

“The Creation of Man”
(Genesis 2:7)

At the 1996 meeting of the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Assembly was asked to consider an appeal from the decision of the Presbytery of the Midwest. That Presbytery had sustained the ruling of one of their Sessions that Dr. Terry Gray, a ruling elder in the OPC and professor of Biology at Calvin College, be found guilty of violating his ordination vow by teaching that evolution was true. And so, as was his right, he appealed finally to the General Assembly, which upheld the Presbytery’s ruling and denied his appeal. What exactly was Dr. Gray teaching? He had published a paper which clearly taught that man had a primate ancestor. In his article entitled “The Mistrial of Evolution,” published in *The Banner*, April 13, 1992, he set down his case. His whole argument was based on the fact that of all the mammals in the world today, only guinea pigs and primates (including man) do not have the gene that is necessary to synthesize vitamin C. They all do have a gene that looks like the right gene necessary to make vitamin C, but it doesn’t work that way in any of them. From this, he concluded, “We could argue that in God’s inscrutable purpose, he placed that vitamin-C synthesis look-alike gene in the guinea pig or human DNA. Or we could draw the more obvious conclusion: that humans, primates, and other mammals share a common ancestor” (*Minutes of the 63rd GA*, 94-95). Now what is interesting is the fact that Dr. Gray believed that his teaching was both Confessional and biblical. As a matter of fact, he based his argument on the very passage of Scripture we are looking at tonight. He believed that when Moses wrote that God formed man of dust from the ground, he was actually referring to the evolutionary processes He used to make the body of man. He believes that the Lord caused all life to evolve from an amoeba, up the chain of complexity, until it finally became all of the animals we see now. What God was saying in verse seven, is that He caused a creature to evolve that was like a man in every way, only he was not yet in the image of God. These creatures, which he called hominids, looked just like we do today, only instead of minds, they had the instincts of animals. But in the second part of this verse, the Lord took one of these hominids out of its jungle home, breathed into its nostrils a human soul, and it became the first man Adam, now made in the image of God. Interestingly enough, Dr. Gray does not believe that God took a female hominid and made her into Eve. Rather, he believes what the Bible teaches. God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, took one of the ribs from his side and closed up the place, and then fashioned the rib into a woman. He may have gotten the creation of the woman right, but is Dr. Gray right about the man? Does Genesis 2:7 teach that man’s body evolved? And does it teach that God breathed the breath of life into an already living creature to make it into a man? The answer to both of these questions is no. Rather, Moses teaches us here that man was created immediately by God from the dust of the earth, and he did not even begin to live until God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

If Genesis One teaches us anything, it teaches us that the God we love and serve is a God of infinite power. There is nothing too difficult for Him. I think sometimes even Christians begin to doubt His power and want to give Him a little help. If they can’t conceive of a God who is powerful enough to create everything in a few days, they will give Him more time, so that He can do it more slowly. But there are still others who simply want to believe what the scientist

says about man and the world, and want to make it harmonize with the Bible. As we've seen before, many scientists believe that the world is billions of years old. They believe that life has been on earth for millions of years. For the most part, they reject the idea of an omnipotent God who made all things. Instead they believe that the material the universe is made of has been around forever. It had no beginning, and it will have no end. They believe, as Dr. Gray, although without God in the picture, that all life on earth came from an accidental combining of the right chemicals. These chemicals eventually formed simple proteins that also combined to create simple forms of life. And through the process of genetic mutation -- that is, changes made in the DNA of these simple creatures by such things as other chemicals and the radiation that comes from the sun --, and through the process of natural selection -- which is the survival of the fittest; the creatures that are formed from the mutation have some advantage the others don't have, and so finally take over -- everything has become as we see it today. Many scientists believe this so strongly, that they are not willing to give it up. They simply will not believe that an all-powerful God created all these things. When it is pointed out to them that we don't see these changes happening today, they say, You need to realize that this took millions of years. It doesn't happen everyday. When it is pointed out that there isn't even one instance recorded of a beneficial mutation in the DNA and that all the mutations which have been studied either cripple or kill those who have them, they point to the one they believe to be beneficial -- sickle cell anemia, which gives those who have it an immunity to malaria, while at the same time threatening their lives everyday with oxygen starvation -- the sickle cells can't bring oxygen to the cells like healthy red blood cells. When you point out to them that the fossil record -- all of the fossils that have been found in the earth -- doesn't contain even one missing link from one species of animal to another, when if their theory was true there should be countless numbers of them, they used to say it was because they haven't done enough digging. After they had done enough, and there was still no evidence, they said it was because evolution doesn't happen in small steps, but in large ones -- such as alligators laying eggs that hatch into chickens; the so-called "The Hopeful Monster Theory." When they are asked why we don't see this happening today, again the answer is, It doesn't happen everyday, but only once in a great while. If that is true, then we should ask, Then how did this creature ever find another one like it as a mate? But now, if after examining all the evidence and not finding any evidence for evolution, you ask them, Why do you believe in this theory? Again, the only answer they can give is that for them there is no other possibility. As far as they're concerned, there is no God. It could only have happened this way, even if they can't find any mechanism that makes it happen.

