

The Framework Hypothesis & Genesis 1

Herman Hanko

This manuscript is taken from lecture given by Professor Herman Hanko at the Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church, Thursday, May 17, 2001. Prof Hanko hopes to show the wrong of this newest theory “The Framework Hypothesis and Genesis 1”, (which is not really new at all) and develop some aspects of the truth of creation and providence. He will answer such questions as: how this theory...

- attacks Scripture’s clarity by making an interpretation of Genesis 1 & 2 so difficult only an expert can understand it.
- attacks the historicity of Genesis 1 & 2 and threatens the historicity of Genesis 3 .11.
- attacks the foundation of the whole revelation of God in Scripture by attacking and undermining the foundation on which the whole of the truth rests, namely the doctrine of creation.

The Evangelism Committee, Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church; 2001

Introduction:

The need to speak on the Framework Hypothesis bodes ill for the church. It is not an error that is placed on church’s agenda by the world. It originated and has its greatest influence in conservative Reformed and Presbyterian denominations and seminaries.

Though of relatively recent origin, in another sense it is not new. Fifty years ago, when I was attending college, the so-called Period Theory was just being introduced into the science department. This explanation of Genesis 1 was replaced, after ten or fifteen years, by what became known as the Gap Theory. That particular view has very few, if any, defenders today. The Gap Theory was quickly followed by other views which explained Genesis 1 as myth, or saga, or a doxology.

Now we are confronted with the Framework Hypothesis. Yet, all these views have one thing in common. They deny the literal meaning of Genesis 1 and are, therefore, an assault, a fierce assault, on Genesis 1 and the creation narrative, and thus, on the sacred Scriptures. It is particularly disconcerting that, when these heresies arise and the church is called to give a clear sound on the trumpet to summon the church to battle and to condemn unequivocally these false views, one finds to his dismay that there is scarcely one anywhere that dares to stand up in the ecclesiastical assemblies and defend vigorously on behalf of God and His truth the doctrine of creation. We get instead whimpers and stutterings, and perhaps a trumpet sounding retreat. That is disconcerting.

I consider this Framework Hypothesis, recently made popular, to be an assault on the Scriptures. It is an assault on the Scriptures in three distinct ways. It is an assault on the divine inspiration of Scripture. It is an assault on the doctrine of Scripture’s authority. It is an assault on the Biblical truth which forms the foundation of the Christian faith.

What the Framework Hypothesis Teaches.

The Framework Hypothesis was first proposed by Dr. Noordzij of the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands in the early 1950’s. His defense of the Framework Hypothesis never became very popular. The later popularity of the view could be explained by the fact that the idea was picked up

by Dr. N. H. Ridderbos, a prominent figure in the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands. He wrote a book in which he spelled out his view of the Framework Hypothesis and defended it. The title of the book is, *Is There A Conflict Between Genesis 1 and Natural Science?* That book has been translated and is available in this country, though only as a used book. But even that book did not really make much progress within Reformed and Presbyterian circles until this same view was picked up by theologian and Old Testament scholar Meredith Kline. He has popularized the theory. He has had remarkable success in promoting it and has succeeded in gaining many to his views, especially in more conservative circles. He has put it on the agenda of the church. Collaborating with Dr. Lee Irons, he has set down his views in a book called *The Genesis Debate*.

The Framework Hypothesis has two parts to it. The first part proceeds from the assumption that the narrative of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 is not to be taken literally, but makes use of a literary device. It is a device which imposes a literary framework on the creation narrative which requires that the narrative be explained in a way quite different from the traditional interpretation that the church has given to it for two thousand years.

The theory goes something like this. The literary framework, by means of which the work of creation is described, is merely a device to give some rather general ideas about the origin of this world without in any way giving us information on the length of time in which God's work of creation was done, in what order God created the creatures belonging to creation, and the manner in which God created them. The days are not literal days, but are a device used which points us to two groups of three, two triads set over against each other. There is a relationship between the two triads and a correlation can be found between day one and day four, day two and day five, day three and day six. What Genesis 1 is trying to teach us is not how God created the world, not in how much time he created the world, but only that the creation is divided into three separate spheres each with its own rulers. There is the sphere of space, which is ruled by the sun, moon, stars, and planets. There is the sphere of the sea, which is ruled by fish and birds. There is the sphere of dry land which is ruled by animals and man. That is about as much as the creation narrative tells us. We must not look to Genesis 1 to learn how God created things or *in how much time* He created things.

