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“The Most Important Biblical Discovery of Our Time”: William Henry Green and the Demise of Ussher’s Chronology

RONALD L. NUMBERS

In 1650 the distinguished church historian Archbishop James Ussher of Ireland announced his meticulously calculated time of the Creation: early Saturday evening, 22 October 4004 B.C.E., a date immortalized in the margins of countless Bibles for nearly three centuries. Among evangelical Protestants who believed in the inerrancy of Scripture this date came to mark the beginning of human history. For some believers it remained a landmark until the late twentieth century; others abandoned it as early as the 1860s. Among American evangelicals no one played a more important role in discrediting Ussher’s chronology than William Henry Green, an Old Testament scholar at Princeton Theological Seminary. One of Green’s Princeton colleagues called his demonstration of Ussher’s fallacy “the most important biblical discovery of our time.”¹ In some ways it was, although its full impact did not come until the second half of the twentieth century.

I. THE COLENSO CONTROVERSY

Green’s interest in biblical chronology emerged in the context of a trans-Atlantic controversy. Early in the fall of 1862 John William

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1. James Ussher, *Annales Veteris Testamenti* (London, 1650), 1; trans. as *The Annals of the World* (London, 1658), 1; George Macloskie to G. F. Wright, 23 November 1904, G. F. Wright Papers, Oberlin College Archives. As William R. Brice points out in “Bishop Ussher, John Lightfoot, and the Age of Creation,” *Journal of Geological Education* 30 (1982): 18–24, John Lightfoot, writing eight years before Ussher, had claimed that the creation had begun at 9 a.m.—in 3928 B.C.E. See also R. Buick Knox, *James Ussher: Archbishop of Armagh* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967), 105–7.

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Colenso, an Anglican bishop from Natal in colonial South Africa, scandalized the English-speaking religious world with a thin volume entitled *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined*. Biblical critics had been busily deconstructing the purported writings of Moses since Jean Astruc and J. G. Eichhorn in the eighteenth century, but their work had attracted little public interest. The bishop's blast against Moses—following closely on the heels of Charles Darwin's recasting of the creation story in *The Origin of Species* (1859) and the efforts of the Anglican contributors to *Essays and Reviews* (1860) to reinterpret the Bible in the light of continental scholarship—created a mighty stir, rousing “the Anglo-Saxon world,” as one contemporary described it, “from its uncritical condition.”²

Colenso, a Cambridge-educated former schoolmaster and author of various widely used mathematics and science texts, had abandoned belief in the inerrancy of the Bible before journeying to Africa, where he began to read the German critics and their detractors. He experienced an epiphany while working with an African convert on a translation of Genesis into the Zulu language. As the bishop explained in the introduction to his book, “a simple-minded, but intelligent, native” asked him if he truly believed the story of Noah and a worldwide flood. Possessing some knowledge of geology from having read the British geologist Charles Lyell, Colenso understood “that a *Universal Deluge*, such as the Bible manifestly speaks of, could not possibly have taken place in the way described in the Book of Genesis.” And he knew that he should not “speak lies in the Name of the Lord.” His dilemma launched the missionary bishop on a quest to reexamine the Pentateuch in detail, or so he said.³

Colenso began by investigating the story of the Exodus, only to discover “the absolute, palpable, self-contradictions of the narrative.” He thus devoted the first of an eventual seven volumes to exposing “the unhistorical character” of that story, often using arithmetical calculations to highlight textual difficulties. The following examples illustrate his method of attack:

1. The Bible (Lev. 8:14) says that “the Assembly,” comprising more than six hundred thousand able-bodied men plus women and
2. Charles Augustus Briggs, *General Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), 284–85. See Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (London: John Murray, 1859); *Recent Inquiries in Theology, by Eminent English Churchmen; Being “Essays and Reviews”* (Boston: Walker, Wise, 1860); John William Colenso, *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined*, part 1, *The Pentateuch Examined As an Historical Narrative* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1862).
3. Colenso, *Pentateuch*, vii–viii.

children, "was gathered unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation." But Colenso's calculations showed that the court of the Tabernacle, "when thronged, could only have held 5000 people."

2. The Bible (Deut. 1:1) says that "Moses spake unto all Israel," which numbered upward of two million people. "Surely," reasoned Colenso, "no human voice, unless strengthened by a miracle of which the Scripture tells us nothing, could have reached the ears of a crowded mass of people, as large as the whole population of London." Crying babies alone would have made it impossible to hear Moses at great distances.

3. The Bible (Ex. 16:16) says that the Israelites dwelt in tents in the wilderness. But "allowing ten persons for each tent, (and decency would surely require that there should not be more than this,—a Zulu hut in Natal contains on an average only *three and a half*),—two millions of people would require 200,000 tents," plus "a prodigious number of trained oxen" to transport them.⁴

Numerous biblical scholars rushed to defend Moses against the bishop's charges, and their arguments were disseminated in books that circulated in the tens of thousands in inexpensive editions. Among the Mosaic defenders was the thirty-eight-year-old William Henry Green, who found Colenso's reasoning revolting. "Is it for this we are to give up faith in the Bible?" he scribbled while reading the book, stopping occasionally to jot such marginalia as "Whole thing garbled," "Bah!" "What outrageous representation," and "ALL FUDGE!"⁵

Although inclined at times to dismiss Colenso's book as "too childish to merit a serious reply," Green decided to wade through the "bog," mud and all. Within months he penned a scathing 195-page response, *The Pentateuch Vindicated from the Aspersions of Bishop Colenso* (1863). In it Green accused Colenso of proposing "by arithmetic to overthrow the Mosaic record" and of building his case on "a few superficial difficulties in the sacred record." He denounced Colenso as a mere "caviller" suffering from a "disordered brain" and an "utter incapacity to deal with the questions which he professes to handle." He ridiculed Colenso for making an astronomical error that no "school-

