

## The Days of Creation in Genesis: Assessment of the Riley–Rimmer Debate<sup>1</sup>

by

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with annotations by  
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Refs. Dr. William Bell Riley and Harry Rimmer, *A Debate: Resolved, that the Creative Days in Genesis were Aeons, not Solar Days* (1929), Published by the Northern Bible Conference.<sup>2</sup>

Note: This assessment of the Riley–Rimmer debate is from 1966 correspondence by Dr. MacRae, then president of Faith Theological Seminary in Elkins Park, PA, edited and re–arranged to reduce repetition and give an orderly discussion. Annotations labeled [dcb] are by Dr. David C. Bossard.<sup>3</sup>

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[031] The Christian world today is facing an interesting situation. We have the Word of God which is our complete and final source of information on spiritual matters, and there is nothing more important than disseminating the spiritual information that it contains. The Bible also contains a considerable amount of material dealing with various sciences. Yet it was no part of God's plan to give us full information about these sciences. If he had desired to do so the Bible would have had to be many times as long as it is.

**Inspiration.** I am thoroughly convinced that everything that is taught in the Bible relating to any field of knowledge whatever is absolutely true and dependable because it is inspired by the Creator himself. However I

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<sup>1</sup> [dcb] Compiled from correspondence written by Dr. MacRae in 1966, to queries on the question of how the days of Creation should be understood. For another view see Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days*, (2004). Possibly the questions arose in connection with the then–pending publication of Morris and Whitcomb, *The Genesis Flood*, which argues for 24–hour creation days. The book under review presents Dr. Riley's side of the arguments. Draft material edited to form these remarks can be found [here](#) on the [ibri.org](#) website.

<sup>2</sup> [dcb] Both debate participants profess the full inspiration and authority of the Bible, but have differing views on the meaning of the Creation Days of Genesis 1. In this debate Riley defends the view that the creation days were eras, and Rimmer defends the view that the creation days are literal 24–hour days.

<sup>3</sup> [dcb] See Dr. Bossard's websites [19thpsalm.org](#) and [creationnarrative.org](#).

am equally sure that it was not the Lord's intention to give us full information about a great many things about which the Bible teaches. I feel that it is very important that we see exactly what is given there and what is not stated. On matters that are not stated it is important that we keep from taking a position which might later be proven to be erroneous. It nowhere states in the Bible that the earth is round. Neither does it state that the earth is flat.

**Science and the Bible.** Many modernists assert that the Bible is out of date because it says that the earth is flat. I unhesitatingly challenge them where such a statement is made. Yet I cannot say that the Bible clearly teaches that the earth is round although one or two passages seem to suggest such a view. The Lord did not choose to give us definite information on this point in the Holy Scriptures.

The same is true about the matter of the earth going around the sun. The [032] Bible speaks of the sun coming out of his chamber like a strong man to run a race. The impression that one would get on this would be that the sun goes round the earth. Many modern scientists feel that the fact that the earth moves around the sun shows that the Bible is out of date. I am well satisfied with the interpretation that the statements about the sun moving through the heaven are figurative, and dealing simply with appearances and not claiming to give us definite knowledge. Modern science seems to have proven that the earth goes around the sun and I feel that it is extremely unfortunate, when people get the impression that this in any way contradicts the Bible. Actually, in my opinion, the Bible does not deal with this particular matter.

Modern science holds that most of the stars that we see in the heavens are other suns, many of them far larger than our own and some of them being billions of miles away. The Bible nowhere teaches this, but neither does it contradict it. It would be unfortunate if people would get the idea that this was a contradiction in the Bible.

The same is true about the astronomic discovery of recent years, that practically all the stars that we see form the great Milky Way galaxy, and that there are millions of other galaxies in the heavens, some of them greater than the one of which our sun is a minor member. All astronomers today believe this to be true. The Bible says nothing about it, but neither does it contradict it.

**Creation Days** As I understand it, the word *yom* in the Bible clearly indicates a period of light between two periods of darkness, and is also used for counting the number of such alternations, and also for an indefinite period of time. We are nowhere told how long the days of

creation were, and I feel that we are taking an unnecessary burden upon ourselves in insisting upon a particular length for them. The length of this period of light may vary from a [021] comparatively few minutes to nearly six months, depending what part of the earth one is in and what time of the year it is.

Another common use of the word is to indicate a period of light with the period of darkness immediately preceding it. To the Hebrews the day began at sunset. Such a day is rarely exactly 24 hours in length. Another fairly common use is to indicate a period of indeterminate length, as in Genesis 2:4 where He use the term to cover all that had been included in the entire six days of Genesis 1. The particular case, we must decide from the context which use is meant. None of them is exactly equivalent to our modern 24-hour day that runs from midnight to midnight. There is no evidence that Moses ever meant by it the scientific definition of the time it takes this particular planet to revolve once on its axis.

Personally, I think that the Scriptural evidence without even looking at any other evidence from any other source rather clearly indicates that many of the days of Genesis 1 were long periods. But I have no criticism of anyone who feels differently. Surely this should be considered as a matter on which true believers in verbal inspiration can differ in friendly fashion, rather than one on which pronouncements should be made or dogmatic stands taken. But in my view, the terminology used on the 3rd, 5th and 6th days fits far better with a long period than with a brief day.

Indeed, on the first page of his debate, Dr. Rimmer asserts that this is a matter on which good Christians can differ without the thinking any the less of one another. He says of Dr. Riley, "in all our acquaintance we have never found ourselves in opposition on any essential point of Scriptural revelation and even now after seeking for a long time for a question on which we can honestly disagree, neither of us is dogmatic or immovable on this."

If the Bible stated that the earth was created in six 24-hour days (as Dr. Rimmer asserts in this debate), I would have no hesitation in believing it. However, God could equally well have done it in six seconds. It is not a question of what the Lord can do, but of whether the Bible actually tells us—or not—how long a time he caused to be taken up in the matters described in Genesis 1.

As to the debate which is the subject of this discussion, Dr. Harry Rimmer was a very able speaker, and many people were greatly blessed by his messages. His books dealing with scientific matters were used of God to save the [033] faith of many high school students. Yet an earnest highly-

educated Christian told me one day that Harry Rimmer had saved his faith when he was in high school, and then had nearly wrecked it when he was in college. The reason for this was that Harry Rimmer took many excellent arguments in various scientific fields and presented them forcibly in defense of the Word, but did not take the time to get the details accurate in all of the fields in which he worked. This makes it very easy for a college professor to take almost any of his scientific writings and show many inaccurate and erroneous statements about various details.

A fine Christian archeologist told me one day that he had gone through a book by Harry Rimmer on Archeology.<sup>4</sup> He said that it had some very fine arguments in it but that the details contained many errors. He referred to the simple matter of fact of the names of the various archeological museums in different cities of the world. He said that in such a simple matter of fact as this he found 20 definite errors in the book. It was as if he had said, "Many people in New York work in the Loop. In Chicago the great statue of Billy Penn on top of City Hall stands at the end of State Street. In Philadelphia one of the most interesting buildings is the Empire State Building." Twenty errors of this kind dealing with the names of archeological institutions occurred in the one book.

