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Creation and the Flood: An Alternative to Flood Geology and Theistic Evolution (Book Review)

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perspective is fully Biblical has not obstructed genuine progress in the matter of religious reformation and theoretic reformulation. What is so sorely needed is not a *monologue* but a true *dialogue*, especially among all scholars who wish to move in a Scripturally-orientated direction but who have been influenced by different philosophical schools of thought. Inasmuch as *Foundations of Christian Scholarship* is intended to foster a meaningful dialogue, it is to be heartily welcomed, carefully read, and eventually responded to with a rather lengthy monograph.

Creation and the Flood: An Alternative to Flood Geology and Theistic Evolution, by Davis A. Young, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House, 1977, 217 pp., \$6.95. Reviewed by Richard G. Hodgson, Associate Professor of Astronomy.

This book is a highly competent study of God's work of creation and the Great Flood of Noah. It is marked by careful exegetical discussions of the appropriate portions of Genesis which break some important new ground in our understanding of the Scriptures.

Creation and the Flood also contains an excellent discussion of the modern geological discoveries that bear upon the question of the age of the Earth. These discoveries very strongly argue that the Earth is several billion years old, and are presented in such a way that the non-specialist can understand the methods used and the way in which these methods are validated and cross-checked. The result is a truly important book: a sound, Biblical discussion of portions of Genesis combined with a well-informed presentation of relevant geological discoveries.

Dr. Davis A. Young is in a unique position to write this book. He is a practicing geologist, educated at Princeton University, and now Associate Professor of Geology at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Some of the fruits of his own field-research enrich the book. He is also the son of the late Edward J. Young, the well-known Professor of Old Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, and is therefore well acquainted with Reformed, Biblical exegesis, a heritage he clearly treasures. Davis Young notes in his preface, "My father. . .and I had originally intended to collaborate on such a book as this" (p. 8). The father's death in 1968 precluded this, but as one reads the superb exegetical discussions contained in this book, one can hear the voice

of Edward J. Young still speaking.

After an introductory chapter reviewing the existing schools of thought, Young deals with theistic evolution, showing that it is not really founded upon or even permitted by the Scriptures. He calls theistic evolution a "House Built on Sand"—a sell-out to Darwinism.

The major portion of *Creation and the Flood* is directed against the superficial use of the Bible by proponents of "Mature Creationism," a school of thought which insists that the Bible teaches that the Earth and the Universe are only a few thousand years old. Mature Creationism has enjoyed widespread popularity in recent years in Fundamentalist and some Calvinist circles as a result of the writings of John C. Whitcomb and Henry M. Morris and the activities of the Creation Research Society.

Young indicates that the proponents of Mature Creationism delight in quoting Scripture texts and data from scientific journals to the untrained public, who are too overwhelmed to realize that many of the quotations have been ripped from their original contexts and heavily reinterpreted. In his book, Young attempts to correct these misinterpretations.

While the reviewer believes Young's book to be excellent in its discussion of Scripture and of the evidence of science, it is not without some blemishes. Apart from a few typographical errors, the reviewer would mention the following:

(1) Young's doctrine of Scripture is quite orthodox, but perhaps a little over-simple. Young says, "I regard Scripture as directly identical to God's Word and therefore absolutely authoritative, infallible and inerrant" (p. 20). While the reviewer certainly agrees that the Bible is absolutely authoritative and infallible in its promises, the manuscript texts of Scripture that we now have are imperfect and show thousands of variant readings, among many of which there is no certain way of choosing the original text. This situation does not put any doctrine in jeopardy, but to say that the Scripture we now have is "directly identical to God's Word" involves something of an oversimplification.