If one would ask how God created all things, the answer of the Framework Hypothesis is: God created all things by "natural providence." Although, in the book mentioned above, little more is said about what is meant by natural providence, it becomes clear that the authors mean God's ordinary way of working in His creation, that is, according to so-called natural laws. Hence, the creation came into being through evolutionary processes, which processes are still in operation today in the creation. Natural development over billions of years explains the origin of the creation.

The second aspect of his theory is called two-register cosmogony. Now I have to admit that I read this material a number of times, but was unable to figure out exactly what is meant. It is very complicated. It is very abstract. It is very far remove from the simple statements of Genesis 1. That in itself ought to send up warning signals to anyone who loves God's Word. What is meant, apparently is this. Genesis 1 is not telling us what happened here upon earth during the creation week, but this chapter in the Bible is telling us what happened in heaven. There is a heavenly register and an earthly register. All Genesis 1 is telling us is that there is some reality of which we know very little, which takes place in heaven where God dwells, but which somehow has some kind of an effect here below which we are able to see and to observe only through the metaphorical language of Genesis 1.

Now, that is too complicated for me to understand. But let me quote.

"The evidence that the Genesis cosmogony has been shaped by the employment of the Bible's two-register cosmology thus demonstrating that the picture of the week of days is one element of a broader pattern in which upper-register realities are described through the metaphorical use of lower-register terminology" (The Great Debate, 185).

I must admit that I do not know what that means. I would find it extraordinarily difficult if I were

teaching the doctrine of creation to five and six year old covenant children, which once I did, to have to say to them, “God did not really create things in six days of twenty-four hours, but what we have here in Genesis 1 is a metaphorical use of lower-register terminology to give us some kind of an idea of upper-register cosmogony.” I would find myself extraordinarily uncomfortable. I would probably skip the lesson on creation, if I had to teach that. But the point is that the language of Genesis 1 is metaphorical and is in no sense of the word to be taken literally.

If you think that to accuse the Framework Hypothesis of denying the literal interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2 is too harsh a judgment, other quotes from the book will prove this contention. It is necessary to prove this because, strangely, the authors claim to believe in the literal interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2. Nevertheless, they write:

“The creation narrative is not to be taken literally but is kerygma-theological, and redemptive” (TGB, 218).

If this is set against a literal interpretation of Genesis 1 & 2, I do not know what “kerygma-theological, and redemptive” mean. But the point is clear. The narrative is not literal.

“The Framework Hypothesis regards the seven day scheme as a figurative framework” (JGD, 219). “While the six days of creation are presented as normal solar days, according to the Framework interpretation, the total picture of God completing his creative work in a week of days is not to be taken literally” JGD, 219).

The men who defend the Framework Hypothesis do not want Genesis 1 or Genesis 2 to be taken literally. I consider that idea, apart from the difficulty in understanding the Framework Hypothesis, to be a deliberate and calculated assault on the sacred Scriptures.

An Assault on Scripture’s Inspiration

The literal meaning of the sacred Scriptures has been the foundation of the Reformed faith since the time of the Lutheran Reformation. It is a profound truth rescued from Roman Catholic bondage. The Roman Catholic Church had given to the Scriptures a four-level interpretation. The literal meaning of the Scriptures was not the real meaning, according to Rome. If one wanted to find the real meaning, one had to go deeper and deeper through these additional three levels of interpretation until finally, when one reached the bottom, he would find the true meaning of the Scriptures in the various levels. The result of that position of Rome was that the ordinary people of God were judged unable to understand the Scriptures, and the Scriptures were denied them.

I do not have to remind you of how vicious Rome became when the Scriptures were translated into the language of the common people. Rome did not want the Bible in the hands of the people of God.

