

## St. Augustine on Science and Faith.

Saint Augustine (A.D. 354-430) in his work *The Literal Meaning of Genesis (De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim)* provided excellent advice for all Christians who are faced with the task of interpreting Scripture in the light of scientific knowledge. This translation is by J. H. Taylor in *Ancient Christian Writers*, Newman Press, 1982, volume 41. ([www.pibburns.com/augustin.htm](http://www.pibburns.com/augustin.htm))

Usually, **even a non-Christian knows something** about the earth, the heavens, and the other elements of this world, about the motion and orbit of the stars and even their size and relative positions, about the predictable eclipses of the sun and moon, the cycles of the years and the seasons, about the kinds of animals, shrubs, stones, and so forth, and this knowledge he hold to as being certain from reason and experience.

Now, it is a disgraceful and dangerous thing for an infidel **to hear a Christian**, presumably giving the meaning of Holy Scripture, **talking nonsense on these topics**; and we should take all means to prevent such an embarrassing situation, in which people show up vast ignorance in a Christian and laugh it to scorn.

The shame is not so much that an ignorant individual is derided, but that **people outside the household of faith** think our sacred writers held such opinions, and, to the great loss of those for whose salvation we toil, the writers of our Scripture are criticized and rejected as unlearned men.

If they find a Christian mistaken in a field which they themselves know well and hear him maintaining his foolish opinions about our books, **how are they going to believe** those books in matters concerning the resurrection of the dead, the hope of eternal life, and the kingdom of heaven, when they think their pages are full of falsehoods and on facts which they themselves have learnt from experience and the light of reason? Reckless and incompetent expounders of Holy Scripture bring untold trouble and sorrow on their wiser brethren when they are caught in one of their mischievous false opinions and are taken to task by those who are not bound by the authority of our sacred books.

For then, to defend their utterly foolish and obviously untrue statements, they will try to call upon Holy Scripture for proof and even recite from memory many passages which they think support their position, although *they understand neither what they say nor the things about which they make assertion.* [1 Timothy 1.7]”

In matters that are obscure and far beyond our vision, even in such as we may find treated in Holy Scripture, different interpretations are sometimes possible without prejudice to the faith we have received. In such a case, we should not rush in headlong and so firmly take our stand on one side that, if further progress in the search of truth justly undermines this position, we too fall with it. That would be to battle not for the teaching of Holy Scripture but for our own, wishing its teaching to conform to ours, whereas we ought to wish ours to conform to that of Sacred Scripture. Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* 1:18

## Geocentric Worldview from Bible

**PS 104:5 He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved.**

### **Psalm 104: 1-6**

PS 104:1 Praise the LORD, O my soul.  
O LORD my God, you are very great;  
you are clothed with splendor and majesty.  
He wraps himself in light as with a garment;  
he stretches out the heavens like a tent  
and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters.  
He makes the clouds his chariot  
and rides on the wings of the wind.  
He makes winds his messengers,  
flames of fire his servants.  
**He set the earth on its foundations;  
it can never be moved.**  
You covered it with the deep as with a garment;  
the waters stood above the mountains.

**ECC 1:5 The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises.**

ECC 1:2 What does man gain from all his labor  
at which he toils under the sun?  
Generations come and generations go,  
but the earth remains forever.  
**The sun rises and the sun sets,  
and hurries back to where it rises.**  
The wind blows to the south  
and turns to the north;  
round and round it goes,  
ever returning on its course.

**PS 19:4b-6 In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun, ...It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat.**

### **Psalm 19: 1-6**

The heavens declare the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.  
Day after day they pour forth speech;  
night after night they display knowledge.  
There is no speech or language  
where their voice is not heard.  
Their voice goes out into all the earth,  
their words to the ends of the world.  
**In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,**  
which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion,  
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.  
**It rises at one end of the heavens  
and makes its circuit to the other;  
nothing is hidden from its heat.**