4. Colenso, *Pentateuch*, 10 (self-contradictions), xiv (unhistorical), 34 (Lev. 8:14), 37 (Deut. 1:1), 46 (Ex.16:16).

5. Green's marginalia, found in his personal copy of Colenso's book in the Speer Library at Princeton Theological Seminary, are quoted in Marion Ann Taylor, *The Old Testament in the Old Princeton School, 1812-1929* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992), 218. American editions of Colenso included *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined* (New York: D. Appleton, 1863); *Abstract of Colenso on the Pentateuch: Showing Who Wrote the Five Books of Moses, and When They Were Written* (New York: American News, [1871]); and *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined*, new ed. (New York: Longmans, Green, 1888).

boy" would make (but in so doing, he committed one himself, as he reluctantly confessed in a note hurriedly added before publication). He dismissed Colenso's arguments as "punctilious," "dishonest," "absurd," and "clumsy," and derided them as "arithmetical pedantry," "outrageous misrepresentation," and "miserable sophisms"—all the while congratulating himself for refraining from the use of any "epithets" or "denunciation."⁶

As one who viewed the Scriptures as "an infallible communication from God," Green found Colenso's "utter want of confidence in Jesus and reverence for his words"—"Moses wrote of me," said Jesus (John 5:46)—particularly galling. As Green saw it, Colenso had raised a question "of life or death." "We will not, we can not give up our faith in the Bible," pledged Green. "To do so is to surrender ourselves to blank despair. It is to blot out the sun from the heavens and extinguish at once the very source of light and life and holiness."⁷

Colenso had only tangentially addressed the reliability of the Pentateuchal genealogies and had written nothing about Ussher's chronology. Nevertheless, Green went out of his way to note that "some links have been omitted in tracing the line of Moses' descent." Even casual biblical scholars, he alleged, knew that the biblical genealogies were "frequently abbreviated by the omission of unimportant names. In fact abridgment is the general rule, induced by the indisposition of the sacred writers to encumber their pages with more names than were necessary for their immediate purpose." A comparison of 1 Chronicles 6:3–14 with Ezra 7:1–5, which gave the identical genealogy minus six names, illustrated the practice.⁸

1 Chron. vi. 3–14	Ezra vii. 1–5
1. Aaron	Aaron
2. Eleazar	Eleazar
3. Phinehas	Phinehas
4. Abishua	Abishua
5. Bukki	Bukki
6. Uzzi	Uzzi
7. Zerariah	Zerariah
8. Meraioth	Meraioth

6. William Henry Green, *The Pentateuch Vindicated from the Aspersions of Bishop Colenso* (New York: John Wiley, 1863), 69 (childish), 15 (arithmetic), 11 (superficial), 32 (caviller), 193 (brain), 194 (incapacity), 24 (astronomical error), 29 (confession), 33 (punctilious), 104 (dishonest), 111 (absurd), 174 (clumsy), 137 (pedantry), 161 (misrepresentation), 193 (sophisms), 194 (epithets).

7. Green, *Pentateuch Vindicated*, 193 (infallible), 19 (want of confidence), 195 (life or death).

8. Green, *Pentateuch Vindicated*, 122–24.

9. Amariah	—
10. Ahitub	—
11. Zadok	—
12. Ahimaaz	—
13. Azariah	—
14. Johanan	—
15. Azariah	Azariah
16. Amariah	Amariah
17. Ahitub	Ahitub
18. Zadok	Zadok
19. Shallum	Shallum
20. Hilkiah	Hilkiah
21. Azariah	Azariah
22. Seraiah	Seraiah
—	Ezra

At this point in his rebuttal to Colenso, Green initiated the evangelical assault on Ussher's chronology by inserting a note that would alter the course of Christian apologetics:

We may here be indulged with a remark aside from the special topic before us, viz.: that if scientific research should ever demonstrate what it cannot be said to have done as yet, that the race of man has existed upon the earth for a longer period than the ordinary Hebrew Chronology will allow, we would be disposed to seek the solution in this frequent, if not pervading, characteristic of the Scriptural genealogies. The Septuagint chronology, to which many have fled in their desire to gain the additional centuries which it allots to human history, is, we are persuaded, a broken reed. The weight of evidence preponderates immensely in favour of the correctness of the Hebrew text, and against the accuracy of the deviations of the Septuagint. But it must not be forgotten that there is an element of uncertainty in a computation of time which rests upon genealogies, as the sacred chronology so largely does. Who is to certify us that the ante-diluvian and ante-Abrahamic genealogies have not been condensed in the same manner as the post-Abrahamic? If Matthew omitted names from the ancestry of our Lord in order to equalize the three great periods over which he passes, may not Moses have done the same in order to bring out seven generations from Adam to Enoch, and ten from Adam to Noah? Our current chronology is based upon the *prima facie* impression of these genealogies. This we shall adhere to, until we see good reason for giving it up. But if these recently discovered indications of the antiquity of man, over which scientific circles are now so excited, shall, when carefully inspected and thoroughly weighed, demonstrate all that any have imagined they might demonstrate, what then? They will simply show that the

popular chronology is based upon a wrong interpretation, and that a select and partial register of ante-Abrahamic names has been mistaken for a complete one.⁹

As Green's reference to the "recently discovered indications of the antiquity of man" suggests, the age of humanity had of late become a contentious topic. Since about the 1820s Christian scholars had been extending prehuman history to accommodate the finding of geologists and paleontologists, but, with few exceptions, human history had been left untouched. As one British writer noted in 1863, it was "remarkable how chary Geologists have until recently been of disturbing the popular notion that the creation of Man took place in the year 4004 B.C. It has seemed as if they had purchased their right to speculate freely on the anterior history of the Earth, by promising to leave untouched that which the theologian claims a his proper province, the origin and early history of the Human Race." Sustained scientific (as opposed to literary) discussion of human antiquity began in the 1840s, with the finding of stone implements mixed with the bones of extinct animals in gravel pits at Abbeville in northwestern France. Still, belief in ancient humans remained relatively rare until 1858, when human flint knives were discovered among the bones of extinct mammals in Brixham Cave in southwestern England. By 1863, when Charles Lyell brought out his *Antiquity of Man*—and Green published his reply to Colenso—the scientific community was rapidly coming to a consensus on the issue. As Thomas Trautmann has noted, "the intellectual revolution" of Green's generation "was the explosion of the traditional biblically based chronology" for human history. "The last great battle between science and dogmatism . . . has now commenced," the anticlerical physician-anthropologist Josiah Nott gleefully announced.¹⁰