I regret to say that I find many errors of this type in this book on the Rimmer–Riley debate. Thus Dr. Rimmer takes Dr. Riley severely to task for building an argument on the use of the word *day* (*hemera*) in the New Testament, insisting that it is only the Old Testament that is important in the present discussion. Yet in another place Dr. Rimmer himself makes a big argument from the use of the word *hemera* in the New Testament, stating that it always means a solar day. Just at a cursory glance in a concordance, I quickly located a dozen cases where *hemera* could not possibly be interpreted as a 24-hour day. [034] Yet Dr. Rimmer dogmatically states that *hemera* always indicates a solar day.

Dr. Rimmer makes a great deal of his claim that the Old Testament word *yom* always means the time that it takes the earth to make one revolution on its axis. Yet there is not a single place in the Bible where the word is defined in this way, nor do we have any reason to think that this idea ever occurred to any of the people who used it in ancient times. To them a day was simply the light period between two periods of darkness, or a series of such periods. The word was also frequently used to indicate a period of definite length. This is what the word means in the Bible and it is not proper interpretation to fasten onto it a meaning different from what the Bible shows it to have had.

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<sup>4</sup> Harry Rimmer, *Dead Men Tell Tales* (1939).

**Instantaneous Days?** At one place during the debate, Dr. Rimmer says that all the acts of God in Genesis 1 were instantaneous and quotes the statement about the creation of light on the first day. Yet the statements in the other days are most of them very different from this. It is doubtful that it could be shown that more than a third of the statements in Genesis 1 clearly represent an instantaneous act on God's part. One place where this might be taught on superficial examination would be the statement in verse 26: "God created man: male and female created he them." Yet in Genesis 2 it is clearly explained that a number of events were included in this simple statement and that God performed a number of distinct acts between the creation of man and the formation of woman. Dr. Rimmer's general statement simply does not fit the facts. It is based only upon the first day and is quite different from the way that things are actually expressed.<sup>5</sup>

If the Bible clearly stated that the earth is the center of the universe and everything else revolves around it, and God figures time according to the turning of the earth on its axis, we would have no doubt that this is the case. I do not find any such statement in the Bible, and feel to accept such a view is reading into the Bible what is not [035] there. It puts us in sharp opposition to the view of all astronomers that the earth is merely one of the planets that goes round the sun, the sun merely one of millions of suns in our galaxy and our galaxy only one of millions of galaxies. If the Bible contradicts all the astronomers in the world, I would not hesitate to stand by the Bible, but where there is no such statement at all in the Bible, and the evidence adduced by the astronomers is very complete and very definite, it seems to me that we are hurting rather than helping the cause of Christ by reading into the Bible something that is not there.

I find the debate by Dr. Rimmer full of dogmatic statements and slurs

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<sup>5</sup> [dcb] The Big Bang is the only event recognized in science as having been—as far as we know—instantaneous. At this event, space and time began as an infinitesimal point of energy. This is the only time recognized by science when energy was created—reflected in the conservation of energy law. Similarly, Day One is the only Genesis creation day in which the day's main event was instantaneous, in the command "Let there be light." St. Augustine around 400 AD had some difficulty with this: why then devote a whole day to this event? What happened during the rest of the day? [See St. Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, I.10.19–21]. This led by a long and roundabout reasoning process to Augustine's conclusion that everything was created instantaneously—created "formless" in Genesis 1:1 and then given "form" over the span of the creation days. Over time this developed into a full-blown Church theology of creation which you can see in St. Thomas Aquinas' question in *Summa Theologica*: [Question 66, Whether formlessness of created matter preceded in time its formation?](#) In this interpretation, verse 1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" is the entire "formless" creation, and then the "form" is worked out over the six Days. In my view this is strained and unnecessary.

upon the intelligence of his opponents, but I find very little of solid evidence, and nothing to prove that the view that he gives is actually taught in the Scriptures. It seems to me that we have enough to do to stand upon what the Bible clearly teaches, without inserting into it something that is not there.

[059] Yet there was one phrase in the booklet that I did not quite like, where it said "the accepted idea of a day as we know it." It should have said "as Moses knew it." Here Rimmer has fallen into the very danger that he is attacking. He declares on page 7, that "a day is the time that it takes the earth to make one complete revolution on its axis. On line 6 of the same page he says "a solar day is nothing more or less."

This is using modern terminology and understanding to define a term used over 3,000 years ago. We may be sure that Moses never heard of any of these terms. The idea of a 24-hour day was quite unknown to him. He had no clocks of the type that we have. Neither did he have any idea, so far as we know, that the earth turned around on its axis. This is not a proper way to define what Moses meant by a day.<sup>6</sup>

**Science and Bible.** [037] The question immediately comes, how much of science did Moses intend to express? The Bible is not written to teach us science. The Bible is written to teach us how to know how to know God and how to be saved through the Lord Jesus Christ. We can be sure that God has given us all the information that we need in the spiritual realm. We have in the Bible everything that is necessary for us to know how to live lives that are worthwhile in His sight and how to come to know Him and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

This does not mean that the Bible tells us everything that might be known about theology. I am sure that there are great depths to the character of God and there are an infinite number of things that He has done or does do that we know nothing about and cannot learn about from the Bible. If the Bible were to tell us all that must be known about God it would take thousands of volumes to contain the information. John 20:31 says that Jesus did many more things that are not told in his gospel and that if all of them were to be written he doubts if all the books in the world would be [038] sufficient to contain the information. God has not told us everything about Himself by any means. He has told us all that is necessary for us to know in the spiritual realm.

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<sup>6</sup> [dcb]. However, in partial defense of Harry Rimmer, I should note that the rising of a given star on successive nights is close to 24 hours, and so, in the spirit of Day Four, there is indeed a built-in concept of a 24-hour day in nature. The rising of Sirius was used in Egypt to establish the Sothic calendar. See the Wikipedia article on the [Sothic Cycle](#).

When it comes to science God has certainly not intended to tell us all about biology or geology or chemistry or even all about history. He tells what is necessary for us to know in these fields in order to understand the spiritual truths that He gives us.<sup>7</sup>

My understanding of verbal inspiration is that wherever He touches upon these fields, what He says is accurate and true. It does not mean that He gives us a full account of any one of these fields. There is much in them that we may discover that is not at all contained in the writings of the Bible. However, what we may discover is not denied in the writings of the Bible. If anything in these fields actually contradicts the Biblical statements, then our discovery has been a mistaken one. God is the creator of the world, and God is the author of the Bible and the two cannot contradict each other. But we may discover a great deal in nature that the Bible says nothing about. It is therefore very important that we be careful not to read into the Bible what is not stated there.

Now we ask ourselves, What is it that Moses intends to say in this field. How are we going to find out? I do not at all like the statement, the last part of this statement: "this is an idea born of science that came long after Moses, and he, in his simplicity, penned the words of God with the evident intention of conveying the accepted idea of a day as we know it."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> [dcb] On the other hand, the [19thpsalm.org](http://19thpsalm.org) website argues that God embedded a "silent voice" in his creation to proclaim his glory and handiwork. This silent voice has enabled scientists, with hard work, to probe God's record which He embedded into His creation. It gives extensive information about how the creation proceeded, and it is only by examining this built-in speech that scientists can learn such things. Albert Einstein expressed his wonderment of this in his [famous statement](#), "The most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it is comprehensible."

