

# Creation, and the Fall of Man

F. B. Hole.

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The first chapter of Genesis furnishes us with the Divine account of the origin of all visible created things; and consequently it touches upon matters of which science, so called, would fain have a monopoly. This chapter has, therefore, for long been scornfully assailed by unbelief.

This, however, need not disturb the mind of any true believer for one instant. The attacks levelled by unbelief are really a compliment to the truth which is being attacked; and they all find their basis in that strange mixture of a very small number of facts with a very large number of suppositions, guesses, deductions, and speculations, which does duty as "science" when the Bible is in question. If we start sifting until the small residuum of real, true facts appears — FACTS, as much beyond dispute as that there is a sun in the heavens — not one can be found, which is in any way inconsistent with the wonderful truth divinely communicated through Moses in Genesis 1.

Let us note a few salient features of this wonderful chapter.

The first verse gives us the great original creatorial act of God whereby the heaven and the earth came into existence, taking place for aught we know in epochs immeasurably remote. Verse 2 resumes the story at a much later stage, when the earth was in a condition far removed from the perfectness of God's original work, apparently the fruit of some catastrophe the origin of which is not revealed. From this point God again begins to work and we read not only of God *creating* (Gen. 1: 21, 27) but of His *making* (Gen. 1: 7, 16, 25), and finally of *His forming* man (Gen. 2: 7). The two latter words are used when it is a question not of producing something out of nothing but rather of fashioning in fresh forms of order and beauty the matter already in existence.

Between verses 1 and 2 of Genesis 1, therefore, is a gap of an extent quite unknown to us. If scientists demand millions of years or even thousands of millions for the geologic ages which have passed, as they suppose, so be it. There is room for them all between these two verses.

The chapter opens with GOD. The word used in the Hebrew is *Elohim*, a word, remarkably enough, of plural form. This is the more striking when we remember that the Hebrew has, besides a singular, a dual form for its nouns. Dual signifies two, plural therefore signifying *three* or more. Yet the verb "created" is in the singular! Why this apparent breach of grammar? Evidently in order that in the very introduction to our knowledge of God we may receive a hint of the truth afterwards plainly revealed that He is a Trinity in Unity — three Persons yet one God. We have only to read verse 2 to discover mention of the Spirit of God, and later in the New Testament we find the active work of creation consistently attributed to the Lord Jesus, the Son. "His Son . . . by whom also He made the worlds" (Heb. 1: 2). The first verse of the Bible, therefore, contains a denial of *Unitarianism*.

It also contains a denial of *Pantheism* — an idea of the ancients and of the heathen world, but more recently revived in Christendom as one of the buttresses of "New Theology." The god of the Pantheist is simply the spirit or essence of Nature. He expresses himself in Nature, but is not to be known or even conceived of as outside of or apart from Nature. The Pantheist professes a god who is *immanent* in Nature but not *transcendent* above it. The God of verse 1 is clearly One outside of Nature and infinitely above it, seeing He made it, and therefore existed before it. From Him all that which we call Nature proceeds.

A nineteenth-century philosopher put it on record that he judged that at least five things must be assumed if we wished in any intelligible way to account for the universe. The five things he mentioned were: Time, Space, Matter, Force, and Motion. He did not say this because he had any respect for the Bible, and yet each of these five is mentioned in verses 1 and 2: —

- (1) "In the beginning" — time;
- (2) "The heaven" — space;
- (3) "The earth" — matter;
- (4) "The Spirit of God" — force;
- (5) "Moved" — motion.

Verse 2 opens the six days' work. We commonly but incorrectly speak of them as the six days of *creation*. Exodus 20: 11 says: "In six days the Lord *made* heaven and earth." The main work of those days was the fashioning anew of the earth and solar system that there might be a suitable abode for the man He was about to create. Beginning with the production of light, we travel up through the ranks of visible things to man, in whom rule and dominion was vested. The order observed in the account — vegetation, then trees, then fishes, birds, cattle, and creeping things, etc. — is such that no exception can be taken to it.