Luther said, “There’s devilry in that.” He translated the Bible into German and gave it to the people of God. He freed the Scriptures from the shackles and chains of Rome. In addition to translating the Bible into German, and as a reason for translating it into the language of the common people, Luther insisted on the truth of the office of all believers. All God’s people are given the Spirit. With the Spirit, they are able to understand the sacred Scriptures. The cornerstone of that doctrine was that the Scriptures are to be taken literally; that the Scriptures mean exactly what they say; that they have no hidden meanings, no meaning below the surface, no deeper levels of meaning. They say exactly what they mean and mean what they say. The literal meaning is the only meaning and the correct meaning.

This truth lies in the very nature of the Scriptures. The Scriptures are, after all, the infallibly

inspired written record of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. But they are the record of God's revelation in Christ to God's people. God wants to tell His people about the great salvation He has prepared for them in Christ. All things recorded on the pages of Holy Writ belong to that salvation.

The conclusion is that Genesis 1 speaks of Christ as well as Revelation 22, and as well as all intervening books and chapters. God gave the revelation of Himself so that His people might have this revelation of Himself to know Him as their God and to live with Him in covenant fellowship. To use the words of Psalm 25, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant" (vs. 15). He tells them who He is. He tells them of all of His wonderful attributes and glorious works. He tells them of what He does in order to save them and make them his people. He tells them of all the glorious things He is going to do for them and will do for them forever and ever. But, because they are all part of the salvation which God gives His people, they are all revealed through Christ, through whom alone is salvation ours.

He makes known His secrets to His people in such a way that they are able to understand. Why else would He reveal these secrets? John Calvin in a certain place speaks of the fact that God in the Scriptures talks "baby talk," because that is all we as creatures are able to understand. God lisps in a language that is understandable to us. To all God's people, the educated and the uneducated, the farmer and the doctor of philosophy, the old saint and the little child, He speaks. How many times in the Scriptures are not children directly addressed? God does not talk in a mysterious language that only professors with their Ph.D.'s are able to understand. He does not talk in the Scriptures about two-register cosmogonies and cosmologies. God wants His people to understand how He made all things. Hence, what God says is literally true. Is that so hard to believe? "God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." That is how God talks because He wants us to know who He is and what He does so that we come to know Him as the God of our salvation.

The simplicity of the Scriptures can not be true if we can no longer trust their literal meaning. There is not any one that reads this pamphlet who can discover what the Scriptures mean, if we are dealing with writings which cannot be taken literally. In that case, the church needs learned scholars to tell us what the Scriptures mean. It is obvious to anyone who reads the first two chapters of Genesis that they teach one simple truth. God, by the Word of His power, called everything into existence in six days exactly like the days we have. Let us conduct an imaginary conversation.

"But," say today's scholars, "You are all wrong. Genesis 1 does not mean that at all."

"Well," we respond, "What does it mean?" The response comes quickly. "We have here a two-register cosmogony given in a literary framework."

"But is not this so vague and hard to understand that it leaves room for unbelieving theories of origins, that is, evolutionism? How can the ordinary child of God understand that?"

"We have gifted Old Testament scholars here in the Seminary who will explain how these things are to be understood."

"But what has happened, then, to Scripture's perspicuity? To the office of believers?"

To that there is no answer. The silence is palpable.

Was the church of the martyrs, the church that was persecuted by the whore of Rome, the church of past centuries, in need of today's scholars to know the faith that she was called upon to defend? They were poor people who, lacking today's scholars, could not possibly know what Genesis 1 and 2 were talking about, if we are to believe today's exegetes of Scripture.

Theories which deny the literal meaning of the creation narrative are leading the church back to Rome! Is that where we want to go? Back to Rome where a new priesthood, now of scholars, will explain to us what we are unable to understand by ourselves?

Facing this very problem in his time, Calvin writes in his preface to his commentary on Romans: "We ought to have such respect for the Word of God that any difference of interpretation on our

part should alter it as little as possible. It is therefore presumptuous and almost blasphemous to turn the meaning of scripture around without due care as though it were some game that we were playing.” He writes in the commentary on the parable of the Good Samaritan: “We ought to have a deeper reverence for scripture than to reckon ourselves at liberty to disguise its natural meaning.” In other words, to disguise Scripture’s natural meaning with theories such as the Framework Hypothesis is to show irreverence to the sacred Scriptures.