<sup>8</sup> [dcb] In addition to Dr. MacRae's objections, I object to the condescension implied in Dr. Rimmer's inference that Moses "in his simplicity...conveyed the accepted idea" as it may have been understood by his contemporaries. Unfortunately, one occasionally finds a similar condescension in St. Augustine's analysis of Genesis.

On the contrary, Moses took great care to avoid any possible endorsement of the contemporary "accepted idea". For example, rather than referring to the Sun and Moon by name, he refers to them as the "greater" and "lesser" lights. Why this peculiar way of reference? Because (I suggest) the then-contemporary names for these objects directly derive from, or are understood as, names for pagan deities, and a major objective of the creation account was to avoid any reference to such pagan accretions. We see this pagan influence today, for example, in the names of the days of the week (Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc.) and the months of the year (January, February, March, etc.).

The Genesis creation account as written by Moses is a deliberate, conscious effort to strip it of any pagan derivation (quite the opposite of what the Liberal scholars' analysis of Genesis concludes). This practice seems confined largely to the creation narrative; in other parts of the Bible, pagan names are often carried over into Scripture, such as the use of pagan names for the months of the year, and even in personal names.

I don't like the statement "a day as we know it."—it should say a day as He—that is, the Creator—knew it. How are we to know what kind of a day Moses knew? I find repeatedly in this paper the statement that a day means a revolution of the earth upon its axis.

I find repeatedly the statement that no matter whether it is light or whether there is no light at all, the earth always takes the same length of time to revolve upon its axis and this is what is meant by a day. However, I searched the Bible through and find no evidence anywhere in it that Moses knew anything whatever about the length of time it takes the earth to revolve on [039] its axis. I find no evidence that Moses knew that the earth had an axis, or that the earth revolves at all. Whether Moses thought that the earth went around the sun or that the sun went around the earth, is nowhere stated in the Bible. I do not know whether Moses knew anything about this or not, but I do not believe that he has given us any information about it. When we say that Moses by the word day means the length of time that it takes the earth to revolve—to go round its axis—we are reading modern scientific ideas into the Bible and becoming wise above what is written<sup>9</sup>. If we want to know what Moses meant by "day" the only way to find out is to see how he used the word.

When we undertake to do this we find that what Moses meant by a day in the first case where he uses it, is a period of light between two periods of darkness. We find this right in Genesis 1:5. He called the light day and the darkness he called night. This is the most general use of the word day. It is a period of light between two periods of darkness.<sup>10</sup> The length of this period varies tremendously. When Moses spoke of six days, did he mean six combinations of a period of darkness and a period of light, or did he mean six periods of light without including in his enumeration the period of darkness. As far as I know we have no way to tell. Of this I am sure, that Moses did not mean a period of time that would be marked as 24 hours on a clock. Moses had never heard of a 24-hour day, nor had he ever heard of the earth revolving on its axis.

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<sup>9</sup> [dcb] I disagree somewhat with Dr. MacRae on this. When more than one interpretation of a scriptural passage is possible, it is appropriate to apply relevant objective scientific facts to help to decide between alternative interpretations. I do not see this as "reading into" the Bible, but attempting to use our understanding to clarify the meaning—as, for example, the "foundations" of the earth hanging on nothing, or the daily (apparent) motion of the Sun. In this, of course, we have a responsibility to distinguish between provable fact and speculations of scientists based on atheistic presuppositions.

<sup>10</sup> [dcb] The darkness before Day One was the primordial darkness described in Gen. 1:2. In my view this darkness before Day One was qualitatively different from the darkness that was created in Gen. 1:4, an absolute darkness that does not exist anywhere in the universe after the activity of Day One. This was followed by the creation of light. Subsequently, that light was separated from darkness, which is a darkness quite different from the primordial darkness that existed before the creation of light.

## The Twelve Arguments

[057] We will now look over Rimmer's twelve arguments. It impresses me that the bulk of them are simply matters of opinion. He declares for instance that we must not adopt a view if it is presented by evolutionists who are deniers of the faith. I would certainly agree with him there. We must not take a view because it is held by enemies of the gospel. Neither however must we reject a view if it is held by enemies of the gospel. Our interest should not be what is held by any exterior view, but what does the Scripture say? Does it give us definite evidence on this, or does it not?

I liked very much the statement that Dr. Rimmer made in his 8th argument. There he stressed that we must not let modern ideas interpret for us what Moses meant.<sup>11</sup>

The twelve points presented by Harry Rimmer in the Riley–Rimmer debate are these. There is some repetition and overlapping, but these are the points as asserted in the debate.

### First argument.

1. In every instance where “*yom*” is to be rendered as an indefinite period the context clearly shows this to be the case!

Near the middle of page 3 Dr. Rimmer gives the first argument which he entitles “The meaning of the word *yom*”. He then says Dr. Riley is right when he said that this word, in the Hebrew language, has many varieties of meaning. Dr. Riley is also right when he says its meaning is sometimes an indefinite period of time. But he then proceeds to argue from this true premise to a false conclusion; that is, because the word sometimes means an indefinite period, Dr. Riley concludes that it cannot mean a solar day in Genesis the first chapter.

I do not have Dr. Riley's statements (the book only gives Dr. Rimmer's side of the arguments) and so do not know whether this is a proper interpretation of his words. I would certainly fully agree that the fact that it sometimes means an indefinite period of time, does not mean that it cannot not mean a solar day in Genesis the first chapter. However, this is not proof that in the first chapter it does mean a solar day.

The word *yom* has three distinct meanings. We have no right to insist

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<sup>11</sup> [dcb] On the other hand, if several legitimate interpretations are possible, it certainly is desirable to choose one that agrees with the modern understanding. There is no special merit to be had in choosing a view that conflicts with carefully interpreted modern experimental science, simply because it does so.

that any one of the three is the one that is used in a certain context, unless we have clear evidence that in favor of such an interpretation in that particular context.

[039] Moses clearly used the word day in three senses. He uses it of the period of light between two periods of darkness. He uses it for a succession of days, whether they be simply the periods of light or whether it also includes with each period of light the preceding period of darkness. And he uses it for a general period of time. Thus in chapter 2 he speaks of the whole creation as one day. "These are the generations of heaven and earth in the days when they were created." This includes all the six days in one. The word day is often used in the Bible for a general period of time. All that we can say [040] of a particular usage is that it indicates a period of time. To know how long the period is intended to be, we must examine the context and see what the writer had in mind. If he speaks of the 23rd day of a certain month, we know that he refers to the sort of calendar system which was then used: one quite different from the system we use today, and yet agreeing with ours in this, that it numbers the days consecutively within each month.