9. Green, *Pentateuch Vindicated*, 128.

10. "The Antiquity of Man," *Westminster Review* 79 (1863): 518, quoted in Donald K. Grayson, *The Establishment of Human Antiquity* (New York: Academic, 1983), 202; Thomas R. Trautmann, *Lewis Henry Morgan and the Invention of Kinship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 32; J. C. Nott and Geo. R. Gliddon, *Types of Mankind* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1854), 60, from a section written by Nott. On the midcentury debates over human antiquity, see especially Grayson, *Establishment*, 179–86; and A. Bowdoin Van Riper, *Man among the Mammoths: Victorian Science and the Discovery of Human Prehistory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). On Genesis and geology in America, see Rodney L. Stiling, "Scriptural Geology in America," in David N. Livingstone, D. G. Hart, and Mark A. Noll, eds., *Evangelicals and Science in Historical Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 177–92; and Stiling, "The Genesis Flood in Nineteenth-Century American Thought" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1991).

II. WILLIAM HENRY GREEN

Just who was this conservative revolutionary who sought to turn American evangelicals away from Ussher's chronology? Historians of religion in America rarely mention him, and the few who do almost never mention his fundamental contribution to primeval chronology. (Two brief remarks by Mark A. Noll stand, I believe, as unique exceptions.¹¹) In apologetic literature, where Green's name still occasionally appears, we are likely to find his name misspelled, his death misdated, his training misconstrued, and his contributions misidentified.¹²

Henry Green, to use his common name, was born in 1825 in rural New Jersey, near Princeton, into a family distinguished by its learning and wealth. At the age of twelve he entered Lafayette College in Pennsylvania. After graduating with honors at age fifteen, he remained at the college for two years as a tutor in mathematics before enrolling in Princeton Theological Seminary in 1842. Early on he displayed impressive linguistic skills. As one of his fellow students later recalled, young Green "took to Greek as if he had been born at Athens; he took to Hebrew as if he had been the son of a rabbi in Jerusalem." In view of his aptitude for foreign languages, it is not surprising that immediately following his graduation from the seminary, he accepted an appointment as instructor in Hebrew at Prince-

11. Mark A. Noll, ed., *The Princeton Theology, 1812-1921: Scripture, Science, and Theological Method from Archibald Alexander to Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1983), 291; idem, *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible in America* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986), 24. The most extensive treatment of Green in print, Taylor's *The Old Testament in the Old Princeton School, 167-251*, neither mentions Green's primeval chronology nor cites his article on that subject in her extensive bibliography of his writings. The same is true of Dwayne Cox's unpublished manuscript, "William Henry Green: Princeton Theologian" (M.A. thesis, University of Louisville, 1976). Peter J. Wallace, "The Foundations of Reformed Biblical Theology: The Development of Old Testament Theology at Old Princeton, 1812-1932," *Westminster Theological Journal* 59 (1997): 41-69, also discusses Green at length without mentioning his chronological work.
12. Francis A. Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time: The Flow of Biblical History* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1972), 122, refers to "Professor William Greene." In his introduction to the reprint of Green's *Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1978), v, Ronald F. Youngblood places Green's death in 1896, four years too early. Hugh Ross, *Creation and Time: A Biblical and Scientific Perspective on the Creation-Date Controversy* (Colorado Springs, Col.: NavPress, 1994), 151, erroneously claims that Green possessed an advanced degree and implies that Green was writing in the 1970s. Pattle P. T. Pun, *Evolution: Nature and Scripture in Conflict?* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1982), 256, identifies Green as a contributor to *The Fundamentals*, which began appearing a decade after Green's death. Ernest Nicholson, *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), says nothing about Green's influence.

ton. Except for two years, 1849–51, when he served as pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, he remained on the Princeton Seminary faculty, becoming in 1851, at age twenty-six, professor of biblical and oriental literature, a title later changed to professor of oriental and Old Testament literature. For seventeen years he served as president of the seminary. Generations of students, impressed equally by his knowledge and severity, privately called him Rabbi. Although a frequent contributor to the *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* before replying to Colenso, he had written only one book, a Hebrew textbook. Unlike so many other prominent biblical scholars of his day, he never studied in Germany, though during a honeymoon trip to Europe in the summer of 1858 he did take time out to audit two of Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg's lectures in Berlin (which has misled a couple of historians into describing him as a student and protégé of Hengstenberg's).¹³

Little in his published writings, either before or after 1863, suggests that he took much of an interest in issues relating to science and religion. Sermon notes from his days as a minister in Philadelphia, however, reveal something of his early views on the subject. He welcomed modern science as a bulwark against infidelity and as "a powerful auxiliary in the overthrow of heathenism." Although happy to let science determine the early history of Earth—to the extent of accepting both its nebular origin and the existence of geological ages that "may have been going on for periods that years can scarcely number"—he insisted that the world's "present inhabitants . . . were formed by the immediate creative power of God at a period not very remote,—a period which revelation dates for us exactly, but which Science can only venture to approximate." Still wedded to Ussher's chronology for human history, he was not yet willing to entertain evidence of human antiquity. "[I]f we found authentic records or monuments any where reaching back for millions of years or even for ten thousand years," he said in 1849, "that wd. be of course in flat contradiction to the Mosaic record." By the time he delivered his inaugural discourse at the seminary, in the fall of 1851, he was warning

13. This biographical sketch is based on the documents in *Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Appointment of Professor William Henry Green as an Instructor in Princeton Theology Seminary, May 5, 1896* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), 69 (Greek and Hebrew), 82 (Rabbi), et passim. Green describes his visit to Berlin in a letter to Charles Hodge, 17 August 1858, in the Charles Hodge Collection, Firestone Library, Box 16, Folder 19, copy courtesy of William O. Harris. Warner M. Bailey, "William Robertson Smith and American Biblical Studies," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 51 (1973): 303–4, describes Green as "a protégé of Hengstenberg"; Cox, "William Henry Green," 15, claims that Green "traveled to Germany to study under the Old Testament exegete Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg."

