

"SO GOD CREATED MAN"

In Genesis 1:27 the creation of man is described in the following words: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." The three-fold repetition of the word "create" in this verse places great stress on the fact that God directly interposed to bring into existence something new. We could easily go beyond this vital fact and gain from the verse the impression that all the material of which man was made was entirely new, and that man's creation was a completely instantaneous event. We might think that it meant that God simply said, "Let human beings come into existence," and that immediately Adam and Eve stood before Him, having thus been created in the twinkling of an eye. However, when we turn to the more detailed account in chapter 2, we read in verse 7: "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 get a very different, though by no means a contradictory impression. We might have inferred from chapter 1, not only that the creation of man was a very special interposition of God's divine power, but also that no previously existing matter was utilized, that it consisted of only one step, that no element of process was involved, and that man and woman came into existence at precisely the same time. All of these additional inferences would be going beyond what the Scripture says and would be definitely wrong. Genesis 2:7 clearly indicates that God took already existing inorganic matter ("the dust of the ground"), that He organized this inorganic matter into a certain form, that He then added something else to it ("breathed into his nostrils the breath of life"), and that the forming of woman came through a different process, as the result of a somewhat later divine act (Genesis 2:18-23).

ERRORS TO AVOID

This examination of these two verses should warn us against certain errors: