book Review by J.M. van der Meer of Henry M. Morris and
Gary E. Parker: "What is Creation Science" Creation-life
Publishers, Inc., P.O. Box 15666, San Diego, CA, 1982. \$7.95.

This book is one of the latest creationist publications on the creation-evolution controversy. In the first part Dr. Parker presents biological evidence against the evolution model and in the second part Dr. Morris evaluates the evolution model in light of thermodynamics and geology. Generally the book is interesting and well written. Although no new arguments are presented I found it worth reading because many issues receive a clearer and fairer treatment, especially by Dr. Parker, than I encountered in other creationist literature so far.

The merits of the book deserve a broader exposition than I will present here. However, I would like to use this opportunity to expose a confusion of science and religion that is a recurring problem with most creationist publications and certainly also with the book under review. I do this because it is my impression that many Christians of Reformed persuasion adopt the fundamentalistic creationist view of science for lack of something better, unaware of the fact that they also accept an unreformed attitude towards the Bible. The confusion can best be illustrated with the creationists' use of the so-called creation model. On the one hand, both Parker and Morris believe that it is possible on the basis of the idea of creation, to predict the characteristics of the world around us. Some of these characteristics are the limits imposed on the variation of organisms (p.82), the absence of transition stages between two phases of evolution of an organism (p.115), the law of conservation of mass and energy and the law of increasing disorganization (entropy) and decreasing amount of useful energy (p.162, 188). On the other hand they do indicate that evolutionists and creationists agree about these observations (p.76, 115). Why does it escape the creationists' attention that, if both evolutionists and creationists can observe the same regularities, it follows that such regularities cannot be predicted specifically by the creation model. Not to mention the fact that the specific details of these observations can in no way be inferred from as general a concept as that of creation, unless one goes through an exercise of reading science into the Bible. It seems to me that the creationists, because of their desire for recognition by the scientific establishment have sacrificed their scientific integrity in claiming too much power of prediction for the so-called creation model.

To make things worse, once such 'predictions' of the creation model have been confirmed', both Parker and Morris believe that the most logical inference from these observations is creation (p.110, 111, 115, 188). This is exactly why evolutionists vigorously

resist the 'creation model', much to the unjustified amazement of creationists who claim that the creation-evolution controversy can be evaluated strictly as a scientific question without reference to the theological, philosophical, or moral implications (p.220). At this point two more questions arise. Exactly what have creationists in mind with their concept of creation and what is their concept of science. It is here that the confusion becomes truly puzzling. On the one hand, creationists emphasize that creation is a scientific concept and not a religious one (p.141, 188, 220, 263, 264-265). Some quotations: "Scientific creationism is not based on Genesis or any other religious teaching". "Indeed, the scientific case for creation is based on our knowledge of DNA, mutations, fossils, thermodynamics and other scientific terms and concepts which do not even appear in the Bible" (p.263). Creationists distinguish between scientific creationism and biblical creationism, which, they believe, can be taught independently from each other (p.264). Scientific creationism is said to be supported by scientific evidence, whereas biblical creationism is based on biblical teachings (p.264). In light of this total separation between a world-and-life view and the interpretation of observations, it is astonishing to see Parker and Morris also give evidence of at least a rudimentary insight in the theological and philosophical ramifications of the evolution-creation controversy. They state that "If science is considered only a search for materialist explanations instead of part of the search for truth, then evolution would still be the only theory taught even if it were known to be completely false" (p.148). A full recognition that scientific creationism also implies a philosophy comes only in an appendix, where they state that "it is absurd to claim that evolution is strictly scientific" (p.265). Furthermore, "It must be remembered that there are only two basic models of origins, creation and evolution. Each model is essentially a complete world view, a philosophy of life and meaning, of origin and destiny. Neither can be either confirmed or falsified by the scientific method, since neither can be tested or observed experimentally, and therefore they must both be accepted on faith! Nevertheless, each is also a scientific model, since each seeks to explain within its framework all the real data of science and history. Creationism is at least as nonreligious as evolutionism. We have tried to show that the Creation Model fits the facts of true science better than the Evolution Model. It is true that creationism is a theistic model, but it is also true that evolutionism is an atheistic model (since it purports to explain everything without a creator). If theism is a religious faith, then so is atheism, since these are two fully comparable systems, each the opposite of the other" (p.265).

If only these principles had been worked out consistently in this book! I think that the self-contradictory statements by

Parker and Morris also have something to do with the creationists' concept of science, if one may speak of such a concept. The scarce remarks on this topic are scattered throughout the book and show little coherence. This reflects the inconsistent and primitive state of the creationistic philosophy of science. "Science is what we see" says Morris (p.170) and, therefore, he does not accept the extrapolation, by evolutionists, of known scientific processes in time and space. However, he does reserve that right for himself, when he extrapolates the law of increasing disorganization (entropy) back in time to argue that there must have been a point in time at which the clockwork of this universe was set in motion (creation: p.168-171). More of the same unfairness could be mentioned. On this principle creationists themselves should refrain from stating any hypotheses about things unseen or unheard of. They don't do that, of course, because it would stall all scientific activity and this shows the inconsistency of their scientific practice and their philosophy. Creationists are clearly preoccupied with scientific proofs of creation. They overestimate the value of science for the solution of questions that have implications far beyond the confines of science. Creationists are in need of a coherent world-and-life view and we, in reformed circles, need to be reminded that we have the potential of further developing and promoting such a view.

Creationists should openly admit, also in a scientific context, that the battle between the two opposing religious views of reality is as much a part of the controversy as is the scientific merit of the creation and evolution models. It is obvious that evolutionists are not going to accept the creation model on its scientific merits only. They are keenly aware of the fact that a religious world-and-life view is implied, and Parker and Morris know this (p.195). This is why those evolutionists who became creationists were also converted to Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Once the religious character of the conflict is recognized, we find science on our side. It is here that the creationists have a strong case. If one is willing to separate chaff from wheat, creationists, including Parker and Morris, have presented us with a body of scientific arguments that is devastating for the evolution model. We can firmly state that the results of the scientific investigation of reality are consistent with the biblical view of creation. But one needs the eye of faith to recognize this.

A recognition of the theological and philosophical ramifications of the creation-evolution controversy should also clarify the issue of whether or not the creation and evolution models should receive equal coverage in public schools. The requirement of scientific fairness on which this is argued would then be replaced with the question of whether different religious or philosophical systems should be taught in public schools. The authors themselves are opposed to the teaching of biblical creationism in public schools, because it would impose unreasonable

demands on non-Christian teachers. One could think of better arguments, but here is a reason to stop the futile battle for the public schools and direct all energy and finances to the development of private schools.

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