(2) Young is quite right in insisting that the early chapters of Genesis must be regarded as history, and not as legend or myth. He does not, however, consider possible implications of the fact that whereas Genesis 2:4ff is historical narrative, the form of Genesis 1:1-2:3 is distinctly that of *poetic prose*. This is manifest in the Hebrew but usually lost in translation, and is usually a truth ignored by most commentators who write on Genesis. Since the form in Hebrew is poetic prose—setting forth

the creation in a series of six days—how insistent should one be that they must be taken chronologically, as Young does? While the reviewer does not himself adopt the Framework Hypothesis of Meredith Kline (see *The New Bible Commentary: Revised*, 1970), he does wonder if a strictly chronological approach to the creation days may be putting too much burden on poetic prose; the creation days of Genesis 1:1-2:3 may be partly topical and partly chronological, Days One through Five being somewhat indefinite, and Days Six and Seven being chronologically most recent. If this is not adopted, there is a real problem in the relationship of Days Three and Four if one insists upon a strictly chronological sequence (as Young does, p. 129).

(3) There is no discussion of Richard Leakey's discovery of Skull 1470 etc. in east Africa (a most remarkable and important find!), although it is pictured on p. 147. Thought by Leakey to be 2-3 million years old, yet remarkably like modern man, this discovery and its dating *demands* discussion! (Probably Young finished his manuscript before Leakey's discovery, but it is unfortunate that he did not revise it or add a postscript to his book).

(4) On p. 172 Young inclines toward accepting the idea of a universal Flood without an adequate exegetical study, something not characteristic of him elsewhere. What does "all flesh" and "all the earth (or land)" mean, especially in the Hebrew? Is Moses thinking in global terms, or would an extensive regional flood be agreeable to Scripture? The question is not easily settled from the Bible. The view that the Flood may have been regional is well set forth in J. D. Davis, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 4th rev. ed., pp. 235-237 (1924).

These few blemishes notwithstanding, *Creation and the Flood* is an excellent book that deserves to be read by every thinking Christian.

Promise and Deliverance, Vol. I, by S.G. De Graaf, translated by H. Evan and Elisabeth Wichers Runner, Paideia Press, St. Catharines, Ontario, 1977, 423 pages, \$9.95. Reviewed by James A. De Jong, Associate Professor of Theology.

This work initially appeared in 1936 in the Dutch language. It was entitled *Verbondsgeschiedenis* (History of the Covenant), and was designed to instruct church-education teachers in the telling of Bible stories, particularly those dealing with historical passages. De Graaf's emphasis is that these stories and ac-

counts are always first of all an account of God's sovereign and electing work in and through the lives of his people. Only secondarily do they say something about the human figures in the Biblical records. This emphasis gives the explanations of De Graaf a strong, covenantal continuity. It also exposes the unity within the Bible in an unusually forceful and insightful manner.

Simply written, this work is profound in content. Undoubtedly this combination explains its wide usage and the devotion shown it by two generations of teachers, students, elders, and pastors. This reviewer, since he began preaching, never constructs a sermon on an historical passage without consulting De Graaf. And De Graaf's insights into the meaning of such passages is always refreshing, often brilliant, and usually on target. For years there have been suggestions that this book be translated into English. And its appearance this year as the first of a projected four-volume English edition is both overdue and enthusiastically welcomed.

Perhaps once in a decade or even a generation a work appears that is substantive and formative for both the professional churchman and the spiritually inquisitive Christian. De Graaf's work has the rare trait of speaking on both these levels. And if this translation receives the attention and circulation that it deserves, sales will boom, preaching will assume a new, more-Biblical focus in many congregations, and authors and teachers of church-education materials will benefit immensely. The Reformed community throughout the world owes the Runners a great debt of praise and gratitude.

Since every translation of an important book has its own history and context which parallel those of the original, a footnote can be added here. In this era of Alex Haley, the Runner translation can be seen as an exposure of the spiritual roots of Evan Runner and the significant number of students on whom he has had such a lasting and significant influence. If anyone would understand the robust Biblical piety inspiring the vision of these men on the North American continent, the place to begin is with De Graaf's study.

We wish Professor and Mrs. Runner stamina for the completion of this important project. Their translation is generally smooth, lucid, and accurate. The publisher is to be commended for the attractive, durable, and economical format in which he has marketed the first volume. At this price the book is a bargain among the best Reformed literature in Biblical studies currently available.