In continuing the argument,, Dr. Rimmer said, "BUT IN EVERY INSTANCE WHERE...." [042] Here I would like to ask, Just who has established this as a rule that unless the context shows it's an indefinite period it must be a solar day? The fact is that the context must show which of the three meanings the word has in the particular instance. Moses never established such a rule, nor does any Bible passage establish such a rule. As far as the meaning the word *yom* is concerned we do not know from that which interpretation is the right one in Genesis one.

### **Second argument.**

2. The vast majority of cases where the word *yom* appears in the Hebrew text demand translation into the equivalent word, Day.

The second argument that Dr. Rimmer gives is the statement that the word *yom* occurs 1480 times in the Hebrew text and it's translated "day" 1181 times in the English Bible. He therefore says, "This, then, establishes a general rule for the guidance of the investigator: the word *yom* is to be rendered 'day', unless the context holds some reason and authority for translating it otherwise." He goes on to say "please note the authority is to be found in the text."

Here however Dr. Rimmer makes the authority not the text but the interpretation given by the translators thousands of years after Moses wrote. In addition to that, the fact that the word is translated "day" so

many times does not prove at all what sort of day is meant. It is often used to mean simply the light period between two periods of darkness. It is also used a very considerable number of times, to mean an indefinite period.

Thus in this argument, there is no evidence given that would have any validity in determining the matter.

Throughout the debate, there is a great deal of discussion of whether God could have created the world in six days, periods of 24 hours. Dr. Rimmer's debate contains a great deal of material about this. Actually, this has nothing whatever to do with the question. God could just as well have created the world in six seconds as in six periods of 24 hours. The matter of what God could do is not at all involved. It is the question of what God did do, and the only way we can tell anything about this is to see what is said in the Bible, trying to see exactly what is stated and to avoid becoming wise above what is written. The fact of the matter is that there is absolutely no evidence in the Bible itself, to show how long the creative days were.<sup>12</sup> And there is no reason whatever to think that Moses had in mind when he spoke of them the period of time that it would take this particular planet to revolve once upon its axis. It may be that each of them was a 24-hour period. They may have been 10-hour periods, they may have been 5-hour periods, or they may have been billions of years in length. The Bible does not state and when we try to say, we are simply being wise above what is written.

Dr. Rimmer goes on to say that when Genesis is referred to in the NT it uses the Greek word *hemera*, which he says always means a solar day. This was an offhand statement of Dr. Rimmer's, evidently simply an argument given without investigation. I draw this conclusion because only on a brief examination of a concordance I came across a dozen instances where the word *hemera* was used for something other than a solar day. When the statement is made, this is the day of salvation, it certainly does not mean a solar day. When it says that Jesus said Abraham saw my day and was glad, he certainly did not mean a 24-hour day. When Paul tells the people that they are hastening unto the day of Jesus Christ, he hardly means a 24-hour day. When the NT speaks of the day of the Lord it certainly does not mean a 24-hour day. In all these and many other cases the word used is *hemera*.

**NOTE ON INSTANTANEOUS DAY.** [061] The most important bit of evidence that Dr. Rimmer gives is the statement that in connection with

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<sup>12</sup> [dcb] However, Psalm 19 talks about a silent voice in the "heavens" (which I interpret to mean the natural world, perhaps with special evidence on the universe) which declares the glory of God. See my discussion in 19thpsalm.org.

the days of Genesis every single command is stated in such a way as to require that it be taken as an instantaneous act. As proof of this he gives the command on the first day, "Let there be light," which he says can also be rendered let light exist. Leaving aside for the moment the question whether this particular command on Day One is necessary instantaneous, as I believe most people would consider it to be, I look at the other commands given in the creative days.

Immediately it occurs to me that when it says that God said in Day Six, "Let us create man in our image after our likeness and male and female created he them." This sounds like an instantaneous act. However, when I turn to chapter 2, I find the creation of man, male and female, described in such a way as to show that it was far from instantaneous. God took of the dust of the earth and breathed into it and it became a living soul. Is this described as an instantaneous act? Or as a process which took at least a certain amount of time. Then there is a good deal that is mentioned between this statement and the statement of how woman was created, at the end of chapter 2. Yet the woman is included in the statement in Genesis 1, "male and female created he them." What sounds like an instantaneous act at first sight there is clearly the kind of a process [060] which must have spread over a considerable bit of time. If all the animals were brought to Adam between the creation of Adam and the creation of Eve, it is hard to think that it could possible have occurred in one 24-hour day. At any rate it was not instantaneous.

Thus we see that a statement that all these acts were instantaneous simply is not evidence. I found only one other statement in the debate which would seem to be a matter of evidence rather than a matter of argumentation. This is the statement made in that all the fathers of Israel held that this was a 24-hour day. This should not really be considered evidence because evidence as to what the Bible means should be found in the Bible rather than in the views of interpreters of any sort.

However, in this instance, the statement is not a true one. We have no evidence whatever as to views on such a matter as this, or on almost any matter held by any fathers of Israel before the time of the church fathers. From the time of the church fathers on, of whom Dr. Rimmer says that they varied greatly on their interpretations on this point, we find various fathers of Israel holding views on many subjects of many different types of great contrast, probably having on this particular subject every bit as much difference among them as the church fathers had.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> [dcb] Furthermore, the Bible was composed in a culture in which many heterodox views were held. There is nothing about the "fathers of Israel" that gives their views special divine authority, such as, for example, the Kabbalist school of thought. See Daniel Friedmann's books for particularly clear discussions of this school.

**Usage of Day.** The most common usage of "day" is to represent a period of light between two periods of darkness<sup>14</sup>. This period varies greatly. In the northern part of continental United States it may be as long as eighteen hours in mid-summer, and as short as six or seven in midwinter. In northernmost Alaska it might be as long as six months.

The other sense in which the word is quite commonly used is the sense of a period of activity. Once I heard a mayor of New York speaking on the radio, refer to "What Al Smith used to say in his day." I am sure that he did not refer to any twenty-four hour day. Similarly I heard someone say the other day that they did not have automobiles in Lincoln's day. The New Testament states that Jesus said, "Abraham saw my day and was glad." Here certainly He was referring to the entire period of His earthly activity, not to any one period of light, and certainly not to any one twenty-four hour period.

After the account of the six days in Genesis 1, Genesis 2 tells of a seventh day on which God rested. This certainly does not mean that God was tired and took twenty-four hours to relax Himself. Its meaning must be something quite different. To my mind there is no doubt that it means simply that God had completed the special creative work of the previous six periods of activity. It is not my impression that God has performed any similar creative work since the creation of man and woman.<sup>15</sup> Consequently it would seem that the seventh day is still going on today and will probably continue until God creates the new heaven and the new earth.

In Exodus 20 it is here used as an instance of the succession of six periods of activity followed by one of cessation, as an example for us, since God made us with a constitution that needs to follow a similar progression. As the seventh day of Genesis is almost certainly a long period, this might suggest that the same is true regarding the first six as well. However, it would be only a suggestion, not a proof. God could have created the world in six periods of activity of five minutes each or of six hours each or of twenty-four hours each, or of three billion years each. We are not told how long the periods were. The Bible leaves us free to guess if we desire, but we should be charitable toward others who make a different guess.

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<sup>14</sup> [dcb] This is, presumably, the meaning of the word in Day One, "And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night."