The work of the fourth day has presented difficulties to many; partly because years ago, under mistaken scientific ideas, light (v. 3) without the sun (v. 16) was regarded as an impossibility; partly because men did not carefully note what verses 14 to 18 really do say, and do not say Sun and moon were created as given us in verse 1; they were only made as "two great lights" on the fourth day; and, further, they were so set in relation to the earth, or the earth to them, as the case may be, that they ruled over the day and over the night, dividing the light from the darkness.

Two other points there are which we must not omit to notice, both concerning creation in a general way. The first is that all that God made was good. Five times over is this said (in verses 10, 12, 18, 21, and 25) about *matter*, whether animate or inanimate. These are important statements in view of the fact that the ordered scene of creation was so soon invaded by evil. It proves that it was an invasion

from without and not produced from within. All as it left God's hand was perfect and undefiled. It is also important as giving the lie direct to that terrible deceit of Satan miscalled *Christian Science*, which is based upon the assertion that matter is evil of itself, essentially so; and that mind is good. The truth is that matter originally was good and mind also, but that when sin did enter it gained first a foothold in mind, i.e. Adam's mind, as we shall see. Through mind, matter has been corrupted. It is "the *mind of the flesh*" which is "enmity against God" (Rom. 8: 7)

The second point is that in this chapter, as soon as life is touched upon, life of such an order as involved reproduction of species, whether herb, tree, fish, fowl, creeping thing, or cattle, the immutable law which governs all such reproduction is laid down in the three words "after his kind." Here we have our attention called to a fact which is continually verifying itself in a thousand ways. Breeding and selection may modify a species within certain limits, but nothing can alter the species.

The words "after his kind" occur in the first of Genesis no less than ten times. They are the statement, we repeat, of a great FACT, and a denial of the much-vaunted theory of *Evolution*. Against this let us mention that Darwin in his book, *The Origin of Species*, frequently uses such phrases as, "The laws . . . are for the most part unknown;" "The causes . . . are most obscure;" "So profound is our ignorance;" "As we have no facts to guide us speculation . . . is almost useless;" "No explanation can be given of these facts." Indeed we have seen it stated that over eight hundred times he uses the phrase "We may well suppose. . ." What a contrast to the "Thus saith the Lord" of the Bible!

The creation of man, male and female, was the crowning work of the six days. Man was made after God's likeness, i.e., bearing a moral resemblance to Him, possessing intelligence, reason, will, and sinless because innocent. He was also made in God's image, i.e. as His representative in this lower creation, and consequently he was given dominion over it. Man was made to rule, but as God's vice-regent, and therefore in dependence upon and obedience to Him. In this respect man appears to be alone, for even angels were made to serve, not to rule. "Are they not all ministering [or serving] spirits?" (Heb. 1: 14).

In Genesis 2: 7, man's creation, is again mentioned, but with another purpose in view. Here we are let into the secret of his spiritual constitution as distinguished from his bodily frame. The latter was constructed from the dust of the ground, but the former he inherited direct from God Himself by his in-breathing. Man is a living soul just as other forms of animate creation are said to be, but man is such by Divine in-breathing of life, which the beasts are not, and herein lies his distinctive glory.

Next we are told of the garden planted by the Divine hand and of Adam being put therein with the happy occupation of dressing and keeping it, for he was not to be idle even in innocence; and, further, that he was put under the single prohibition of not eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Chapter 2 closes with an account of how Eve was made. She was the subject of a special subsequent work of God, yet she was made *out of* Adam. The human race is therefore essentially *one*.

As we close Genesis 2 we have Adam the Divine representative holding dominion over the earthly creation and Eve his helpmeet associated with him. Yet he was under law, a law of but one commandment, and therefore he stood before God on the ground of his own responsibility. Obedient, he abode in Divine favour and maintained his position. If disobedient he was surely to die.