of a "grand battle" over the integrity of the Bible in which "enthusiasm for science" and "foreign researches" (that is, German biblical scholarship) were on the antibiblical side.¹⁴

Although Green did not believe that the Bible taught or anticipated modern science, he did, like many fellow Christians, think that science and the Bible could not, if properly understood, conflict. God had created both. "Abandon neither the evidence of your senses on the one hand, nor the assurance of a well-established faith on the other," he advised the faculty and students of his alma mater on the occasion of the laying of the corner stone for a new chemistry building at Lafayette College, "but calmly abide in the confident anticipation that in this, as in hundreds of instances before, an increase of knowledge will reveal the mutual consistency of the word and works of God." Throughout his life Green rejected the notion that Genesis 1 and 2 represented two distinct creation narratives, though from his earliest writings he granted that the "days" of the first chapter represented "successive periods," not literal days. Indirect evidence suggests that he adopted the harmonizing scheme advocated by his Princeton colleague Arnold Guyot and by John William Dawson of McGill University, whom Green brought to the seminary to lecture on the harmony of science and the Bible and later tried to lure to Princeton permanently. Dawson, following Guyot, interpreted the "days" of Genesis as vast epochs spanning the development of the earth from nebulous mass to Edenic perfection.¹⁵

Amid the uproar over Colenso—additional volumes, a sensational heresy trial, and a successful legal fight to retain his bishopric—Green's reply attracted relatively little attention besides a few notices that commented on the "vein of quiet ridicule" running through the tract or on the author's humor and wit. As far as I can tell, only one

14. W. H. Green, MS sermon on Genesis 1:1, delivered at Central Church, 20 May 1849, William Henry Green Papers, Box 1, File 2, Office of Archives and Special Collections, Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries; William Henry Green, *An Inaugural Discourse*, 39, 66, 67, an undated booklet based on a 30 September 1851 lecture, copy in the Brown University Library. Regarding Green's early willingness to accept the nebular hypothesis and geological ages, see also W. H. Green, MS sermon on Gen. 12:1, at the Central Church, 9 February 1851, Green Papers, Box 1, File 3.
15. W. Henry Green, *The Value of Physical Science in the Work of Education* (Easton, Pa.: Lafayette College, 1865), 27. Regarding the two accounts of creation, see William Henry Green, review of *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, by S. R. Driver, *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 3 (1892): 340; and idem, *The Unity of the Book of Genesis* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), 17 (successive periods), 22, 25 (days), 29, 33. On Guyot's and Dawson's interpretation of Genesis 1, see Ronald L. Numbers, *Creation by Natural Law: Laplace's Nebular Hypothesis in American Thought* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 91–94, 100. On Green's relationship with Dawson, see Susan Sheets-Pyenson, *John William Dawson: Faith, Hope, and Science* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 87–88.

reviewer, in the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, saw the significance of Green's note on primeval chronology. After quoting the entire passage, the critic conceded that the time gained from the incomplete genealogies might "meet all the difficulties arising from historic and linguistic evidences of human antiquity." But, he asked skeptically, will they "solve the difficulty of the 'fossil man'?"¹⁶

By far the most significant endorsement of Green's chronological expansion of Genesis came from a senior colleague at Princeton Seminary, Charles Hodge, who welcomed Green's insight as an exegetical lifesaver. The famous theologian's son Alexander Hodge recalled his father's reaction to Green's suggestion: "I can well remember my father walking up and down in his study when he heard (about it) and saying, 'What a relief it is to me that he should have said that.'" In his immensely influential three-volume *Systematic Theology* the elder Hodge put Green's insight to work to resolve the discrepancy between the Egyptian and Hebrew chronologies. "The chronology of the Bible is very uncertain," he wrote in a passage citing Green. "The data are for the most part facts incidentally stated; that is, not stated for the purposes of chronology. . . . Under these circumstances it is very clear that the friends of the Bible have no occasion for uneasiness. If the facts of science or of history should ultimately make it necessary to admit that eight or ten thousand years have elapsed since the creation of man, there is nothing in the Bible in the way of such concession. The Scriptures do not teach us how long men have existed on the earth."¹⁷

Still, Green's major contribution to biblical interpretation languished in obscurity, while his reputation as America's leading de-

16. Review of *The Pentateuch Vindicated from the Aspersions of Bishop Colenso*, by William Henry Green, *Methodist Quarterly Review* 23 (1863): 518–19. On Green's use of ridicule and humor, see, respectively, "Prof. Green on Colenso," *New-York Observer*, 26 March 1863; and review of *The Pentateuch Vindicated from the Aspersions of Bishop Colenso*, by William Henry Green, *Christian Advocate and Journal*, 9 April 1863, 119. On Colenso, see George W. Cox, *The Life of John William Colenso, D.D., Bishop of Natal*, 2 vols. (London: W. Ridgway, 1888); Peter Hinchliff, *John William Colenso: Bishop of Natal* (London: Nelson, 1964); and Jeff Guy, *The Heretic: A Study of the Life of John William Colenso, 1814–1883* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1983). For a positive assessment of Colenso's *Pentateuch*, which appeared in seven parts between 1862 and 1879, see John Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century: England and Germany* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1984), 220–37. According to Rogerson, 220, "Colenso's *Pentateuch* was one of the most original British contributions to biblical criticism in the nineteenth century."

17. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Scribner, 1871–73), 2:40–41. Alexander Hodge's recollection is quoted in Arthur C. Custance, *Two Men Called Adam* (Brockville, Ont.: Doorway Publications, 1983), 5. On Charles Hodge's attitudes toward science, see Ronald L. Numbers, "Charles Hodge and the Beauties and Deformities of Science," in James H. Moorhead and John W. Stewart, eds., *Charles Hodge Revisited: A Critical Appraisal of His Life and Work* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, in press).

fender of traditional views of the Bible soared, especially in the years after the German publication in 1878 of Julius Wellhausen's *History of Israel*, which for Green reduced the Pentateuch "to a compilation, by no one known, of legends gathered from diverse and contradictory sources originating no one knows how"—and whose author Green dismissed as a trickster whose interpretation of the Bible came largely from his "own exuberant fancy." For a man who believed that "the Old Testament contains no errors that require correction, no mistakes due to the inadequacy of the organ employed to transmit the divine will," the times were indeed troubling. And the battle was only heating up. By the early 1880s the Scottish critic William Robertson Smith was introducing English readers to the new criticism, hitherto largely inaccessible to the public by virtue of being "locked up in German." Worse yet, whereas in the past friends of the Bible had defended it "against pagans, infidels, and sceptics," they were now being called on to protect it against prominent churchmen. Biblical scholars no longer contented themselves with merely determining what God taught in the Bible; the most radical among them were now questioning whether the Bible even came from God. "The battle rages around the citadel," Green observed with alarm in 1883. "No drones or cowards are wanted now."¹⁸

Meanwhile, his reputation as an evangelical scholar and administrator continued to grow. Although he declined the presidency of Princeton College in 1868, he presided over the seminary for seventeen years. During the 1870s and early 1880s he chaired the ecumenical Old Testament section of the American Bible Revision Committee and, in 1891, served as moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly. Even his critics grudgingly conceded his intelligence and tenacity. Smith, who counted Green among the driest writers he knew, nevertheless regarded him as "the most scholarly by far of my assailants." The editors of the widely read *Sunday School Times* lauded Green as one of "the foremost biblical scholars on either side of the Atlantic" and invited him in 1887 to contribute six months' worth of commentary to accompany the Sunday-school lessons on the Old Testament. When

18. W. H. Green, *The Hebrew Feasts: In Their Relation to Recent Critical Hypotheses Concerning the Pentateuch* (New York: Robert Carter, 1885), 13 (compilation); idem, "Prof. Robertson Smith on the Pentateuch," *Presbyterian Review* 3 (1882): 109 (fancy); idem, "The Perpetual Authority of the Old Testament," *Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, n.s. 6 (1877): 221 (no errors); idem to C. A. Briggs, 8 July 1881, Letter 1535, Transcripts of C. A. Briggs's Correspondence, Union Theological Seminary Archives (locked up); idem, *Moses and the Prophets* (New York: Robert Carter, 1883), 9–10 (unbelievers, radicals, and cowards). Regarding Wellhausen, see also W. H. Green, "Pentateuchal Analysis a Failure," *Independent*, 3 May 1894, 1. On Smith, see Bailey, "William Robertson Smith," 285–308. Wellhausen's *Geschichte Israels* was published at Berlin in 1879.

the liberal Baptist critic William Rainey Harper sought a worthy conservative to debate the merits of higher criticism in the pages of his journal *Hebraica*, he selected Green, who ably, if tendentiously, defended the traditional point of view. Green's two classic books, *The Unity of the Book of Genesis* (1895) and *The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch* (1895), promptly appeared in German translations.¹⁹

Among progressives at home and abroad Green's reputation plumeted as higher criticism prospered. The publication of his books in German led to an outcry from critics there, offended by his "perfidious" habit of attributing the "worst motives" to his opponents. The Edinburgh-based *Expository Times* identified him as the last remaining "Old Testament scholar who rejects the results of criticism" and described his "battle-flag" as "the Pentateuch, the whole Pentateuch, and nothing but the Pentateuch." Green's prominent role in the heresy trial of his sometime friend and fellow Presbyterian, Charles Augustus Briggs, the leading American higher critic, prompted outraged liberals to tag him a "heresy hunter." Briggs himself dubbed Green "the American Hengstenberg" (after the most prominent German traditionalist) and belittled him for using "the method of an advocate, and not of a scholar." Another critic thought it "pathetic" that "in appealing to authorities in support of his views, Professor Green is obliged to call a roll of the dead." Indeed, by the 1890s Green stood virtually alone as a major scholar opposing the higher criticism, much as his friend Daw-

19. David Hoeveler Jr., *James McCosh and the Scottish Intellectual Tradition: From Glasgow to Princeton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 227 (presidency); W. R. Smith to C. A. Briggs, 8 February 1883, Letter 2089, Briggs's Correspondence; *Sunday School Times*, 18 June 1887, 385. Green's "Critical Notes" appeared in the *Sunday School Times* from 1 January 1887 through 11 June 1887. The Harper-Green exchange, titled "The Pentateuchal Question," appeared in *Hebraica* between 1888 and 1892. For a critical appraisal of Harper's role in this exchange, see Robert Lee Carter, "The 'Message of the Higher Criticism': The Bible Renaissance and Popular Education in America, 1880-1925" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1995), 204. On Harper, see James P. Wind, *The Bible and the University: The Messianic Vision of William Rainey Harper* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1987), which mentions Green only in passing. On Green and the American Bible Revision Committee, see Peter J. Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures: American Protestant Battles over Translating the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 43-44, 49, 58-59. In the mid-1860s Joseph Henry, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, consulted Green about a manuscript on "Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family," submitted by the anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan for publication to the *Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge*. Henry could think of no one "better qualified to judge" the work; Joseph Henry to W. H. Green 6 December 1865, Record Unit 33, Outgoing Correspondence, Office of the Secretary, Smithsonian Institution Archives, a copy of which was provided by Marc Rothenberg. For Green's assessment of this landmark study, see W. H. Green to Joseph Henry, 14 March 1866, Record Unit 26, Incoming Correspondence, Office of the Secretary, Smithsonian Institution Archives.

