

BOOK REVIEW

of

Henry M. Morris,
The Biblical Basis for Modern Science,
Master Books, 2002.

This book is in the Evangel Library,
and this review is by Larry D. Paarmann.

Unless you were raised in a very strong Christian family which included considerable home Christian instruction, and were active in a strong Christian church, you, like many of us, might almost think the title of this book to be humorous, or even an oxymoron. After all, aren't modern science and the Bible somewhat at odds? One would certainly gain this notion from many sources in our society including various media, public education, and your next door neighbor. One might even pick this up in Christian schools or churches. Complicating the issue is that *modern* science has swallowed naturalism hook, line and sinker, and doesn't even seem to realize the difference between hard science and philosophical naturalism. As Phillip Johnson and many others have noted, the source of truth in our society is naturalistic science, the depositories of truth in our society are secular universities, and the authorities of truth in our society are naturalistic scientists. But if we are able to separate hard science (science that deals with facts, the scientific method, repeatable experiments, etc.) from philosophical naturalism (a philosophical position, not a scientific one), as Morris would have us do in this book, then we might be able to follow his arguments that the Bible and its teachings provide the true basis for scientific studies, a basis lacking in all non-Christian societies.

Henry Morris is the founder and now president emeritus of the Institute for Creation Research (ICR). This book under review is one of Morris' most noteworthy publications in the area of what is known as creationism. Prior to founding ICR, Dr. Morris was the chairman of the department of civil engineering at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University for thirteen years. His classic engineering textbook on hydrology, published by Wiley, is still in print more than 30 years after its initial publication. He is known for being a very careful, thorough writer. One of his first books on creationism, *The Genesis Flood*, coauthored with John C. Whitcome, initially published in 1961 and still in print, is known for starting a new wave of interest in creationism.

The book has four parts and sixteen chapters. Part 1, Science and True Christianity, has the following chapters: Queen of the Sciences, Christ and the Cosmos, Miracles and the Laws of Nature, and Science Falsely So Called. Part 2, The Physical Sciences, has the following chapters: Creation of the World, The Host of Heaven, The Power of Heat, and The Dust of the Earth. Part 3, The Earth Sciences, has the following chapters: Foundations of the World, Water and the Word, Overflowed with Water, and Fossils and the Flood. Part 4, The Life Sciences, has the following chapters: The Life of the Flesh, In the Image of God, Babel and the World Population, and God and the Nations.

In chapter 1 Morris sets the tone by a philosophical discussion of cause and effect. He claims that all scientists operate on the assumption of cause and effect, not just that one event *follows* another but that the second event *follows from* the other. This is what in our western, highly influenced by Christianity, culture calls common sense, but it isn't something that can be scientifically proved. There is one exception, however, to the above stated assumption by scientists of cause and effect. That is when the topic is concerned with origins: the origin of the universe or the origin of life. In chapter 1 Morris states "Scientists like to project an image, for public consumption and admiration of detached objectivity, or searching for truth. Yet that search for truth seems to stop abruptly whenever it begins to lead in the direction of supernatural creation, and the vaunted objectivity of scientists quickly deteriorates to irate emotionalism whenever evolution is questioned on scientific grounds. ... Rather than discrediting the possibility of the supernatural, the law of causation offers strong testimony to the existence of a personal, omnipotent God. As noted above, the law leads inevitably to a choice between two alternatives: (1) an infinite chain of nonprimary causes; (2) an uncaused primary Cause of all causes. Although again it is impossible to prove rigorously that the second alternative is the true one, it surely is more satisfying to all logic and experience."

In chapter 2 Morris continues on the above theme: "So inextricably is time now associated with the law of entropy, that Sir Arthur Eddington many years ago gave the second law of thermodynamics the graphic name of 'time's arrow.' The universe is decaying toward an eventual 'heat death.' However, since it is far from 'dead,' it must have had a beginning! Thus, by the second law, the universe must have been created somehow at some finite time in the past, since otherwise it would have died long ago." The naturalistic scientist calls the beginning an uncaused big bang with no explanation about how or why the bang occurred, other than however or why-ever, it was naturalistic. The Christian says that "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Which sounds more logical, reasonable, and scientific to you?

And so Morris continues throughout the book to illustrate again and again that the Christian is on solid ground in all scientific pursuits, some subjects perhaps more than others, illuminated by the logic and reasonableness of Scripture. It is because the Christian believes, and western society has embraced either because of being Christian or operating on borrowed capital, in a rational, omnipotent creator God, and that life has a purpose, history has a direction, human thought is not an illusion and human responsibility is real, etc., all derived from Biblical teaching, that science is possible.