Genesis 3 brings us into the presence of the great catastrophe. The *source* of it is uncovered — the serpent; but in the serpent we discern the devil who is called Satan, for he had evidently entered into the serpent, then a far finer creature than now, to carry out his evil design. The woman, Eve, becomes the *medium* of it. Approached by the serpent, she listened, and then taking the lead, which was not her place, she acted and disobeyed. Adam, however, was the *responsible transgressor*. It is always

Adam's sin of which Scripture speaks, and 1 Timothy 2: 14 supplies us with the reason. Eve was deceived but Adam was not. His eating of the forbidden tree was therefore an act of pure defiance of God. It was undiluted lawlessness, and *that* is the very essence of sin.

We must carefully notice the way that the serpent went to work. It will not only instruct but also forewarn us, for his wiles are always similar. He aimed to undermine the creature's confidence in the Creator, labouring first and foremost to produce distrust of God.

He took three steps to accomplish this.

The first was the questioning of Divine Revelation. "Yea, hath God said?" were his words. He knew that if once the word of God were weakened in the woman's mind a breach would be made in the walls of defence. Notice that he misquoted the words in order to question it, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" The woman corrected his misquotation but herself exaggerated the Divine prohibition, adding the words, "neither shall ye touch it," to what God had said. This proved that the poison of doubt had begun to work in her mind.

Following up this initial advantage the serpent said, "Ye shall not surely die," thus denying the threatened penalty of ruin and death and giving the lie direct to God. He represented God's judgment as being but an idle threat.

Thus far the serpent had dealt in negatives, but now he comes to a positive assertion and dangles before the woman's mind a tempting bait. "Ye shall be as gods," were the words by which he asserted deity for man as the result of disobedience, and he insinuated that God knew that this would be the result of their eating of the forbidden tree, and that the real reason why the prohibition was given was that He desired to withhold from them this coveted prize from motives of jealousy.

Even the devil, however, does not trade in nothing but lies. He added the words, "knowing good and evil" (ver. 5), which was true as far as it went. He did not add that they would only know both in finding themselves under the power of the evil and without desire for the good. Facts partially stated often do efficient service in an evil cause.

These same three things are much in evidence in the false religious systems of to-day. However varied they may appear if subjected to only a surface inspection, a deeper analysis reveals that underneath they all agree in.

- (1) Questioning revelation, i.e. the Word of God.
- (2) Denying ruin and death.
- (3) Asserting deity for man.

Putting the three together we have "*the lie*" to which probably reference is made in 2 Thessalonians 2: 11.

The lie did its deadly work in the soul of Eve. She believed the devil and distrusted God, hence the temptation of the forbidden fruit assailed her in all its force. It appealed to the lust of the flesh in her, for she saw that it "was good for food." It appealed to the lust of the eyes for "it was pleasant to the eyes." It appealed to the pride of life, for it was "a tree to be desired to make one wise." Under this threefold appeal "she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

Thus God was abandoned for a moment of self-pleasing. The seed was sown which was to bear so fearful a harvest. The deed was done.

Its consequences began to appear immediately. Self-consciousness, slavish fear of God, the disposition to prevaricate and even to blame God Himself for what had happened, are all manifest in this third chapter. Nor do we have to go outside this chapter to find the governmental consequences of disobedience as regards the serpent, the woman, and the man. Each receives an appropriate sentence under which they are to this day and which no art nor ingenuity of man can lift. The garden of delights is lost for ever.

One other thing in the chapter we must not forget. It contains those first words of hope as to the coming of the woman's seed who should reverse the issues of that fatal day. Instantly the dark night of disaster fell the first star of hope was lit by the Divine hand in man's sky. The whole of Scripture, particularly the New Testament, is the working out in detail of all that was involved in Genesis 3: 15.

A few questions may now be considered.

