

CONCERNING THE MINISTRY OF DR. HUGH ROSS

Summary of an article by Bolton Davidheiser, Ph.D. Zoology, Box 22, La Mirada CA 90637

Dr. Hugh Ross has a worldwide ministry. His mission is to affirm the scientific accuracy of the Bible. He is a "Big Bang" enthusiast, which means he believes the world came into existence through a great explosion of nothing about fifteen to twenty billion years ago. Starting with this premise, and as he emphasizes, he believes the Biblical days of creation were long expanses of time. He cites ancient Christian writers as authorities supporting long periods of time for creation. However, as modern secular writers point out, these ancient writers also had views which properly may be called evolutionary. Furthermore, there are modern Hebrew scholars who consider the days of creation as ordinary days.

Dr. Ross says that if Moses had recorded the order of events in creation by chance instead of by inspiration, the probability of getting them in the correct order would have been incredibly small, but Moses did get them in the correct order. How do we know he did? Aside from faith there seems to be no other way except by comparison with the order given by the evolutionary scientists. But using that as the standard puts the authority of the scientists above the authority of the Bible.

For example, according to Moses the sun was created on the fourth day while the scientists say the sun is older than the earth. Furthermore, green plants require light for photosynthesis. If the days of creation were long periods of time and green plants were created on the third day, they could not have survived until the creation of the sun on the fourth day. Dr. Ross solves these dilemmas as did Dr. Scofield before him in his famous Bible notes. The idea is that the sun really was created at the start but was obscured by clouds until revealed by the removal of the clouds on the fourth day. Before this sufficient light penetrated the clouds to sustain the plants.

Actually, when God said, "Let there be light," during the first day of creation it was not necessarily sunlight, just as in the New Jerusalem of the future eternity there will be no need for the sun, as the glory of the Lord will illuminate it (Revelation 21:23).

Dr. Ross told an audience, "Science and the Bible totally agree concerning the initial condition of planet earth, that the earth began with an atmosphere dominated by ammonia and methane." Where does the Bible agree to that? This kind of atmosphere for the early earth was promoted in textbooks for many years. The more recent opinion among scientists is that instead it was mostly nitrogen and carbon dioxide. A computer analysis at NASA indicates that at the earth's distance from the sun an ammonia and methane atmosphere would be chemically unstable and last only a short time.

Dr. Ross further told this audience that the removal of the darkness (Genesis 1:2) caused by the ammonia-methane atmosphere was a delicate procedure because the molecular weights of ammonia and methane are so close to that of water, which needed to be retained in the atmosphere. He mentions five factors that had to be involved and said that "all of these five factors would need to be held within a variation of not more than one or two percent for billions of years, and the probability of this, putting it conservatively, would be something like one chance in a billion."

He makes other fantastic statements concerning the origin of the solar system and the "six solar systems we can see besides our own" (there are none), and concerning gravity, the moon, the second law of thermodynamics, etc. It should be added that he says he now is more careful not to make such fantastic statements and blunders as formerly.

Beyond matters such as those just mentioned, the most important consideration has to do with theology. Dr. Ross espouses

a theology by which a doctrine of salvation is obtainable from the observation of nature. He cites the first chapter of Romans, where we are told that the heathen are without excuse for their idolatry since evidences of creation are so clearly revealed in nature. But a denunciation of idolatry through recognizing in nature that there must be a God of creation is a different matter from understanding salvation by grace and receiving Christ as personal Savior through accepting His atonement for sin. God is the righteous Judge and not ourselves. Our part is to inform the heathen and other nonbelievers about the way of salvation through the atonement made for sin by our Lord upon the cross.

Also in support of this doctrine Dr. Ross writes in his book *The Fingerprint of God* that Job, "without the aid of scriptures and in opposition to the religion of his peers, discerned all the elements of 'the gospel,' the good news of how man can find eternal life in God." How could Job do that? Job and others who lived before the atonement for sin was made by our Lord at Calvary, who worshipped the true God and kept His statutes, went to paradise, later to join those saved by grace through our Lord's atonement.

Also having to do with theology is the matter of evolution. As Dr. Ross accepts multiple millions and billions of years for the development of the cosmos, the solar system, and the earth with its contents, how does this affect his thought as to *how* it all came about? More importantly, does it influence his followers toward accepting compromises with evolution?

Two kinds of compromise with evolution are "theistic evolution" and "progressive creationism." According to the former, evolution is true but it was not Darwinian. God did it that way. Progressive creationists note that animals and plants do change but the changes are limited and not sufficient for evolution from simple forms to man. When a type of animal or plant reaches the limit of its variation, God steps in and performs a creative act, putting it a step higher. But overall this took just as many long ages as the evolutionists require and most progressive creationists assume very large amounts of variation.

In a public broadcast Dr. Ross appeared with an evolutionist. Regarding a popular definition of evolution as "descent with modification," he said, "As long as the modification is understood in very broad terms, I'd be comfortable with that." In other words, if "descent with modification" (evolution) is understood to be broad enough to include processes which are not strictly natural but may include acts of God (theistic evolution) it is OK with him. He further said, "I would differ, say, from a theistic evolutionist [then he changes the subject and does not say how he would differ from a theistic evolutionist] and I don't put all the miracles of God at the beginning of the Big Bang. I see what takes place following the Big Bang as natural processes [evolution], of course controlled by God [theistic evolution], since He's responsible for the laws of physics. But that's what science is all about, studying these processes." Here the evolutionist interjects with approval, "Right."

The dialogue continues. Dr. Ross: "Just because the ICR [Institute for Creation Research] says certain things about the Bible as literal doesn't mean it [what the ICR says] has the approval of Hebrew scholars." Evolutionist: "Exactly, and similarly, I think that the very strict young-earth creationism, which is to my mind scientifically so unreasonable, has given conservative Christians a bad name." Dr. Ross: "Yes, because I would take the position that it is impossible to take the Bible literally and come to the conclusion that the days are only twenty-four hours." Evolutionist: "Yes." Dr. Ross: "They must be long periods of time." Evolutionist: "Yes."