The church always has maintained this position. Walter J. Kaiser, professor of Old Testament in Gordon-Conwell Seminary writes: “Scripture has only one meaning, the one obvious from the thought and words. It is a meaning which anyone who reads the text can ascertain. The obvious surface meaning, the ‘prosaic’ meaning is the right one, and looking for other meaning reduces exegesis to a shambles” (*Rightly Divided. Readings in Biblical Hermeneutics*, Roy B. Zuck, General Editor, Kregel Publications. Pp167-170).

Even Herman Ridderbos, who promoted the Framework Hypothesis, wrote concerning the creation narrative in his book on the subject,:

“One who reads Genesis 1 without prepossession or suspicion is almost bound to receive the impression that the author’s intent is to say that creation took place in six ordinary days.”

The Framework Hypothesis has to do with what is called literary criticism of Scripture. In an essay (originally given as a speech), C. S. Lewis writes: “Whatever these men may be as Bible critics, I distrust them as critics. They seem to me to lack literary judgement, to be imperceptive about the very quality of the text they are reading.... These men ask me to believe they can read between the lines of the old texts; the evidence is their obvious inability to read (in any sense worth discussing) the lines themselves. They claim to see fern seed and can’t see an elephant ten yards away in broad daylight” (*Christian Reflections*, 154, 157). That strikes me as appropriate. The defenders of the Framework Hypothesis claim to see the fern seed of two-register cosmogony and they can not see the elephant of six days of creation in broad daylight at ten paces. That is an assault on the sacred scriptures and God’s Word. We must view it as such and consider our calling.

An Assault on Scripture’s Authority

The Framework Hypothesis is an assault on Scripture’s authority. The Framework Hypothesis, as well as any other view that refuses to take Genesis 1 literally, is an assault on Scripture’s authority because it is a sell-out to modern unbelieving science. Now I happen to like science and I am not going to use this point to carry out some vendetta against science. I read all the science I have time for. I like astronomy particularly. Science is wonderful. But not unbelieving science. Yet the church sells its soul to unbelieving science. Unbelieving science is summoned to serve as the shock troops in an assault on the citadel of the Scriptures.

The authors of the Framework Hypothesis would deny this. They are at great pains to claim for themselves two things. They claim to believe in the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures, and they claim that they are not imposing their Framework Hypothesis upon Scripture under the pressure of scientific discovery. Many times in the course of their argument they remind the reader of their commitment to the Reformed doctrine of Scripture. One is reminded of Shakespeare’s memorable line: “Me thinketh thou protesteth too much.” But so it is. They want us to be convinced that they are not adopting their view under the pressure of modern science. Their Framework Hypothesis, so they claim, was developed simply because of the fact that they were engaged in honest and objective exegesis of Genesis 1 and 2 and were compelled by the exegesis itself to adopt this position.

But what they claim is not true. This can be shown from their own writings. The defenders of the Framework Hypothesis tip their hand, whether purposely or inadvertently They write:

“We must regard any creation account or narrative of human events that clearly contradicts

scientific and or historical data as erroneous, mythical, or fictional.”

One can not say it any clearer than that! Any exegesis which contradicts science is erroneous, mythical, or fictional.

“Our position is that natural revelation and scripture cannot contradict one another. If there is an apparent conflict between our interpretation of natural revelation and our interpretation of Scripture, the only role of natural revelation in the exegetical task is to serve as a warning that we may need to re-examine our exegesis.” That settles the matter of their view of the relation between natural revelation and Scripture. When natural revelation and Scripture come into conflict with each other we are not warned, as we should be, to reinterpret our science! No, when the two come into conflict with each other we are told that we may need to reexamine our exegesis. Science is right. Our understanding of Scripture is wrong. That means that the authority of science stands above the authority of Scripture.

Another quote will further substantiate this.

