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The Alleged Contradiction between Gen. 1:24-27 and 2:19

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is only too evident that these Scripture-passages do not offer for us the proof that they are meant to offer. Even in the form of the quotations as given by Paul they fail to do so. But Paul's method of quoting Scripture is too well known to trouble us."³⁷) This rationalist gives the case away. He starts out with the premise that Paul teaches a future conversion of all physical Israel, and because Paul's Scripture proof fails to prove that, he rejects the proof and still sticks to his assumption with regard to Paul's teaching. The actual case is that Paul's Scripture proof gives the knock-out blow to what he is falsely assumed by some to teach and emphasizes what attention to his whole argument³⁸) shows to be his true teaching.

We can confidently subscribe to the unequivocal position taken in our Synod's *Brief Statement* of 1932: "There will be no general conversion, a conversion *en masse*, of the Jewish nation."³⁹)

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V. BARTLING

The Alleged Contradiction between Gen. 1:24-27 and 2:19

The first chapter of Genesis, as every Bible student knows, has the animals made first and then man. But the second chapter is commonly held to reverse the order and to place the creation of man before that of the animals. This view is based upon the assumption that Gen. 2:18-25 constitutes a continuous piece of narrative and that the tense of the Hebrew verb with which v. 19

37) Quoted in German by Walther, *Lehre und Wehre*, 1859, p. 328.

38) Also the concluding verses of the chapter enforce the interpretation presented by us. Let us hear Philippi on this (*Roemerbrief*, 3. Aufl., p. 559): "Was nun endlich noch den Schluss des 11. Kapitels betrifft, so fuehrt der Apostel V. 28-32 durch, dass Israel zwar wegen seiner Verwerfung des Evangeliums Gott verhasst, aber um des mit den Vaetern geschlossenen Bundes willen von Gott geliebt sei, denn Gottes Gnaden-gaben, vgl. 9:4, 5, und seine Berufung moegen ihn nicht gereuen. Er hat also seinen Bund mit dem Volk Israel nicht schlechthin aufgehoben, sondern ist stets bereit, diejenigen wiederum gnaedig in denselben auf-zunehmen, welche ihrerseits glaeubig zu ihm zuruecktreten. Wie der unglaeubigen Heidenwelt durch den Abfall Israels Heil widerfahren ist, so soll ja auch Israel dadurch zur Rueckkehr zum Glauben gereizt werden, damit es das ihm stets bereite Erbarmen Gottes auch wirklich ueberkomme. Denn Gott hat alle beschlossen unter den Unglauben, nicht um sich der einen zu erbarmen, der andern aber nicht, sondern um, so viel an ihm liegt, sie alle in sein Erbarmen einzuschliessen, wenn sie nur diesen Einschluss nicht ihrerseits zurueckweisen. Zuletzt bricht dann der Apostel V. 33-36 in den bewundernden Lobpreis der goettlichen Weisheit aus, die ihren geheimnisreichen Erwaechlungsratschluss in der K. IX—XI entwickelten Weise zu seinem Ziele fuehrt."

39) *Doctrinal Declarations*, St. Louis, 1937, p. 57, section 42.

opens therefore implies a sequence in the order of time, necessitating the following translation of v. 19: "And so the Lord God formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the fowl of the air and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man should call each living creature, that was to be its name."¹

According to this view the animals were created in fulfilment of God's purpose to find a counterpart to Adam. That, however, implies that God's first attempt to provide a helpmeet for man was a dismal failure and that the animals owe their creation to this unsuccessful experiment on the part of God. But this idea, which certain exegetes have unfortunately derived from this chapter, runs counter to the whole conception of God as expressed both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. The God of Israel knows no failure; He accomplishes whatever He sets out to do, and all His works are done in wisdom.²

Furthermore, it is highly improbable that any author or redactor would put almost side by side two such *flagrantly* contradictory statements, one placing the creation of the animals before that of man and the other after it. To assume such a state of affairs is to attribute a pronounced degree of intellectual deficiency to the redactor, whom higher criticism has credited with having brought together the first two chapters of Genesis.³

But some will argue that these same chapters contain other statements which are just as flagrantly contradictory. For does not the first chapter picture the earth as being at first submerged in an immense body of water while the second chapter represents it as being so dry that nothing could grow on it? And does not vegetation according to the first chapter spring up at the mere utterance of God's command, before man had ever appeared on the face of the earth, while the second presupposes rain from heaven and the labor of man to make plant-life possible?

These ideas are based upon a misunderstanding of the second chapter. Gen. 2:4 ff. cannot possibly treat of plant-life in general; for if there was no vegetation at all throughout the earth before the creation of Adam, and if its production depended upon him,

1) Thus S. R. Driver, *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew* (Oxford, 1892), p. 88; and Eduard König, *Historisch-Comparative Syntax der Hebräischen Sprache* (Leipzig, 1897), p. 51, and *Die Genesis* (Gütersloh, 1919), p. 220.

