

gence, we find that in the context the purpose of this statement is clearly not to tell how the animals came into being (as is shown by the lack of reference to so many other elements of the creation), but simply to deal with an important problem in relation to man. God wished to show man his need of a companion. He wished to demonstrate to him that it was necessary to create another being like himself. In order to demonstrate this He brought all the animals before Adam, and we read that there was found among them no help meet for Adam (v. 20). In describing this incident, it is only natural for the writer to refer back to the fact that God created the animals. To take the story as an account of the order of creation is to miss its purpose altogether, as even a cursory examination of the context should make abundantly clear. It is only reasonable to consider that the author is referring back to the fact that God had already created the animals, rather than to interpret his words as meaning that they were only then created. In forming the animals God had other purposes in mind, as had already been suggested in chapter 1. Here only their relation to man's need of a proper companion is under consideration.

What sort of primitive mind could invent a story in which animals came into being simply as the result of a series of unsatisfactory attempts to satisfy man's need. After God created man, according to such a view, He wanted man to have a helpmate, so He created a rhinoceros. The rhinoceros did not prove to be a satisfactory helpmate for man, so God created a hippopotamus. When this did not prove to be a satisfactory helpmate, he created a giraffe, then a crocodile, then an elephant. Thus one animal after another was created. After it proved unsatisfactory, it was not destroyed, but allowed to continue—perhaps even a second one was created, so as to produce posterity.

All these animals having thus proved unsatisfactory, but having begun to fill the earth with their descendants, God thought of a new idea. Instead of making still more animals, he finally hit upon the expedient of taking a part of Adam and making a woman out of it!

How unworthy is such an interpretation of the sublime and lofty picture of God that fills these chapters! God knew what He was about. He planned it all, for His great purposes. He brought to Adam the animals He had previously created. He did not create them to see if they would do for a helpmate for man. He brought them before Adam to show him that they would not fill his need. The animals were already in pairs—a fact that made even clearer to Adam his own need of a companion.

If one wishes to assume that a most rude and childish intelligence produced this part of Genesis, he can easily populate the entire Bible with contradictions and absurdities. If he merely gives the writer credit for normal intelligence, and makes a modest effort to interpret his writing as fitting together, most of the alleged contradictions immediately disappear.

For the English reader, it would be simpler if v. 24 began with a pluperfect tense. Hebrew has no pluperfect. The verb might just as well be translated as pluperfect here. But this is not really necessary. Order of statements is often logical rather than chronological. There is no necessity of interpreting this passage as meaning that animals were created after man, and thus importing absurdities into the story, as well as making it contradict Gen. 1.

Thus we see that the alleged contradictions between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 completely disappear on close examination of the passages. We have an account of the creation of the universe; then we have a more detailed account of the creation of man. There are certain overlappings between the two supplementary accounts, but there is no contradiction between them.