<sup>15</sup> [dcb] Possibly excluding miraculous acts, which God in His providence can perform at any time He desires (e.g. turning water into wine).

**Evening and Morning.** [063] I have occasionally heard it said that the six days of Genesis must be exactly like a twenty-four day with which we are familiar because of the words "evening" and "morning" in them. However, I do not see that it is possible to interpret them this way. As we today think of a twenty-four hour day for purposes of timetables, we consider it as beginning at midnight. The modern Jews, for purpose of observing the Sabbath, think of it as beginning at sunset. Consequently their day begins with evening and ends with morning.

For a time of waiting the Book of Daniel uses the phrase "evening – morning" which is translated "day" in our King James Version. However, it is impossible to think of a real evening, that is, a period of decreasing light, as coming at the beginning of the time before there was any light at all.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, it was not until the fourth day that we read that the sun and moon and stars were made indicators of time, so that there would be no warrant for measuring time by the sun during the previous days. It seems most reasonable to think that "evening and "morning" here simply mean beginning and end, and do not actually indicate physical features.

Of course God's work of preservation and of providence continues constantly. He could not rest from this for a minute or everything would dissolve into chaos. When it says that God rested it does not mean that He ceased to exert influence upon His creation, but simply that He ceased from His creative work, and that cessation still continues during this entire seventh day. [064] Such a theory is definitely contrary to Christian teaching, and to many Biblical statements. There are many details about the way that God created the world that he has not revealed to us, just as there is a great deal about its present condition that the Bible tells us nothing about.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> [dcb] In my view, following the conclusions of modern science, the darkness of Genesis 1:2 which prevailed before Day One is a different sort of darkness than existed at any time after the creation of light in Day One. I understand Day One as the creation of the entire universe, together with all the energy of the universe, and the beginning of space and time, in that word "Let there be light." This is called the Big Bang in science. The original creation was all light. Afterwards, darkness appeared as the universe cooled to permit the formation of proper atoms (hydrogen, helium, etc.). This darkness, however is qualitatively different from the darkness before Day One because all darkness in the universe contains some ambient radiation, whereas the darkness before Day One, described in Genesis 1:2, was perfect emptiness, without radiation. See my discussion in [creationnarrative.org](http://creationnarrative.org). It is interesting that early theologians such as St. Augustine, concluded that the light of Day One was different from the light which is mentioned in Day Four. The light of Day One was not from the Sun because the Sun (or any material elements) did not exist at that first instant of time.

<sup>17</sup> [dcb] For example, nowhere does the Genesis account talk about the creation of life itself, which is one of the most phenomenal features of the whole creation process; nor

In fleeing from error, we gain nothing by going beyond the Scripture—in fact we sometimes make it easier for our opponents when we do so. If a man is driving on a wide mountain road with a steep drop on one side and a high cliff on the other side, he does not increase his safety by hugging the inside of the road so tightly that he constantly brushes against the side of the cliff. It is important that he keep away from the edge of the steep drop, but to say that six feet away is more dangerous than twelve feet away is rather stupid.

The Biblical account of the creation of man implies that he was created full-grown. It is not impossible that God created the earth with fossils in it at different levels so constituted that they would look as if they had been formed from the decay of the bodies of animals or plants. Yet, to many people it would seem more reasonable to think that such animals actually had lived during one or more of the creative days. If so, this does not prove evolution, nor is it a step in that direction. The Bible says nothing about fossils and gives us no definite statement as to how long ago the creation occurred or how rapidly it went. We know that it was not all instantaneous since we are told that it was divided into six definite periods.

### **Third argument.**

3. Wherever the word *yom* is preceded by a numeral article we are forced to accept it as a literal day.

Dr. Rimmer gives no reason for this; he simply makes a dogmatic statement. I know of no Scriptural statement to this effect. Naturally, the commonest use of the word "day" with a number before it is in enumerating days of the month, and this is true in the Hebrew Bible as in almost any other type of literature. Yet this does not by any means prove that the word, if used with a number before it, always has to refer to a solar day. There is no such rule stated anywhere in Scripture.

If you say that baseball games are held on sunny days you might then say that the first day on which they played was the 25th of March, the second day was the 14th of April, the 3rd day was the 5th of May. In these cases you would refer to a solar day but what you would have in mind would actually be the light portion rather than any 24-hour day at all, except of course for matters of designation.

It would be quite natural for any of us to make such a statement as the

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does it mention microscopic life (for good reason): the first mention of life is in Day Three with plants on the dry land.

following: "There are four important days in Scripture. The first day is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2). The second day is the day of the Lord's vengeance (Isa. 34:8). The third day is the day of the Lord (Neh. 5:2, 2 Peter 3:10). The fourth day is the day of Christ (Phil 1:6,10; 2:16; 2 Thes. 2:2). Thus we could easily speak of the first day, the second day, the third day, the fourth day, without meaning 24-hour days . Whether Scripture does this or not, I do not know. But there is certainly no reason why it could not do it, and certainly the use of the number is no indication at all as to whether the days in Genesis are 24-hour days or not.

Personally, I have no objection to anyone thinking that these were 24-hour days, But I consider it to be very foolish to be dogmatic about it and to insist that they were. We just don't know. As the words stand in the Scripture, they sound to me much more like long periods than like 24-hour days. I feel that on this matter we should live and let live, leaving each one free to think what he wants, since God has not chosen to tell us whether they were 5-minute days, or 24-hour days, or 2-billion-year days, or indeterminate periods of time.

#### **Fourth argument**

4. The quibble of my respected opponent: that the rays of the sun had not reached the earth until the fourth day . . . what has it to do with the matter of time element in the first chapter of Genesis? . . . A day is the diurnal revolution of the earth on its axis.

Under this head Dr. Rimmer proceeds to assert that the fact that, that the reference to the sun on the 4th day does not prove anything at all about the first three days, but here he fails to note what is said about the 4th day. He readily admits that the fourth day does not tell about the creation of the sun. In fact, he expresses the belief that the sun had been created "ages and ages" before the time of the 4th day. Dr. Rimmer asserts (top of page 7) that a day is the diurnal revolution of the earth on its axis."

Dr. Rimmer under this argument does not interpret the appearance of the statement, "Let there be light," as a creation of light at all, but merely as the beginning of the time when a little light from the sun reached the earth after ages and ages in which no light at all from the sun had reached the earth. Then on the 4th day he thinks that all of the fog and vapor that had so long obscured the light of the sun was removed.

This interpretation seems to rob the first day also of all instantaneity. It is true indeed that God could say, let all the fog and vapor that has been so extremely black and so completely obscured, kept away all light from the sun, suddenly be eradicated. But there is no reason to think that He did,

in the light of the way He created man. If Dr. Rimmer's interpretation is correct that the removal of barriers which kept all light from reaching the earth during ages and ages, was something which occurred gradually over a long period of time rather than an instantaneous act. The Bible simply does not state.

Perhaps the action of the first day was instantaneous, perhaps not; in any event it cannot be said that there is any other statement in the first chapter that "demands instantaneity." It is unfortunate indeed that a statement should be made that "the wording of the text in each case is such as to demand instantaneity." In most cases it is the exact opposite.