### **Difficulties arise in many minds as to the origin of evil and why God should permit it at all. Is there scriptural light as to this?**

There is ample light as to the origin and entrance of evil into this world, and with that we have been dealing. Scripture also indicates that it was through pride that sin found a place originally with the devil (1 Tim. 3: 6), and under the title "King of Tyre" we appear to get a description of Satan's original glory and irremediable fall in Ezekiel 28: 11-19. But as to why God, knowing all that would ultimately be involved, ever created Satan or man, and why He permitted evil to ever invade any part of His fair creation, Scripture is silent, and we know nothing.

After all, these are matters which lie beyond the reach of finite minds. Is it likely that God would reveal to us such secrets of His high and eternal counsels as must lie on the plane of infinity? If He did, should we be any the wiser? No! It is well for us to call a halt here and say with the Psalmist, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it" (Ps. 139: 6).

### **We are often reminded of the vast ages which must have transpired, according to the geologists, during which various strata of the earth's surface and fossil remains were deposited, Why does not the Bible tell us about these?**

Because the Bible addresses itself not to the mind and its curious reasonings, but to the conscience and its awakened necessities; it is not an introductory handbook to the sciences, but a Divinely given guide to God, and righteousness, and heaven. Hence no space is wasted over matters of no importance to its purpose.

Immense ages may have transpired as the geologists assert. If so, there is room for them all between verses 1 and 2 of Genesis 1, as we have seen. There is nothing in Scripture to deny the possibility of the earth being filled with vegetation and creatures, or even successive relays of them, in pre-Adamic times. The fossils unearthed may well be relics of these prior creatures.\*

(\*Scientists who are Christians now clearly understand the flood to be the source of fossils. Note however that no ground is conceded to evolution in these papers. L.H.)

What about the remains of prehistoric man, for which great antiquity is claimed? Are we to suppose that man existed before Adam, or that far more than six thousands years have elapsed since his appearance?

To suppose that man existed before Adam would clearly be to deny Scripture. He is "the first

man" (1 Cor. 15: 45). As to six thousand years; we speak of ourselves being separated from Adam by about that time, accepting Usher's chronology as usually printed in our authorized English Bibles. There is, however, no certainty about that. It is a question of calculations made from the ages of the patriarchs and other historical data. Many have done it and no two agree. A few make it a little less than Usher and some a great deal more. Here, again, touching a matter of no real moment, the Bible is largely silent. We may make our calculations, but the fact is — *we do not* KNOW.

If, however, folk come to you and talk about the *proved* great antiquity of human remains, tell them politely that in so talking they prove nothing but their own excessive credulity. If you wish to discover what a confused welter of contradictory assertions and suppositions the whole matter is involved in, read *Evolution Criticised*,\* by the late T. B. Bishop, if you can obtain it.

\* Published by Oliphants, Ltd., London. This volume is unfortunately greatly lacking in the classification and arrangement of its subjects. It nevertheless contains much illuminating matter.

### **Are the six days of Genesis 1 ordinary days of twenty-four hours, or do you regard them as long periods of time?**

The word "day" is not infrequently used in Scripture as signifying quite lengthy periods, hence we are not surprised that many have assigned that meaning to it in Genesis 1. Such an interpretation, however, lands us at once into serious difficulties.

For instance: —

Why the repetition of "the evening and the morning (vv. 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). All plain enough if an ordinary day be meant — the Jewish day began at 6 p.m. remember. On the larger scale it would simply assert that there was a beginning and an ending to the period; a self-obvious fact unworthy of mention and much less of repetition.

Again, man was made during the sixth day, and then came the seventh of rest, between his creation and the Fall. Was this a period running into thousands of years? How could it be? Adam was only one hundred and thirty years old when Seth was born, and his total years were nine hundred and thirty.

Once more, in Exodus 20: 8-11, we have the fourth commandment concerning the Sabbath wherein we have the seven days of the week and the seven days of creation put together without one word of differentiation between the respective days. We could only assert that one set of days was entirely different from the other if clear proof were forthcoming from other parts of Scripture, and it is not.