son stood alone among scientists in defending the Bible against Darwin.²⁰

III. PRIMEVAL CHRONOLOGY

While liberal biblical critics were dismissing Green as a scholarly dinosaur, Bible-believing evangelicals such as George Frederick Wright, editor of *Bibliotheca Sacra*, were turning to Green for help in dealing with the increasingly convincing evidence of human antiquity. Wright, an accomplished geologist and Congregational cleric, had risen to prominence in the 1870s and 1880s as one of the leading American advocates of theistic evolution. During that time he had appealed to Green and Hodge for help in harmonizing the accumulating evidence of human antiquity with the apparently short chronology given by the Old Testament genealogies. The elasticity of these records, he concluded, allowed "the geologist and the archaeologist and the Egyptologist and the linguist to work peaceably at their several problems." It was "already high time," he declared in 1882, to "remove the misleading dates of Archbishop Usher [sic] from the margins of our 'authorized' translation." By the late 1880s Wright was moving increasingly to the right theologically, so much so that when he brought out his magnum opus, *The Ice Age in North America: And Its Bearing upon the Antiquity of Man* (1889), he expressed concern that anthropological and archaeological evidence was pushing human antiquity back at least to the end of the glacial period, eight to ten thousand years ago (which he later extended to sixteen to twenty thousand years). For help in resolving this tension, he turned to B. B. Warfield, a biblical inerrantist at the Princeton Theological Seminary, who shared Wright's openness to biological evolution. Warfield wisely suggested that Wright talk to Green, which he did. The two men conversed until "the small hours of the night," and Wright emerged from the dialogue feeling reassured that the biblical genealogies did indeed provide the wriggling room he

20. Review of *The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, by W. H. Green, *Expository Times* 7 (1895-96): 227 (battle-flag); W. H. Green, "Heresy Hunters," *Presbyterian*, 15 February 1893, 12; Charles Augustus Briggs, *General Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), 289 (Hengstenberg); idem, *The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893), 143; Edward L. Curtis, review of *General Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon*, by W. H. Green, *Biblical World* 14 (1899): 459. Regarding the Briggs affair, see Mark Stephen Massa, *Charles Augustus Briggs and the Critics of Historical Criticism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1990). For British and German criticism of Green, see J. A. Selbie, "Critics and Apologists," *Expository Times* 10 (1898-99): 221-23; and C. Steuernagel, "Dr. W. H. Green of Princeton: A Reply to Dr. Dunlop Moore," *Expository Times* 10 (1898-99): 476-80. For criticism of Green's critics, see Dunlop Moore, "Critics and Apologists," *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 10 (1899): 533-42.

needed to harmonize his findings about human antiquity with his belief in the accuracy of the Genesis record.²¹

A grateful Wright invited Green to share his insights with the readers of *Bibliotheca Sacra* by expanding the note he had inserted in his reply to Colenso into a full article. Thus in 1890 the journal featured a nineteen-page fleshed-out version simply titled "Primeval Chronology," in which Green offered evangelical scholars "the needed relief" from the uncomfortable—and unnecessary—constrictions imposed on them by Ussher's chronology. He assured them "that the Scriptures furnish no data for a chronological computation prior to the life of Abraham; and that the Mosaic records do not fix and were not intended to fix the precise date either of the Flood or of the creation of the world." The following year he prepared a condensed version of his essay for the popular religious weekly *The Independent*, framed explicitly as a refutation of the charge, circulated by John William Draper and others, that science conflicted with the Bible.²²

Green's recalculation of the primeval chronology led to immediate calls for the repudiation of Ussher's chronology. "In the face of these admissions," declared one academic, "it is, to say the least, a misfortune that Bible houses and tract societies should continue to print Usher's [sic] chronology in the Bible margin." No one contributed more to popularizing Green's discovery than Wright, who effusively praised his new mentor for showing that "the forms of speech in Genesis permit us to place Adam as far back as the earliest date for which we shall find satisfactory and specific evidence." To publicize Green's work, as well as to cloak himself in the mantle of Green's unquestioned orthodoxy, Wright devoted eight pages of his *Scientific Confirmations of Old Testament History* (1906) to summarizing Green's argument against Ussher, reprinted Green's "Primeval Chronology" in its entirety in his *Origin and Antiquity of Man* (1912), and frequently alluded to Green in other publications.²³

21. G. Frederick Wright, *The Ice Age in North America: And Its Bearings upon the Antiquity of Man*, 5th ed. (Oberlin, Ohio: Bibliotheca Sacra, 1911); idem, *Studies in Science and Religion* (Andover, Mass.: Warren F. Draper, 1882), 376–79; idem, "How Old Is Mankind?" *Sunday School Times*, 25 January 1913, 52 (visit with Green). For a second account of Wright's visit with Green, see Wright, "The Flood and Genesis," *Independent*, 8 August 1901, 1858–59. On Wright, see Ronald L. Numbers, "George Frederick Wright: From Christian Darwinist to Fundamentalist," *Isis* 79 (1988): 624–45; and Numbers, *The Creationists* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 20–36.
22. W. H. Green, "Primeval Chronology," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 47 (1890): 285–303, quotations on 300 (needed relief), and 303 (precise date); idem, "Pre-Abrahamic Chronology," *Independent*, 18 June 1891, 1–2; John William Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (New York: Appleton, 1874).
23. Frank Cramer, "The Theological and Scientific Theories of the Origin of Man," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 48 (1891): 511(margin); G. Frederick Wright, "The Harmony of Science and

Despite Wright's efforts to popularize Green's declaration of freedom from Ussher, many, if not most turn-of-the-century evangelicals remained unappreciative, even unaware, of Green's contribution. When friends and colleagues from around the country met in Princeton in 1896 to celebrate Green's fifty years of service to the seminary, no one mentioned his path-breaking chronological work. And when he died, four years later, those who noted his passing remained equally silent. No wonder Princeton's professor of natural history, George Macloskie, complained to Wright in 1904 that "Green's work on the chronology is still unknown to the public"—despite its being, in his opinion, "the most important Biblical discovery of our time." Perhaps Macloskie, an ordained Irish Presbyterian minister, did more harm than good to the anti-Ussher cause by going around proclaiming that "all our theologians had gone wrong on every important scientific question, until Dr. W. H. Green saved the Bible from Colenso by showing that Ussher had misinterpreted the Bible." Macloskie felt that at the very least Green's discovery gave the lie to Charles Hodge's famous boast, at the celebration of *his* fifty years of service to Princeton Theological Seminary, that "a new idea never originated in this Seminary."²⁴