“As far as the time frame is concerned [that is, how long it took God to create all things, HH], with respect to both the duration and the sequence of events, the scientist is left free of biblical constraints in hypothesizing about cosmic origins” (Quoted from Kline in The Reformed Herald, 7).

We are flatly told that the scientist, whether believer or unbeliever, is perfectly free, when it comes to the question of the origin of the creation and the sequence of events in creation, to do his own work apart from any constraints of the Scriptures.

So, after all, their claim to be objective in their exegesis is a false claim. They want to make room for science, which teaches an old earth. We are to take the word of an unbelieving scientist rather than the Word of the God of heaven and earth. Especially when it comes to how the world came into existence. Is that what the believer is supposed to do? That is what these men are asking us to do.

The argument is that natural or general revelation and special revelation are both the Word of God; that both, therefore, say the same thing and cannot contradict each other. We must be reminded of a truth upon which Calvin insisted. He reminded us that our sin makes us so spiritually blind that we can not see the revelation of God in creation unless we put on the spectacles of Scripture. Hence, science must be interpreted in the light of Scripture, not Scripture in the light of science.

Two points must be emphasized in this connection. The first is that the Framework Hypothesis, as well as all other theories that try to bring evolutionism into the creation narrative, is based on the Principle of Uniformitarianism. We are able to determine, so this principle states, how the world was ten, fifteen, or twenty billion years ago by how the world is today, because all the forces operating in the creation today were operating throughout the entire history of the world, and were operating in the same way. Kline concedes the principle when he insists that creation took place by ordinary or natural providence.

This theory of uniformitarianism is, however, demolished by the Holy Spirit in Peter’s second epistle, chapter three, where Peter puts the very words of the Uniformitarians in the mouth of the scoffers who deny Christ and the power of His coming: “This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: *“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation”* (vss. 1-4). But, as Peter goes on to say, all things do not continue as they were from the beginning of creation. The Flood came and the Flood was a universal catastrophe. As Peter makes clear, the entire structure of the creation

was changed by the flood. Whereas once the creation was surrounded by water and stood in the water and out of the water, now it is surrounded by fire being reserved unto the day of judgment.

Another event which is not taken into account is the fall of man into sin.

In his book, *The Green Eye of the Storm*, John Rendle Short tells us that one of his reasons for abandoning theistic evolutionism and adopting the traditional view of creation in six days of twenty-four hours was his inability to get past the fact of the fall and the curse that came because of it. It is in the nature of the case that anyone who wants an old universe, as is true of all the defenders of the Framework Hypothesis, must have a creation in which there always was death. Kline says that the idea of death coming with the fall cannot be supported by the Scriptures. He realizes, however that Romans 5:12 is a key text, and so he tries to explain away the clear meaning. The text reads, "Wherefore, as by one man sin came into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed on all men for that all have sinned."

But it cannot be explained away. After the fall, God pronounced the curse upon the creation. The curse means that God in His fury against sin, brings death into the creation.

The difficulty is that one cannot have fossils that are one hundred and fifty million years old if there was no death before the Fall. That is impossible. So, death was characteristic of creation for all the billions of years of its development, contrary to the literal statements of the Scriptures. Reformed believers must maintain that through the fall of Adam death came upon all things, and that only through the atoning death of Christ Himself, who bore the curse, can man and the creation be delivered from the bondage of corruption. Before the fall death was impossible. The whole creation, through Adam lived in fellowship with God the source and fountain of all life.

Not only is it true that the tremendous catastrophes of the Fall and the Flood came upon this creation, so that all things do not continue as they were from the beginning of the creation, but man, as the punishment of God against sin, is made totally depraved. Part of that total depravity is his spiritual blindness. In his spiritual blindness he is unable to understand spiritual things. In his blindness he is an enemy of God. He hates God and attempts by one means or another to destroy God's name, and truth from the earth.

