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THE DANGER OF READING OUR OWN IDEAS INTO THE BIBLE

It is very easy for people to read the erroneous ideas of their time into the statements of the Bible. Sometimes this even affects the translation. In the Middle Ages it was thought that the earth was flat and it is probably a survival of this idea that led the translators of the King James Version to translate a Hebrew phrase in Isaiah 11:12 and Ezekiel 7:2 as "the four corners of the earth." The Hebrew word that they translated "corners" means "wings," and was so translated in the Greek Old Testament. Thus we see that the phrase is really just a reference to the four directions.

Even today one sometimes hears it said that the Bible teaches that the earth was flat. Such a statement is completely false. If the writer of any section of the Bible thought that the earth was flat, God prevented him from making any statement to that effect in the inspired writings that God intended should be part of the Bible.

People often speak about a conflict between science and the Bible. This, however, is a complete misunderstanding. There is often a conflict between the ideas of students of science and the ideas of Bible students, but between the facts of this world that God has made and the actual statements in the revelation that God has given there can be no conflict. All too often the people of one generation have read their ideas of science into the Bible, and the next generation, which has abandoned these ideas, has assumed that they represent Biblical teaching. In such cases the conflict is not between science and the Bible but between the science of one generation and the science of another. We must be careful not to read into the Bible ideas that are not there, but we can be sure that whatever is really stated in the Bible is definitely true.

This review of the nature of God's revelation and of some of the factors that must be taken into account in correctly interpreting it should prevent us from making certain common errors as we proceed to examine the precise relation of the Book of

Genesis to the theory of evolution.