Hodge's public adoption of Green's chronology in the early 1870s had given it its biggest boost in the late nineteenth century; its embrace by Green's junior colleague B. B. Warfield produced a similar effect in the early twentieth century. Warfield, perhaps the foremost biblical inerrantist of his time, nevertheless praised Green for showing "that it is precarious in the extreme to draw chronological inferences from [the biblical] genealogies." Although he figured that twenty thousand years would sufficiently accommodate the needs of science, he expressed a willingness to go up to two hundred thousand years if

Revelation," *Homiletic Monthly* 33 (1897): 210; idem, *Scientific Confirmations of Old Testament History* (Oberlin, Ohio: Bibliotheca Sacra, 1906), 190–97; idem, *Origin and Antiquity of Man* (Oberlin, Ohio: Bibliotheca Sacra, 1912), 443–44. For additional tributes to Green by Wright, see, for instance, Wright, "Recent Discoveries Bearing on the Antiquity of Man," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 48 (1891): 298–309; idem, "Adjustments between the Bible and Science," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 49 (1892): 153–56; and idem, "Present Aspects of the Questions Concerning the Origin and Antiquity of the Human Race," *Protestant Episcopal Review* 11 (1889): 301–3.

24. See *Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary*; Macloskie to Wright, 23 November 1904; Macloskie to Wright, 4 November 1911, G. F. Wright Papers (theologians). Charles Hodge's famous quip appears in Alexander A. Hodge, *The Life of Charles Hodge, D.D., LL.D.* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1881), 521. A number of obituaries can be found in the William Henry Green Papers. Macloskie drew attention to Green's discovery in "The Outlook of Science and Faith," *Princeton Theological Review* 1 (1903): 603; and "Monism and Darwinism," *Princeton Theological Review* 2 (1904): 434–35. The fullest account of Macloskie appears in David N. Livingstone and Ronald A. Wells, *Ulster-American Religion: Episodes in the History of a Cultural Connection* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 40–48.

necessary, arguing that the biblical genealogies were “so elastic that they may be commodiously stretched to fit any reasonable demand on time.” Warfield may have been stretching inerrancy to its limits, but endorsements did not come any better in fundamentalist circles.²⁵

It is difficult to assess Green’s status between the early 1910s and the late 1950s, because there was little public discussion of his views on chronology and evangelicals, if anything, became less interested than before in accommodating evidence of human antiquity. Most of his influence on chronological discussions came indirectly through the writings of Hodge, Wright, and Warfield. One contributor to *The Fundamentals* (1910–15) hailed Green as “perhaps the strongest of the scholarly opponents of the rationalistic Higher Critics” but said nothing about his chronology. Neither did such evangelical stalwarts as James Orr and Oswald T. Allis, who frequently invoked Green’s name in other contexts. One of the few promoters of Green’s chronology during the interwar years was Melvin G. Kyle, Wright’s fundamentalist successor to the editorship of *Bibliotheca Sacra*. Convinced by anthropological and archaeological discoveries of “the stupendous antiquity of man,” he resurrected Green’s long “ignored” work to prove that the Old Testament chronology remained trustworthy.²⁶

The full impact of Green’s anti-Ussherian chronology did not come until the second half of the twentieth century, when it became an exegetical hot potato in certain sectors of the evangelical community. Virtually all parties, even the strictest fundamentalists, came to agree with Green that human history had begun earlier than 4004 B.C.E. The divisive issue was how much earlier—thousands or millions of years? In the contest to resolve that issue Green became an icon.²⁷

25. B. B. W[arfield], Editorial Notes, *Bible Student*, n.s., 8 (1903): 241–52. Warfield expressed similar sentiments in “On the Antiquity and the Unity of the Human Race,” *Princeton Theological Review* 9 (1911): 1–25. On Warfield and science, see David N. Livingstone and Mark A. Noll, “B. B. Warfield (1851–1921): A Biblical Inerrantist as Evolutionist,” *Isis* 91 (2000): in press.
26. Dyson Hague, “The History of Higher Criticism,” *The Fundamentals* (Chicago: Testimony Publishing, [1910–15]), 1:120; M. G. Kyle, “The Antiquity of Man According to the Genesis Account,” *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* 57 (1925): 134–35. The Scottish theologian James Orr, *The Problem of the Old Testament: Considered with Reference to Recent Criticism* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1923), and the American Old Testament scholar Oswald T. Allis, *The Five Books of Moses* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1943), mentioned Green repeatedly. See also Alexander Hardie, *Evolution: Is It Philosophical, Scientific or Scriptural?* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror, 1924), 185, 198; and A. Rendle Short, *Modern Discovery and the Bible* (Chicago: InterVarsity, 1955; first published in 1942), 97–98.
27. For an example of scholars struggling over Green’s authority, see Stephen R. Schrader and Davis A. Young, “Was the Earth Created a Few Thousand Years Ago?” in Ronald Youngblood, ed., *The Genesis Debate: Persistent Questions about Creation and the Flood* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1986), 56–85.

A symbolic turning point came in 1948 with the publication of Byron C. Nelson's *Before Abraham: Prehistoric Man in Biblical Light*. A prominent minister in the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, Nelson had during the previous two decades earned a reputation as the Lutheran apostle of flood geology, a scheme devised by the Seventh-day Adventist George McCready Price for squeezing all of earth history into about six thousand years. During the mid-1930s Nelson had served as vice president of the short-lived Religion and Science Association, an ill-fated effort to form a united creationist front against evolution. Within a few years, however, a growing acquaintance with geology and anthropology had convinced him that human history dated back at least forty to fifty thousand years and that the continued reliance of Ussher's chronology was "probably the most common and injurious error which is fastened on the Bible." Following a decade-long struggle for church approval to disseminate his suspect views, he finally brought out *Before Abraham* in 1948. Nelson opened chapter 1 with a long quotation from Green's "Primeval Chronology," casting doubt on Ussher's "erroneous" chronology. "It is very essential that the world know" that Ussher's dates are undependable, argued Nelson, "because what Dr. William Green said fifty years ago might come to pass, namely, that some day a scientific discovery might be made which would clearly demonstrate that mankind is older than Ussher's interpretation has allowed, has finally come to pass." By this time Nelson was privately entertaining the possibility of "the creation being back maybe a million years—a literal 7 day week creation—and a Deluge which changed the face of the whole earth correspondingly ancient."²⁸