Evolutionism, in whatever form it may come, is an attempt to do that very thing. Are we then going to permit these unbelieving scientists to tell us how the creation came into existence? God has given us the Scriptures to tell us, and He has put those Scriptures as eyeglasses on our nose so that we can see the creation as God made it and as it truly is. Apart from these spectacles, we can not understand the creation. But if we have the spectacles on, we can understand it. Then we can do our scientific work and see God in all of His mighty works, all His power, all His majesty, and all His purposes which He has for the whole of creation and for us. What a marvelous gift God has given to us.

We can perhaps show the foolishness of evolutionism with an illustration. Supposing that a group of scientists, interested in architecture, came to a large and old castle to learn how it was constructed. In the entryway a book was found on the table in which the builder of the castle explained in detail how he had built it. But these learned scientists, glancing briefly at the book, reject it as an authoritative account, throw it into the moat filled with water, and proceed to examine a few stones in the walls, a few steps from the steep staircases, and a few tiles from the roof. After studying them, these learned men give us a detailed explanation in which they maintain that the castle came from some very old material, but gradually evolved into the mighty fortress which it is now. Who would ever believe such nonsense?

And now there are those in the church, conservative churches, who take their spectacles off, throw them on the ground, jump on them a few times, and then go prowling around in the earth's crust, blind as bats, to tell us how the creation came into existence. How can anyone believe these things?

An Assault on the Foundation of the Gospel

Finally, this view is an assault on the foundation of the gospel. I word it that way deliberately.

When I was going to college, I was introduced to the Period Theory. The days of Genesis 1 were said to be long periods of time, not normal days of twenty-four hours. The professor, knowing that some of us in the class were believers in the literal interpretation of Genesis 1, said to us in words of this effect, "I hope by the end of the year, I will have you all persuaded of the correctness of the Period Theory. If there are one or two of you that are not persuaded, I will consider that to be a failure on my part. But I want you to understand that it really does not make any difference what you believe. Whether you believe a literal account of Genesis 1, or whether you believe in the Period Theory does not make any difference for salvation, because Genesis 1 and its interpretation does not belong to the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. So you can believe what you wish on these matters. All these views are acceptable in the church."

Howard Van Til, in his book *The Fourth Day*, also insisted that it makes no difference what one believes on this question. Whether one believe what his book teaches, or whether one believes in creation in six days of twenty-four hours, or any other theory, the question of what is right and wrong is irrelevant, because the creation narrative is not a part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The same is being said today by the defenders of the Framework Hypothesis. We have to listen to the old song: "It doesn't matter what you believe." Even in the book, *The Genesis Debate*, the defenders of creation in six normal days state emphatically that they do not consider the issue a divisive one, and that different views ought to be acceptable in the church.

From such a position matters can only get worse. The question of creation becomes an open question in the church. To make matters worse, it is then added that the question of the creation is a non-confessional question, and that any effort on the part of radicals to define the way in which God created all things and the time in which He did so is an effort to add to the confessions. Because all this is said to be true, we are asked to tolerate these views. The plea is made: "Just tolerate us. That is all we are asking. Declare the whole matter of origins to be non-confessional. Give us room in the church for our view. You may hold to your view. You may maintain your position. We are not going to try to shove our views down your throat. It just doesn't make any difference to salvation. It doesn't touch on the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

It is striking and significant that the Arminians asked for the same toleration in the years prior to the Synod of Dordt—and they came close to taking over the whole church. It does make a difference what people believe concerning Genesis 1 & 2, because it makes a difference on what they believe concerning their Bibles. Who are these people that claim to have the right to take part of the Bible and say this does not belong to the gospel of Jesus Christ? The whole of Scriptures has to do with Jesus Christ. The whole of Scriptures is gospel. The whole of the Scriptures has to do with our salvation. When God made the worlds and created man as the king, His purpose in that creation never was to glorify Himself through the first Paradise and the first Adam. His purpose right from the start was to glorify Himself through the second Adam in the redeemed heavens and earth which are made one through the power of the cross of Jesus Christ.

Do you think that Satan, that foul spirit from hell, could frustrate the purpose of Almighty God? Do you think that when he introduced sin into the world God stood wringing His hands in despair while saying, "Oh my, everything is spoiled. We shall have to fall back on Plan B. Plan A came to nothing. The devil made it impossible. Now I will try to salvage something out of this mess that the devil and man made." Is that the God of Scripture? The Scriptures reveal God as the absolutely sovereign One who does all His good pleasure.