### **Fifth Argument**

5. And God said, "Light, exist; and light existed!" The entire phrase is one of instant, absolute obedience to a pressing command, and implies an act consummated in the instant of its inception.

[027] When it comes to matters of evidence there is really only one strong argument in the whole of Rimmer's presentation. This is the fifth argument, which if provable, would indicate a great deal. On page 8 we read: "In the accounts of the various acts of creation in this week, the wording of the text in each case is such as to demand instantaneity." Only one illustration is given, that of the first day. But note the strong statement: "In the accounts of the various acts of creation the wording of the text in each case is such as to demand instantaneity." Let us examine the facts. Let us begin with the very last creative action.

In Genesis 1:27 we read, "So God created man in his own image, in the Image of God created he him, male and female created he them." At first sight this seems to fit in quite definitely with the statement that in every case the wording of the text is such as to demand instantaneity. However we must compare Scripture with Scripture. In Genesis 2 there is a fuller account of the creation of man and [027] woman. Genesis 2:7 reads: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Here we find that the creation of man involved at least two stages, forming his body from the dust of the ground, and then breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. The impression that the creation of man was an instantaneous act is therefore seen to be incorrect.

Furthermore, the statement, in Genesis 1:27 said "male and female created he them." But chapter 2 tells us that various things happened between verse 7, when man was created, and verse 22, when woman was created. The statement in Genesis 1 which seemed to describe an

instantaneous act, proves in the light of chapter 2, not to be an instantaneous act at all. To do so, God could if He chose, have simply said, Let men and woman be standing here, wholly formed and complete." But that is not what He did. Genesis 2 shows that something quite different occurred. [028]

No other description of a creative act in Genesis 1 is so expressed "as to demand instantaneity." Most of them are so worded as to strongly suggest the contrary. Thus in verse 9 we read that God said "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together in one place, and let the dry land appear." God could have said "Let all the waters be in one place, and the dry land separate from them," and made it happen instantaneously. But this is not what the scripture reports. He said "Let them be gathered together." The wording as Moses wrote it, describes a process which could have occurred within a few hours or which might have taken years before it was completed. So far from demanding "instantaneity" the statement plainly suggests the opposite.

[028] So far from every creative act of Genesis 1 being stated in such a way as to demand instantaneity, we have found that the very opposite is true of every one of them, except, perhaps, for the creation of light on the first day.<sup>18</sup>

[043] Similarly, in verse 11 and 12 we read, "and God said let the earth bring forth grass .... and it brought forth grass ...." He speaks of all the different types of vegetation, not that God said let the earth be covered with vegetation but let the earth bring forth. Certainly the suggestion here is a process that occurs over time.

In the fifth and sixth days we find statements about the animals exactly like the statements about the plants in the third day. It does not say that God caused that instantaneously and suddenly the world would be covered with various kinds of animals. He said let the waters bring forth abundantly. He said let the earth bring forth. The words as they stand do

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<sup>18</sup> [dcb] As remarked in footnote #5, The Big Bang is the only event recognized in science as having been—as far as we know—instantaneous. In the Fourth argument (below), relating to Day Four, Dr. Rimmer expresses the belief that the sun had been created "ages and ages" before the time of the 4th day. This is a common view among many interpreters of Genesis 1. As remarked before, my own view is that Day One is indeed the beginning not only of light, but of the universe itself, and of space and time. My justification for this view is precisely the fact that this is the view of modern science, and the wording of Day One is a perfect expression of Big Bang. Furthermore, I believe that Day One is the *only* act of creation that is reasonably seen as instantaneous (both by the wording and by the execution of the Day's actions). No scientist can make a valid argument that the Big Bang was other than instantaneous, because no valid scientific statements can be made earlier than the [Planck Time](#),  $5.39 \times 10^{-44}$  seconds after the BB.

not demand spontaneity; in fact, they suggest the very opposite.

Thus we have looked at all the statements in the various days of the creation account, about the acts that were done, except the one that Dr. Rimmer quotes in connection with the first day. He says in his debate, that as an example of the fact that in each case the words of the text demand instantaneity, that on the first day God said let there be light and there was light. Dr. Rimmer goes on, "there is no absolute literal translation from the Hebrew to the English of this phrase, but the nearest that we can come to it is perhaps 'and God said light, exist; and light existed.' The entire phrase is one of instant absolute obedience to a pressing command, and implies an act consummated in the instant of its inception.<sup>19</sup> Here, on this day, more than any other perhaps, the "era" theory of my esteemed opponent appears extremely ridiculous. Why in the name of common sense should it take the omnipotent creator 500,000 years to receive a response to His command, 'let light be!?' Especially when the text may be transliterated 'then God said "let light be!" and light was!' Did it take God a half million years to speak this sentence, or was the light slow to obey? [044] Or did it come at once, and God then waited 500 millenniums before He started any further activity?<sup>20</sup> Truly the proponents of the age theory are like those of old who strained at a gnat and swallowed the camel!"

This sounds very convincing as proof that the action, that God's activity on the first day was an instantaneous creation of light. It may very well be that this is the case but in every other instance of God's actions during the creative week, the language does not demand spontaneity, but in fact suggests the very opposite.

Furthermore in connection with this day it is not quite so apparent as Dr. Rimmer's words would suggest, that the Scriptural statement requires spontaneity. We have already noticed that the statement , God created man, male and female created he them, is proven by chapter 2 not to be an act that occurred instantaneously but rather something that was spread over a period of time. It is possible that the great act of the first

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<sup>19</sup> [dcb] An instantaneous appearance of light is exactly what modern cosmological science would assert occurred in the Big Bang. I do not dispute this conclusion that the creation of light was instantaneous; however it should be noted that scientists speak here from ignorance since the true nature of "energy" is unknown (and perhaps unknowable to science that is necessarily trapped within this universe). From all evidence seen within the confines of this universe, it appears to have been instantaneous—and I for one am happy to defer to science on this point.

<sup>20</sup> [dcb] I have not seen his debating partner's definition of "era" but I would assume that it was of variable duration; so Day One was just an extremely short "era" (neglecting the time that the creation of darkness might require). Rimmer seems to be making a specious argument here.

day, also, took a period of time.

### **Sixth argument.**

6. Could God have accomplished the events of any of the six days in a period of twenty-four hours? . . . For God, twenty-four hours was enough!

[024B] Of course, this is not the question under discussion at all. God could have done everything that is described in Genesis 1 in periods of 24-hours each, or in 6 periods of 24 minutes each, or of 24 seconds each. He could have done it all in one second. The question is not what He could have done, but, what He did. He could have sent his Son to earth as a full-grown man, if He chose. Instead He chose to let Him grow up in a normal fashion during the thirty years of which we know so little. The question is not "What could God have done?" but "What did He choose to do?"<sup>21</sup>

The 6th point consists of the argument of the insistence that God could accomplish on any one day all that the Bible says He did—on one solar day—all that the Bible says he did on any one of these days. This is readily granted. But it may as well be an argument for days that were five minutes long as for days that were 24 hours long. God could have performed everything described in Genesis 1 in one second if He chose. [046] The question is not what could God do, but what did He do. The Bible actually does not tell us how long he took in performing the acts described in chapter 1. If someone prefers to believe that it was 6 24-hour days I see no objection to his believing this. But I do think that he has no right, that it is his duty to give equal right to anyone else to interpret the Scripture, the statements of Genesis 1, in what seems to me the far more natural sense.