# Important People & Dates

<b>Ptolemy (geocentric astronomy)</b>	(AD 127-145)
<b>Augustine of Hippo</b>	(A.D. 354-430)
<b>Martin Luther 95 Theses</b>	1517
<b>Copernicus (heliocentric astronomy)</b>	(1473-1543)
<b>Francis Bacon (1561-1626)</b>	Two books in harmony: 1605
<b>Isaac Newton</b>	(1642-1727)
<b>Benjamin Silliman (Yale)</b>	(1779-1864)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Silliman's Journal became American Journal of Science;</li><li>▪ President, Am. Assoc. for Advancement of Science</li></ul>	
<b>Edward Hitchcock (Amherst)</b>	(1793-1864)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 1840 Elementary Geology</li><li>▪ Paleontological chart 1840</li><li>▪ 1851 The Religion of Geology</li></ul>	
<b>Asa Gray (Harvard)</b>	(1810-1888)
<b>James Dana (Yale)</b>	(1813-1895)
<b>Charles Hodge (Princeton)</b>	(1797-1878)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Patient analysis and unhesitating confidence in science and Scripture "We only interpret the Word of God by the Word of God when we interpret the Bible by science."</li></ul>	
<b>Benjamin Warfield</b>	(1851-1921)
<b><i>The Genesis Flood</i> by Whitcomb and Morris</b>	1961
<b>Creation Science Foundation. Ken Ham</b>	1979
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Creation Science Ministries, Answers in Genesis</li><li>▪ Creation Museum, KY. \$27 million, 70,000 sq. ft. (2007)</li></ul>	
<b>Intelligent Design. (Phillip E. Johnson, Michael J. Behe)</b>	1990s

## Science & Faith Quotations

**Martin Luther** (1483-1546): a German monk, priest, professor of theology and iconic figure of the Protestant Reformation. His translation of the Bible into the vernacular (instead of Latin) made it more accessible, causing a tremendous impact on the church and on German culture.

"There is talk of a new astrologer who wants to prove that the earth moves and goes around instead of the sky, the sun, the moon, just as if somebody were moving in a carriage or ship might hold that he was sitting still and at rest while the earth and the trees walked and moved. But that is how things are nowadays: when a man wishes to be clever he must needs invent something special, and the way he does it must needs be the best! The fool wants to turn the whole art of astronomy upside-down. However, as Holy Scripture tells us, so did Joshua bid the sun to stand still and not the earth." [Luther is referencing Joshua 10:12-13 where "Joshua said to the LORD in the presence of Israel: 'O sun, stand still over Gibeon, O moon, over the Valley of Aijalon.' So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies."] from Luther's Tablebook (*Tischreden*), or record of dinner-table conversations

### **Billy Graham**

"I don't think that there's any conflict at all between science today and the Scriptures. I think that we have misinterpreted the Scriptures many times and we've tried to make the Scriptures say things they weren't meant to say, I think that we have made a mistake by thinking the Bible is a scientific book. The Bible is not a book of science. The Bible is a book of Redemption, and of course I accept the Creation story. I believe that God did create the universe. I believe that God created man, and whether it came by an evolutionary process and at a certain point He took this person or being and made him a living soul or not, does not change the fact that God did create man. ... whichever way God did it makes no difference as to what man is and man's relationship to God." Billy Graham: *Personal Thoughts of a Public Man*, 1997. p. 72-74

### **Henri Blocher** (French, GCTS 1989, D.D.)

- **Scripture should be interpreted solely based on text & context.**
- **What was the author's intended meaning?**

"The author of Genesis has shown us that he did not understand the days of the first tablet literally. It is therefore erroneous, in our view, to introduce the Bible into the geochronological debate." *In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis*. p.217, (IVP, 1984).

### **Derek Kidner** (1913-2008) British)

Senior Tutor, Oak Hill Theological College (1951-1964)

Warden, Tyndale House, Cambridge University (1964-1978)

- Considers evolution perfectly compatible with the opening chapters of the Bible. (IVP, 1967) *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* (Tyndale OT Commentaries)

### **Roger Wiens:**

Principal Investigator for the ChemCam remote sensing package on the Curiosity rover on Mars.

**Mark Noll** vimeo (2.15 minutes). <http://vimeo.com/44007714>