2) Cf. W. H. Green, *The Unity of the Book of Genesis* (New York, 1895), p. 27. The same incongruity is of course involved when it is assumed that Gen. 2:4 ff. originally formed a separate creation account with an independent interest, provided that vv. 19 and 20 are left in their present position.

3) Cf. Green, *op. cit.*, pp. 20 f.

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as held by many, on what did Adam live before the origination of the plants? Moreover, the verb "to till," used in v. 5 and again in v. 15, refers not to the *creation* of the plants but to their *cultivation*. Again, as the context reveals, Gen. 2:4 ff. is concerned solely with the location of the future Paradise and with the fall of man and neither denies nor affirms the existence of plant-life in other parts of the earth. For these reasons the expression "in the earth," or "in the land" (אֶרֶץ, v. 5), cannot refer to the earth in general but must refer to the area where the Garden of Eden was to be located. *This place* which the Lord had evidently made dry like a wilderness when He separated water and land (chap. 1:9 f.), was still destitute of "every shrub of the field" and "every herb of the field" (v. 5) at the time of man's creation.⁴ The soil itself was indeed fertile, as we can gather from v. 8 f., so that vegetation would have been possible as far as the fertility of the land was concerned, but two of the main conditions for the cultivation of that area were still wanting: the Lord had as yet not sent any rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground and, probably, to supply the lack of rain by means of irrigation. And this barren desert the Lord turned into the most beautiful place on earth. He first caused a mist to rise, which afterwards probably descended in the form of rain (cf. Job 36:27), to water all the face of the ground. Then, after the soil had thus been watered and prepared for the bringing forth of vegetation, He created man. With this second act He could have stopped, since He could have placed man in charge of bringing this region under cultivation and turning it into a garden of beautiful green; but instead of that He continued to work, and He Himself planted the garden, charging man merely with its further development and its preservation. The picture in this chapter is indeed different from that in the preceding one, but time, place, and purpose are also different.

4) Elsewhere in the Old Testament (Gen. 21:15 and Job 30:4,7) the term עֵשֶׂב denotes an uncultivated shrub, a desert shrub. Here, in Gen. 2:5, the expression "shrub of the field," i. e., shrub of the open field, or the open country, probably also denotes an uncultivated shrub. The phrase "herb of the field" embraces both cultivated and uncultivated plants. The wild plants could of course have grown also without the aid of man had it not been for the lack of rain. But the cultivated plants needed the care of man. The assertion made by C. F. Keil, *Biblischer Commentar über die Bücher Mose's*, Vol. I, 1 (Leipzig, 1866), p. 43, and by others that Gen. 2:5 denies only the growing and sprouting of those plants, not their existence, is inconsistent with the meaning of the verb הָיָה ("to be," "to become"), which "cannot pass through the conception of *becoming* into that of *growing*," as correctly observed by A. Dillmann, *Genesis*, Vol. I (Edinburgh, 1897), p. 114.

A third reason against the view that one chapter places the creation of the animals before that of man while the other reverses the process is the fact that Gen. 2:4-25 plainly presupposes the existence of Gen. 1. By its own declaration Gen. 2:4-25 does not treat of the creation of heaven and earth in general. Rather it takes the existence of heaven and earth for granted. It opens with the formula **אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת**. Elsewhere in the Old Testament the term **תּוֹלְדוֹת**, derived from the Hiphil of **יָלַד** ("to give birth to," "to beget"), means "generations," "progeny," "genealogical register," or "genealogical history." Some commentators place v. 4 a, containing the formula under consideration, at the beginning of the first chapter. But that change in the Masoretic text is open to serious objections. In Biblical Hebrew, the phrase **אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת** is never used before the subject of the **תּוֹלְדוֹת** has been mentioned, the subject in this case being heaven and earth. Moreover, if v. 4 a originally stood before chap. 1:1, there is no satisfactory way of explaining why it was removed from its original position to be made the heading of chap. 2:4 ff. Others would connect this line with the preceding section, treating it as a subscription to chaps. 1:1 to 2:3. But **אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת**, in accordance with its meaning, always introduces a new section and thus always belongs to that which follows and never to that which precedes. Therefore, in spite of the stylistic differences between 2:4 a and 2:4 b-25, v. 4 a: "These are the **תּוֹלְדוֹת** of the heavens and the earth when they were created," must belong to the following verses and indicates that these verses are a record of what was generated of heaven and earth; in other words, they contain the *further* or *subsequent history* (**תּוֹלְדוֹת**) of the heavens and the earth, or the universe, with special emphasis on man.⁵⁾ Still others combine this formula with what follows but regard v. 4 a as a later, redactional insertion. Granting, for the sake of argument, that this verse is an interpolation made by the redactor, it nevertheless shows that the redactor, having perhaps better indications than we have, realized that chap. 2:4b-25 is not a new account of the creation of the universe but that, in a sense, it continues the story of the preceding chapter, giving us a supplementary and more detailed account of certain phases of creation. For, as evidenced by the context, chap. 2:4-25 is concerned only with a number of deeds which the Lord performed *after* the making of heaven and earth in the *narrower sense*, namely, in that part of the world where the Garden of Eden was to be located. V. 4 b briefly refers to heaven

5) For a fuller discussion of the phrase **אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת** (and also for a discussion of the general stylistic differences between Gen. 1 and 2) see König, *Die Genesis*, pp. 188-90, and Green, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-20.