### **Seventh argument.**

7. Refutation of the great stronghold of the "era-ists." We do not say that in twenty-four hours God covered the entire earth with pine forests in their present profusion, with wild ducks by the millions, with humans by the myriads; but only that on each day in

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<sup>21</sup> [dcb] My personal view (as noted earlier) is that God embedded a "silent voice" so that careful scientific investigation could reveal many details about how the actual history of the earth unfolded—including, for example knowledge of the actual age of the universe, how the elements were formed and many other facts that one could not reasonably expect to be accessible to knowledge (as remarked in Einstein's "incomprehensible" remark). If this "silent voice" is an accurate unfolding—and why would God reveal His glory and handiwork through a fictional account?—then the creation days describe actions that occurred over geological ages, far from instantaneous.

which a certain work is done the origin or beginning of that kind is recorded.

Personally, I think that this argument is completely aside from the matter under consideration. The question is not what does science prove, but what does Genesis 1 say. Apart altogether of any evidence from science, I find no Biblical evidence whatever to say that the days of Genesis 1 are necessarily 24 hours long. Perhaps they were billions of years in length, we simply do not know. The language used in connection with the third, fifth and sixth days sounds to me far more as if God caused processes to occur that took millions of years than as if he did something within a 24-hour period. In any event, these three days do not describe instantaneous acts, but processes, even if they may have been so speeded up as to occur within a few hours. And there is no Biblical statement anywhere that such a speeding up occurred.

Under this discussion, Dr. Rimmer has a very interesting suggestion. He says that each of these days is only the time when that particular thing began. Thus when vegetation was created there might have been only two blades of grass and two trees of each kind, that came into existence, nothing more, and then all the rest came in succeeding time. The days would be simply the beginning of processes, rather than the complete occurrence. Of course we do not say God covered the entire earth with plants and trees in their present profusion. Yet this is not what the Scripture says. The Scripture does not say that God said on the 3rd day, "Let the earth be covered with trees and that a tree began and later others came." What he says on the 3rd day is that the earth brought forth trees. [048] The whole suggestion is that great amounts of vegetation came into existence on that day.

#### **Eighth argument.**

8. The reason we accept the solar duration of the days of Genesis is the apparent fact that Moses' clear intention was to convey the twenty-four hour idea.

So the statement as contained under argument 8 is not a presentation of fact at all. However, it is not a matter anyway of Biblical evidence and so should not really concern us.

A statement is made at the end as to what the ancient fathers believe. I am sure that we have no knowledge of what those beliefs were. We cannot say that Moses intended to convey the modern geological idea of aeons in each day of creation. Neither can we say that Moses intended to convey the modern astronomical idea of the time that it takes the earth to

revolve once on its axis. It is clear in the Scripture that the word day as used in the Hebrew means a period of time, and that the length of the period has to be gathered from the context. Sometimes it is an extremely short period; sometimes it is an extremely long period. Which it is in Genesis 1 the Lord has not revealed to us and we are wrong in attempting to be wise above what is written.

### **Ninth argument.**

9. We are in favor of the solar day idea because any other theory is merely a concession to the time element demanded by the evolutionary school of geology.

Dr. Rimmer continues, "Reason number nine goes right to the heart of the controversy. We are in favor of the solar day idea because any other idea is merely a concession to the time element demanded by the evolutionary school of geology; and why should we concede them anything from the Scripture? They are irreconcilable enemies and their program does not call for reconciliation with the Scriptures but rather eradication of the Scriptures. This theory was born to uphold the contentions of the enemies of the Bible, and we owe them no consideration in the matter."<sup>22</sup>

In other words, since evolutionists believe long periods of creation we should not believe in them. I certainly feel that we should not accept any view because unbelievers hold it, but neither should we reject a view because unbelievers hold it. We should go to the Scripture and see what it teaches. Such arguments as these are interesting and often seem convincing but prove nothing.

As far as the statements of the argument are concerned I would agree with it one hundred percent. We do not need to make any [048] concessions to the demand of unchristian interpreters. Neither do we need to make concessions to the demands of Christians who are scientists. We need not make any sort of concession, we are simply interested in seeing what the Bible teaches. Yet we must be equally careful not to read into the Bible theories which have come into our minds from recent scientific thoughts or recent attitudes, such as the idea that the length of time it takes the earth to revolve in its axis is a fundamental time measure of the entire universe and of God's economy. This is a natural idea for earthbound mortals to get, but there is nothing in the Scripture to indicate that it is necessarily true. It is a concession to thought that is not based upon the Scripture. The Scripture does not tell us how long these days were.

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<sup>22</sup> [dcb] With this expression of pique, Dr. Rimmer condemns all true believers to have an anti-science viewpoint. Needless to say, I do not believe that.

However, though I agree that we need not make concessions to enemies to the Bible, not to anyone, but merely to take what the Bible teaches, I think we must be very careful not to adopt any theory simply because it is contrary to what other people may hold, whether these people be enemies or friends. And that we also should be very careful not to reject an interpretation of the Scripture because it fits with ideas which are held by people who are against the Scriptures. We're not interested in whether the scripture agrees or disagrees with particular group of human beings, we are interested in what the Scripture teaches. Any idea, no matter where it comes from is worth examining in Scripture to see whether it fits with Scripture or not, but we should not be prejudiced in our relation to Scripture by the source of the idea. The question is not who holds an idea or who has originated an idea but what does the scripture actually teach.

### **Tenth argument.**

10. The days of Genesis are solar days, as they follow the general Hebrew custom of dividing the day into evening, the beginning, and morning, the start of the daylight period.

It is a little difficult to be sure exactly what Dr. Rimmer means by the 10th argument.

This would suggest that he is arguing from the fact that it says, "and there was evening and there was morning, one day." This argument could not possibly fit from any viewpoint—fit at all in the first day, nor could it fit on the 2nd and 3rd day. It would be only the last two that could possibly fit. These terms are used figuratively no matter what length of days they were. They mean beginning and end, not a time of increasing darkness and increasing light, as the words literally mean. However, before he is finished with this argument, Dr. Rimmer says:

"Another Scripture reference that should settle the matter, and would, if my dear opponent were not Irish, is the quotation in Hebrews 4:4, where the inspired writer refers directly and specifically to this 7th day in the book of Genesis. The reference reads:

"For he hath said somewhere the 7th day on this wise, and God rested on the 7th day from all his works."

In the Greek text of the NT this word is *hemera*, and it always means solar day."