It's strange -- isn't it? --, that even though some Christians are unwilling to reject the existence of God, they will still accept the idea that God used evolution to create life. They want to believe their Bibles and these scientific "facts" as well. But is the information which the scientists have really "facts." So many today, even in the church, seem to believe that scientists are infallible, or close to it. They often tend to let the scientist have their say first, before coming to their Bibles, to try and harmonize them. But this is wrong. Scientists are just men, like anyone else. And because they are men, they are liable make mistakes, like anyone else. A man once gave this good illustration how wrong they can be. Writing of the eruption of Mount Pelee on the island of Martinique in the West Indies in 1902, he says, "The papers tell us that on Monday, Mt. Pelee destroyed several vineyards with streams of red-hot lava, and showed such signs of disturbance that the Governor of the Island appointed a commission of scientists to visit the volcano, inquire into its present condition, and future intentions, and report back promptly to

headquarters, or as it turned out to be, tail quarters. One of these printed reports was found after the eruption; and but for the dreadful fate that came upon the reporters themselves, as well as the whole country, it is enough to make every one who reads it smile; even the celebrated Henry of England could not have preserved straight facial lines after its perusal, and would have smiled again. The Commission, or Committee of Doctors of Science, had been requested to look in the eye, feel the pulse, take the respiration, examine the heart, and probe well into the eternal economy of Mt. Pelee. What an imposing sight those half dozen human specks moving up the side of the trembling mountain must have presented to the onlooking world. Perhaps the arrival of all this incarnated prodigious learning increased the agitation of the volcano itself. Anyhow, the men of science arrived, investigated, understood the whole thing with a few sapient glances, and reported. So did Mt. Pelee three days later! The written declaration of the [Representatives] was, That there would be no more disturbance, that the worst was over, and that such was the position of the crater and the formation of the valley at the foot of the mountain, that St. Pierre was especially safe, etc., etc. All this was very soothing and gratifying to the frightened people of the city, but, like certain famous Diagnoses of prominent men in the medical fraternity, the case was not at all understood, and so, on Thursday morning Mt. Pelee suddenly made a report of its own, and vomited out a hurricane of fire, cubic miles of cinders, ashes and lava, and swept multiplied thousands to death in three minutes time. Among the destroyed were the men of science who wrote, and the Governor who signed the learned paper wherein was testified the amiable nature and good intentions of Mt. Pelee. The whole sad circumstance, aside from other teachings, looks like one of the ironies of the divine providence, and there are many. The wisest men are met so frequently in nature and life with flat denials of their statements and utter failures in fulfillment of their prognostications, that it would seem to be enough to convince all of the ignorance as well as the helplessness of the race. The word science is taken from the Latin scio, which means to know. Who gave this name to these men? Was it done innocently or in satire? For after saying all we can about human knowledge of Gods works, how inconceivably vast and profound is the ignorance which remains. Already we have had four different theories about earthquakes. Numbers of times we have been told that the world is rapidly cooling off, when Mt. Pelee breaks into the conversation with its hoarse voice, crying out, Certainly but after this fashion” (*Illustrations, Ages*). Scientists are not infallible. They have made many many mistakes. If you were to examine the so-called chain of evolution from a monkey to a man, you would find that many of the creatures they thought were links in that chain were either hoaxes or very bad misinterpretations. And what makes matters even worse is the fact that these unbelieving scientists hate God and want to do all that they can to destroy the “facts” that reveal Him. Is this the kind of person you want to trust to guide you into the truth? Now I don’t mean to say that everything the scientist says is wrong. Certainly, there have been many unbelieving scientists who have made amazing discoveries. But when it comes to the subject of how man came to be on this earth, and how everything else did as well, we move beyond the subject of science to that of faith. Even if the scientist could prove that evolution was possible -- which he can’t, but even if he could --, he still couldn’t prove that it actually happened that way. To know what really happened, you need to be there to see it. The scientist wasn’t there. Neither were we. But God was.

So then, what does God say about the origin of man? Looking at the same verse that Dr. Gray examined, we see that God, on the sixth day of His creation, formed man from the dust of the ground. It has been pointed out by some, that instead of simply speaking and commanding

the earth to bring forth the man, as He did with His other creatures, there seems to be a more personal involvement here on the part of God. He formed and fashioned the man from the dirt. He didn't make it into something else first, and then through a series of evolutionary steps eventually make it into a man, but He made it into a man directly from the dust of the ground. But notice another important point here. Even though what He made here was called a man, this man wasn't alive yet. It wasn't until God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life that he became a living being. Dr. Gray believed that this breathing was the imparting of a human soul to Adam, that Adam was alive before God did this, but he was not yet a man. But Moses writes that Adam was a man, before this breathing, but that he was not alive until God breathed into his nostrils. Now whom should we believe? We need to read our Bibles more carefully. God speaks to us very carefully and accurately. Therefore we need to listen carefully to what He says, or often we will miss the whole point. God wants us to understand that we are a special creation of His. We were made immediately from His hands. God didn't reach down and first make an amoeba, a single cell creature. He didn't cause this amoeba to evolve into a two and three cell creature, and eventually into a man. If you believe this, not only do you not believe what the Bible says, you also have to believe that there was death before the Fall. As these creatures evolved, one would become better than the others and the others would die off. Generation after generation of hominids would have lived and died, even those that looked just like us, before man was finally created. What then would be the significance of the Fall? When man sinned, death entered into the world. A curse fell upon all of the creation. This is when death and destruction began. Before the Fall, all was at peace and perfect harmony. Before the Fall the Bible indicates that none of the animals were yet carnivorous. God gave all of them the green plants and herbs to eat, as He did to man. It wasn't until later, after the Fall, that the animals began to eat each other. But evolution, even theistic evolution, teaches that there was killing and death and destruction before the Fall. But this isn't true. We are not the result of millions of years of killing and death. God made us directly. We aren't an accident of nature. We aren't even the end product of some evolutionary process controlled by God. We are unique creatures, made from His hand, and created in His image. This is what makes us special. This is what gives us dignity. Next week, I would like for us to consider that God also made us in His image. We will also look at what that image is, and what a wonderful blessing it is for us to be made in it. Amen. Let us pray.