We therefore accept the days as being days of twenty-four hours. *To faith* this is no more difficult of acceptance than the interpretation which sees in them thousands of years.

### **Objections are raised as to God placing a prohibition upon Adam, and also as to the *fact* that such tremendous consequences are attributed to a cause so small as eating "an apple." How would you answer such points?**

Well, supposing God had left Adam without prohibition or commandment of any kind, there then would have been no sign or reminder of their relative positions; that God was Creator and to be obeyed, and that Adam was but the creature and bound to obey. The wonder is not that God put upon him one prohibition, but that He did not put many. There were many trees in the garden, and instead of with-

holding the ninety-nine and giving him but one, God gave him the ninety-nine and withheld but one.

As to great results flowing from an apparently small cause, is it not often thus? The first great world war sprang out of a fatal shot fired in an obscure Balkan town. The heavy express train runs through the junction and swerves from one main line to another. You do not expect it to hurl itself with a crash from the one to the other at a distance of a hundred yards. No, it slips off almost imperceptibly, and there is hardly an eighth of an inch in it at the point where the divergence takes place.

So Adam slipped off the main line of obedience over what may seem a very fine point. Nevertheless he defied God, and defiance is never more flagrant and wilful than when it is in regard to some small thing, where the action is quite needless and without excuse.

### **Is the doctrine of "original sin" a scriptural one?**

The term "original sin" may not be found in the Bible, but the truth which is conveyed by the term is there right enough. In Genesis 5: 3 we read, "Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in *his own likeness*, after his image." Note the words we have italicised. Originally he had been created in God's likeness, but he did not reproduce himself during his brief time of innocence when there might have been another man also in God's likeness. He fell first and then begat children in his own likeness as a fallen creature. The law of Genesis 1 "after his kind" at once operated. Hence in Romans 5: 19 we read that "by one man's disobedience many were made [or, *constituted*] sinners." All his descendants came into the world sinners in their very constitution. That is what is meant by "original sin."

The solemn truth that human nature is tainted and corrupt is not popular, but even if men could erase it from Scripture it would still be shouted to heaven from every corner of the habitable earth. There the fact IS. The Bible alone explains its origin and unfolds the remedy.

### **The penalty was, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Yet Adam lived for nine hundred and thirty years? How do you reconcile that?**

First by understanding what death is. It is not extinction of being. No reconciliation would be possible if that were the case. Death is separation: primarily from God Himself the source of all life and happiness; secondarily the dissolution of man's composite estate, the separation of spirit and soul from the body.

In the day that he sinned Adam died in the primary sense, that is, an infinite gulf yawned between him and God as the account shows. He became, in New Testament language, "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2: 1).

Nine hundred and thirty-years later he yielded up the ghost and died in the secondary sense. Ultimately he will (except he repented and believed) be judged and consigned to the lake of fire, which means eternal and irrevocable separation from God. This is "the second death" chronologically, though it is the full thing and therefore the primary thing as regards its meaning.

But, second, note that death *did* fall in the garden on the very day of Adam's sin. Not on him personally but on some innocent victim, or victims, out of whose skins the Lord God made clothing for the guilty pair. Thus early was testimony given in a typical way to the fact of death as the wages of sin and also to the efficacy of a substitutionary sacrifice.

**Why did God make such a point of removing Adam from the tree of life, lest by any possibility he should eat of it?**

Because, as it says, he would then have lived for ever. That is, death could not then have touched his body and he would have been doomed to continue for ever in his sinful condition; physically beyond the touch of death's hand, but spiritually dead and alienated from God. His exclusion from the tree of life looked like further judgment, and so it was, but it also contained within itself the seeds of ultimate blessing, inasmuch as in God's own time Death was to become the door to eternal life. If physical death had been impossible to man then not even incarnation would have made it possible for Christ to die, and consequently Adam would have been shut up to his ruined state without hope. Thus early was God's judgment made to subserve the designs of His mercy, and pave the way for that climax of the ages — THE DEATH OF CHRIST.