Here is an argument based upon the use of a Greek word in the NT. The statement is made "*hemera* ...always means solar day." Actually at a very brief glance I noted a dozen instances where the Greek word *hemera* cannot possibly mean a solar day. A very brief examination of its use in the NT will make absolutely clear that it is used exactly like the word *yom* in the OT. That is to say, it very frequently means a period of light between two periods of darkness and the length of this varies with the part of the world or the time of the year. It is used also for an alternation of light and darkness, as when one figures a number of days. However, there are many cases in the NT where it is used of a period of indefinite length, as where in 1 Cor. Paul says "now is the day of salvation." Does he here mean a solar day? Where Paul refers in Thess. to the day of Jesus Christ, does he mean a solar day there? Jesus said Abraham saw my day and was glad. Did he mean a 24-hour day there? There are many such instances in the NT [050] If there is one thing we can be sure of in this discussion, it is that *hemera* does not "always mean solar day."

#### **Eleventh argument.**

11. The fact that Moses, the same man who penned the account of creation, is the same writer who makes a comment on this creative week, inspired so to do by God Himself, in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. . . . Are the Jews to work six geological ages and rest the seventh geological age?

**Work Days** The 11th argument which begins on the bottom of page 12 deals with Moses' statement that God rested on the 7th day and tries to show that a 24-hour day was sufficient for God to rest, there was no need of His resting a geological age. However, this is surely quite beside the point. No one thinks of God as like a man having to rest. Elsewhere in the debate, Rimmer spoke of God's having ceased from His creative labor on the 7th day. God does not set up an example for our rest in that he after six days of work finds it necessary to rest one day. God gives us an analogy to show what the program is that He wants us to follow, of alternations of six days of work then one day of rest. He ceased from His creative labor on the 7th day. It nowhere says that all of God's ceasing from creative labor was over before Adam was created. Whether this refers simply to a brief period that came after the creation of man or whether it refers to a long period including the present in which God had ceased from creative labor is perhaps not necessary to attempt to determine. The important thing is that God gave us an example to show how, the way that He had made our constitution and that He wished us to alternate in our work and rest. Actually God simply ceased from creative labor, He did not rest as we do. An attempt to insist on a precise analogy is not an argument at all as to how God created the world.

**Twelfth argument.**

12. The Third Day of creation . . . The ocean is formed: the dry land appears: and botany is born! . . . These plants lived some five hundred thousand years without any direct rays of the sun to nurture them?

[025] The 12th argument (p.13–14) asserts that since the sun was not visible from the earth on the third day, the third day could not have been a long period, because vegetation could not grow without the sun. This is simply an argument based upon human experience in farming and we have no right to limit the power of God. We can not say what God might have chosen to do. Anyway, the first day provided light, and what the vegetation needs for growth is light. Such arguments prove nothing.

As Rimmer himself says on p. 2–5 what really matters is not such arguments as these but definite scriptural evidence. I did not find a great deal of this in the 14 pages of the debate.

This 12th argument is not stated in any one sentence anywhere, but the best I can figure out for its meaning is that he says that it would have been impossible, if the 3rd day was a long period, for the plants to have grown without the light of the sun.

I am very wary of any arguments based on what it would have been possible or impossible for God to do. The question is not what could God do but what did God do? [052] God could surely create the world in six seconds if he wanted, he didn't need six 24-hour days. He could certainly cause the processes described in this first chapter of Genesis to reach over a period of billions of years if he chose. He does not have to speed His work up to suit our human ideas of time. It is not a question of what God could do but what He chose to do. As far as the 3rd day is concerned it is definitely stated that light was made on the first day. How much light plants need to grow cannot be proven by the experience of a farmer today, it is a matter of how God made the plants.

The situation in the world in many ways must have been very different before the flood than it is after. Even a cursory reading of the early chapters of Genesis makes this clear, yet exactly how it was or what differences there were in the makeup of the universe we are not in a position fully to understand. We do not know just what the conditions were during the 3rd day, but the Bible says that during the 3rd day God ordered that plants should grow up and cover the earth, and then it was on the 4th day that he made the sun appear and become usable as a

measure of time. If this is the way that the Bible says God did it then I see no difficulty in accepting it regardless of the length of the days involved.

[026] **ONE Day as one revolution of earth about its axis.** Whatever else we may or may not know about the meaning of Genesis 1, we do know this definition was certainly not what Moses or anyone of that time had in mind. The only way they could have ever dreamed of such a definition of a sun would be a specific revelation of God to them about the fact and we have no evidence that he made such a revelation. If He had it would have been strange indeed that so many centuries elapsed before anyone ever thought of the idea as far as evidence goes that the earth revolves on its axis. The fact of the matter is of course that it states in the fourth day that God caused the sun, moon, and stars to appear and made them measures of time for days and for years. This certainly excludes the idea that the sun, the relation of the earth to the sun was a measure of time of the days in the previous three days. This fourth argument is a negative one which does not seem to grasp the meaning of the statements about the 4th day at all.

## **Appendix The Riley–Rimmer Debate**

Debaters: Dr. William Bell Riley and Harry Rimmer.

Title: Title – A Debate: Resolved, that the Creative Days in Genesis were  
Aeons, not Solar Days

Published in 1929 by the Northern Bible Conference.

The twelve points presented by Harry Rimmer in the Riley–Rimmer debate are:

1. In every instance where “*yom*” is to be rendered as an indefinite period the context clearly shows this to be the case!
2. The vast majority of cases where the word *yom* appears in the Hebrew text demand translation into the equivalent word, Day.
3. Wherever the word *yom* is preceded by a numeral article we are forced to accept it as a literal day.
4. The quibble of my respected opponent: that the rays of the sun had not reached the earth until the fourth day . . . what has it to do with the matter of time element in the first chapter of Genesis? . . . A day is the diurnal revolution of the earth on its axis.
5. And God said, “Light, exist; and light existed!” The entire phrase is one of instant, absolute obedience to a pressing command, and implies an act consummated in the instant of its inception.
6. Could God have accomplished the events of any of the six days in a period of twenty-four hours? . . . For God, twenty-four hours was enough!
7. Refutation of the great stronghold of the “era-ists.” We do not say that in twenty-four hours God covered the entire earth with pine forests in their present profusion, with wild ducks by the millions, with humans by the myriads; but only that on each day in which a certain work is done the origin or beginning of that kind is recorded.
8. We accept the solar duration of the days of Genesis is the apparent fact that Moses’ clear intention was to convey the twenty-four hour idea.
9. We are in favor of the solar day idea because any other theory is merely a concession to the time element demanded by the evolutionary school of geology.

10. The days of Genesis are solar days, as they follow the general Hebrew custom of dividing the day into evening, the beginning, and morning, the start of the daylight period. . . . Now we gleefully challenge our erudite and esteemed temporary opponent to give us a verse in the Hebrew text where a geological age is thus described, “And there was evening, and there was morning, one geological age.”

11. The fact that Moses, the same man who penned the account of creation, is the same writer who makes a comment on this creative week, inspired so to do by God Himself, in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. . . . Are the Jews to work six geological ages and rest the seventh geological age?

12. The Third Day of creation . . . The ocean is formed: the dry land appears: and botany is born! . . . These plants lived some five hundred thousand years without any direct rays of the sun to nurture them [?]

Source: [Roots by the River](#).