When God formed the heavens and the earth, He, as it were, created the stage in splendid detail, on which stage would be enacted the drama of sin and salvation in Christ. Christ's salvation is cosmic. The salvation of the catholic church and the salvation of the whole cosmos in Christ. Even the salvation of heaven is through Christ (Col. 1:20), so that all things may be united in Him who is

exalted to be Lord of all. Right from the beginning of the works of God that was God's purpose.

God saw all that He had made and behold it was very good. Why was it good? It was good, because God saw that it was perfectly adapted to serve the purpose which He had determined for it in Jesus Christ. There is gospel here in Genesis 1.

There was even evidence of this given by God in the creation of the heavenly bodies. These heavenly bodies, we are told, were created for various purposes, among which was to serve as "signs" (Gen. 1:15). But what is a sign? A sign is an earthly reality that points to a heavenly truth. We are given a sign of the sacrifice of Christ in the broken bread and the poured out wine served in the Lord's Supper. The sun was created to be a sign of the Sun of Righteousness who rises with healing in his wings (Mal. 4:2). It is a sign of as the bridegroom of His bride, the church, who comes forth from His chambers (Psalm 19:5, 6). The gospel of Christ. God created the lily of the valley and the bright morning star so that we may see Christ (Colossians 2:2, II Pet. 1:19). There is gospel in God's work of creation. To deny creation is to deny the gospel. Indeed, creation is the foundation of the gospel. Genesis is the book of beginnings, the beginnings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In Proverbs 8, where Christ is personified as the Wisdom of God, Christ Himself says, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.... While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there... (vss. 22-31). This is gospel, glorious gospel. Because Christ is the One in whom all the cosmos and all the elect are saved, He was, as it were, present when the cosmos was formed that He might supervise it and see to it that it served His own glorious work of salvation. Even more, He was revealed as the Wisdom of God in all the works of God's hands. The creation is the foundation of the gospel. Are we going to destroy the foundation? What will happen to the house?

The advocates of the Framework Hypothesis are reluctant to include man in creation by "ordinary providence." Perhaps it is too great a concession to evolutionism even for them. The result is that the proponents of the Framework Hypothesis draw a line through the events of the sixth day. The line must be drawn between the creation of the land animals and the creation of man. What belongs on the side of the line which includes the creation of animals belongs to science, we are told. But this is not true of the creation of man. The creation of man must be taken literally. But why? There are no exegetical reasons for drawing such a line. And indeed, with more logical consistency, many refuse to do this, but claim that man also belongs to the evolutionary process – although he may have had a soul injected at some point along the way. But, let it be noticed, this evolutionary description of man's origin is the inevitable results.

Finally, it is repeatedly argued that the church must allow freedom for its scholars to believe and teach what they will concerning the truth of creation because the whole doctrine is a non-confessional doctrine. That is, while the Confessions teach that God created all things, they do not teach how and in how long a time God performed the work of creation.

This line of reasoning is sheer sophistry, and an open attempt to bypass the Confessions. The Confessions, taken in their entirety, simply assume the doctrine of creation as taking place in six ordinary days, such as we know today. But they also teach this doctrine explicitly The Heidelberg Catechism states that "The eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (who of nothing made heaven and earth, with all that is in them). ..."(Lord's Day 9, q. & a 26).

The Framework Hypothesis contradicts this statement of the Catechism in two ways. First of all, it contradicts this statement by teaching that the creation took place by ordinary or "natural" providence, and was not, therefore, a miracle. If creation **out of nothing** is not a miracle, then there are no miracles at all in Scripture. Secondly, the advocates of the Framework Hypothesis contradict this teaching of Scripture because they teach that the various creatures came forth from something. Higher forms of creatures came forth from lower forms of creatures. All developed. This is a denial of our Confessions, which are squarely based on Scripture's own repudiation of evolutionism. Heb.

11:3 teaches that God created in such a way “that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” These men, bent on introducing evolution into the church, say, “Things which are seen were made of things which do appear.”

