

the Church of England as an "aid to those whose faith may have been shaken by recent assaults."³⁸ The editor of this series of essays, William Thomson, was at the time serving as Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol. The series thus represented the response of a large segment of the English clergy to the recent advances of theological liberalism. The other essays of the series defended the reality of miracles, the divine inspiration of the Bible, the genuineness and authenticity of the Pentateuch, etc.

In his essay McCaul first gives a defense of the historical character and unity of the Genesis account of creation.³⁹ He then proceeds to show that all claims that this account is in disagreement with the discoveries of science are in error. In this he strongly affirms his belief in the fact of creation, and deals with the antiquity of the events of the first chapter of Genesis.⁴⁰ By means of Hebrew exegesis he finds strong evidence that the Hebrew expression translated "In the beginning" does not cite a specific time or point in eternity when God created. Quotations are given from several other Bible scholars who held that "'In the beginning' includes the idea of pre-mundane existence...and answers to 'Before the world was' (John xvii. 5)." McCaul says of these, "All are agreed that 'beginning' refers to duration or time, not to order, and that it is indefinite in its signification, and may mean previous eternity, or previous time, according to the subject spoken of." Thus he translates the first statement of Genesis as, "Of old, in former duration, God created the heavens and the earth," and states that the Hebrew here allows at least as many millions of years as the discoveries of geology indicate.⁴¹

McCaul finds convincing evidence in the Scripture for taking the days of creation as periods of indefinite length, most of them being long. Among these evidences he cites the figurative use of the word "day" in numerous places throughout the Bible, and notes the peculiar extent of the first day of creation (Genesis 1:3-5). In this passage we should note that the first day is described as consisting, not merely of an evening and a morning, but of a period of light (following the creation of light) plus "an evening and a morning." Therefore the first day is represented as indefinitely longer than the second, and represents a "mode of reckoning unique in the Bible, and peculiar to this first chapter of Genesis."⁴²

McCaul sums up his position with regard to geology and the Scriptures as follows:

Thus a comparison of the actual statements of Moses with the discoveries and conclusions of modern science is so far from shaking, that it confirms our faith in the accuracy of the sacred narrative. We are astonished to see how the Hebrew Prophet, in his brief and rapid outline sketched 3,000 years ago, has anticipated some of the most wonderful of recent discoveries, and can ascribe the accuracy of his statements and language to nothing but inspiration. Moses relates how God created the heavens and the earth at an indefinitely remote period before the earth was the habitation of man--geology has lately discovered