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and earth in general; but beginning with v. 5, the text turns to the region of the future Paradise and brings out the idea that *this area* was still a barren desert when man issued from the hands of his Maker. That is the scene of action in this chapter.⁶⁾ Our account begins at a point *during* the creation of the universe and all that is contained therein, to give the new material its proper setting, and from there it continues and leads up to the main theme developed in the following chapter, dealing with the fall of man. Gen. 2:4-25 is in reality nothing but a preliminary to the narrative of the fall of man and his expulsion from the Garden of Eden. For this reason it was necessary to point out that man is a double being, consisting of body and soul; that he is created out of the dust of the ground and that therefore he can again turn to dust, but that he is also animated by the breath of God and that he can therefore die a spiritual death as well as a physical death (vv. 7 and 17 and chap. 3:19). It was furthermore necessary to locate the scene of the temptation and of the Fall (vv. 8-17), to bring out the relation between Adam and Eve (vv. 18-25),⁷⁾ and at the same time to show how abundantly the Lord had provided for man.⁸⁾

In the light of these considerations there can be no reasonable doubt that vv. 19 and 20 are to be treated as a parenthetical remark. The episode which they record really constitutes somewhat extraneous material and causes a slight break in the narrative of the creation of the woman and the institution of matrimony, recorded in vv. 18 and 21 ff. It is introduced, nevertheless, for a very specific purpose. The animals are brought to Adam that he might name them (which involves a penetration into their essence and characteristics) and that he might thus awake to the need of intimate companionship and to the realization that among all the creatures of the whole world not a single one was fit for such companionship with him, owing to the great dissimilarity of body and spirit. When this purpose is achieved, the narrative proper is resumed, and the creation of the woman is related,

6) Thus also Ernst Sellin, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Leipzig, 1933), p. 38.

7) Cf. Green, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

8) The view here presented is by no means in contradiction with the statement in vv. 4b and 5: "On the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, there were as yet no field shrubs in the land, and no field plants had as yet sprung up," because the expression "the earth and the heavens" can also be taken in a wider sense, to include everything contained therein, and the phrase "on the day that" is used also to designate a longer period of time (see Num. 3:1; Is. 11:16; Jer. 11:4); the word "day" in this instance is not to be taken in the same sense in which it occurs in the first chapter of Genesis.

followed by the story of the institution of the state of matrimony. Vv. 18-25, consequently, do not form a continuous, uninterrupted narrative, and it is therefore not necessary to assume a chronological sequence between vv. 18 and 19.

These considerations make it not only possible but necessary to take וַיֵּצֵר, with which v. 19 opens, in the sense of the pluperfect and to render this passage as follows: "Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the fowl of the air, and He brought them to the man," etc. Parallels to this usage of the imperfect with *waw* consecutive are found in Zech. 7:2, which the late J. M. P. Smith⁹⁾ of the University of Chicago has translated: "Now Bethel-sar-ezer had sent (וַיִּשְׁלַח) Regem-melek and his men to propitiate the Lord"; Gen. 24:64, 65: "And Rebekah raised her eyes and saw Isaac, and she dismounted from (her) camel (for she had said [וַתֹּאמֶר] to the servant: 'Who is the man yonder that is walking through the field to meet us?' and the servant had said [וַיֹּאמֶר]: 'He is my master'), and she took her veil and covered herself"; and Josh. 2:22: "And they" — viz., the men who had been sent to spy out Jericho — "went and entered the hills and stayed there for three days, until the pursuers returned (for the pursuers had sought [וַיִּבְקְשׂוּ] them all along the way, but had not found them)."

Taking all these points into account, I cannot see any justification for assuming a discrepancy between Gen. 2:19 f. and the preceding chapter. While it must be conceded that the pluperfect signification would stand out more clearly if v. 19 would start with וַיֵּצֵר אֱלֹהִים, instead of beginning with an imperfect consecutive, it must also be conceded that this construction is not necessary for the proper understanding of our passage if it is read in its relation to the previous chapter and in the light of Old Testament theology. Hebrew grammar admits the construction which takes וַיֵּצֵר in the sense of our pluperfect, and exegetical considerations require it. The alleged discrepancy thus disappears.

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9) J. M. P. Smith and Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Bible, An American Translation* (Chicago, 1935), p. 873.