The Confession of Faith, Article 14, teaches that death came into the world with the fall of man. The Framework Hypothesis denies this when it insists, as it must, that death was always present in the world. Article 14 says:

“Man willfully subjected himself to sin, and consequently to death and the curse.... [Man] by sin separated himself from God, who was his true life; having corrupted his whole nature; whereby he made himself liable to corporal and spiritual death....”

This article identifies death and the curse as being the same. Genesis 3 tells us that the curse **upon the creation** (“Cursed be the ground for thy sake”) as the punishment for Adam’s sin. It came with the Fall.

In Article 12 of the Confession of Faith, such a work of creation as Genesis teaches is specifically taught. “We believe that the Father, by the Word, that is, by His Son, hath created of nothing the heaven, the earth, and all creatures as it seemed good unto Him, giving unto every creature its being, shape, form, and several offices to serve its Creator....” How it is possible for anyone to deny that this article teaches creation in six ordinary days is hard to imagine. If this article does not teach creation by God’s almighty Word in a moment and by His power, then all language has lost its meaning. Notice, first of all, the article insists that God created all things “by His Son,” not by evolutionary processes. Not natural providence was the method; God’s Son was the direct Agent of creation. Secondly, creation was “of nothing.” And, finally, creation was such a work of God that by means of creation God gave **to every creature its being, shape, form and several offices**. The being, shape, and form of every creature was given directly from God and was not acquired by the creature through genetic aberrations, the survival of those most able to adapt to their environment, and evolutionary processes, called by the advocates of the Framework Hypothesis, “natural providence.”

Finally, the Canons of Dordt, (III & IV, Art. 12) compares creation to regeneration. Regeneration is said to be performed by God in a way “not inferior in efficacy to creation.” It is called in fact “a new creation.” If the creation of the worlds took place by “natural providence,” the same must be true of regeneration. Somehow, by natural providence the totally depraved sinner is transformed to become a saint, glorified and holy. It is merely a matter of development. Rather, even the Canons, singularly uninterested in the doctrine of creation in their fierce battle with Arminianism, insist that regeneration is comparable in many respects to the creation of all things.

Let it never be said that the “how” and the “manner” of creation is a non-confessional matter. That is a travesty on our Confessions and will inevitably lead to denials of other confessional doctrines.

Creation is a Matter of Faith

That all brings up one final point.

We do not attempt to prove creationism from science. We must not attempt to do this. I am not saying that true science contradicts the creation narrative. It does not. But the battle lines are not drawn between competing and contradictory interpretations of creation, It is not a question of who does the best science. The issue is far more profound than that. The question is simply this: Do you believe the word of God or don’t you? The battle is between faith and unbelief. It is unbelief to construct a view of the origin of the creation which conflicts with the literal meaning of Genesis 1. It is unbelief to take Christ’s book and say to Christ, “There are some things that didn’t happen the way you said they happened, because science says that it is impossible for creation to happen that way.

Hebrews 11:3 puts the entire battle where it must be fought. How is it possible to confess the truths of creation as given in Scripture? The only way is the way of faith. Unbelief will always seek to destroy the truth of God –also the truth of creation. But faith alone is able to confess the doctrine of creation, namely, that God formed all things in six days of twenty-four hours. How do we know that by the Word of the Lord the heavens were framed and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth (Psalm 33:6)? How do we know that God is the One who calls the things that were not as though they were (Rom. 4:17)? How do we know that any form of evolutionism, which teaches that things which are seen came from things which do appear, is heresy? How do we know that God formed all things in six days of 24 hours, limited by morning and evening? The only way is faith. “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Heb. 11:3). Faith is the only way. Saving faith. Faith which confesses that salvation is in Christ alone. Faith which, laying hold on Christ, receives Scripture as Christ’s Word.

If the whole world believes in evolutionism, and the church meekly follows the world, the believer who clings to Christ by faith and finds in Christ the fullness of his salvation, who glories in the hope of being with Christ forever and ever world without end, maintains, even in the fires of persecution, the simple yet profoundly glorious truth of the doctrine of creation.