During the 1950s the so-called neoevangelicals associated with *Christianity Today* and the American Scientific Affiliation also discovered Green and the utility of his unimpeachable orthodoxy in their fight against fundamentalist "hyperorthodoxy." The Baptist theologian and philosopher Bernard Ramm, a self-styled progressive creationist, led the charge in 1954 with the publication of his landmark *Christian View of Science and Scripture*. Although eager himself to reject Ussher's chronology, he feared that less cautious exegetes might try to wedge too much time into the Genesis narrative between Adam and Abraham. Exactly that seemed to happen when evangelical anthropologists began wrestling with the implications of Louis B. Leakey's

28. Paul Nelson, introduction to *The Creationist Writings of Byron C. Nelson*, vol. 5 of Ronald L. Numbers, ed., *Creationism in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Garland, 1995), xiv (late 1930s); Numbers, *The Creationists*, 105–16; Byron C. Nelson, *Before Abraham: Prehistoric Man in Biblical Light* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1948), 1, 5–6, 16.

discovery in 1959 of a 1,750,000-year-old fossil man, *Zinjanthropus*, in East Africa. When Donald R. Wilson, an anthropologist at Calvin College, shared this finding with the readers of *Christianity Today*, he called on Green and Warfield to assure them that Christians had nothing to fear theologically. "It may not be necessary as yet to think of the age of man in terms of millions of years," he wrote. "But it certainly is necessary to think of man's origin in terms of tens of thousands of years and with very high probability in terms of hundreds of thousands."²⁹

Such Christian generosity prompted Carl F. H. Henry, the founding editor of the magazine, to complain in 1965 that Christian anthropologists might be too hastily caving in to "the inordinate pressures of contemporary scientific theory about the antiquity of man." James O. Buswell III, a Wheaton College anthropologist, tried to deflect Henry's rebuke by arguing in effect that with "theologians of the orthodoxy of Green and Warfield" on their side, Christian anthropologists need not worry about mere mortals such as Henry. "It seems to me," he wrote in a published letter to Henry, "that those who oppose an antiquity of man of hundreds of thousands of years *must take*" the statements of Green and Warfield into account. Later that year Buswell delivered much the same message in an effort aimed at convincing members of the American Scientific Affiliation that they should, for scientific reasons, and could, for biblical reasons discovered by Green, embrace Leakey's early man. For years to come evangelical anthropologists almost instinctively shielded themselves behind Green and Warfield whenever they felt threatened by less open-minded believers.³⁰

During the 1970s and 1980s Green became a favorite of evangelical scientists wanting more time and biblical scholars wanting more respect. In 1972 Baker Book House brought out an anthology, edited by

29. Bernard Ramm, *The Christian view of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1954), 313–14; Donald L. Wilson, "How Early Is Man?" *Christianity Today*, 14 September 1962, 1175–76.
30. [Carl F. H. Henry], "American Evangelicals and Theological Dialogue," *Christianity Today*, 15 January 1965, 395–97; James O. Buswell III, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 12 March 1965, 618; idem, "Homo Habilis: Implications for the Creationist," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 17 (1965): 74–78. For later invocations of Green, see, for instance, William J. Kornfield, "The Early-Date Genesis Man," *Christianity Today*, 8 June 1973, 931–34; and Buswell, "Creationist Views on Human Origin," *Christianity Today*, 8 August 1975, 1046–48. In "A Creationist Interpretation of Prehistoric Man," in Russell L. Mixer, ed., *Evolution and Christian Thought Today* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1959), 165–89, Buswell mentioned Green in a note (168), but not in connection with his chronology. Both Buswell and Kornfield, who also taught anthropology at Wheaton, cited Wheaton's Samuel J. Schultz, who in *The Old Testament Speaks*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 12–13, rejected Ussher in favor of Green. Robert Brow, "The Late-Date Genesis Man," *Christianity Today*, 15 September 1972, 1128–29, argued that Adam was created about 3900 B.C.E.

Walter C. Kaiser Jr., of "the fourteen best evangelical essays in the field of Old Testament studies." Thanks in part to Kaiser's inclusion of Green's "Primeval Chronology," this essay, infrequently noticed in Green's own lifetime, became a "classic," the thinking evangelical's antidote to Ussher. Robert C. Newman and Herman J. Eckelmann Jr. reprinted it as an appendix to *Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth*, published by InterVarsity Press. The evangelical guru Francis A. Schaeffer, the Old Testament scholar Ronald Youngblood, and the geologist Davis A. Young all followed Green. "Perhaps more than any other evangelical of his generation," wrote Youngblood, "he demonstrated the fact that wholly satisfactory, conservative answers could be given to questions being raised by liberal higher critics with respect to the origin and nature of the Pentateuch."³¹

About the same time so-called young-earth creationists such as John C. Whitcomb Jr. and Henry M. Morris, authors of the immensely influential *The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record and its Scientific Implications* (1961), were fighting to limit the time gained by Green's insight, preferring what Morris called "a modified Ussher chronology." Although they readily conceded small gaps in the Genesis genealogies—and acknowledged Green's discovery of such—they refused to push the date of creation back farther than 10,000 B.C.E. and preferred a much more recent date. It struck Whitcomb as "an utter absurdity" to allow "100,000 years between *each* of the twenty patriarchs of Genesis 5 and 11," as some evangelicals, such as Buswell, seemed to be doing. "Our understanding of *the basic outline of man's earliest history* must come from Scripture rather than from science," he insisted. On occasion Morris lamented that "the much-maligned Usher [sic] chronology . . . may have been discarded too quickly."³²

31. Walter C. Kaiser Jr., ed., *Classical Evangelical Essays in Old Testament Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1972), unpaginated introduction; Robert C. Newman and Herman J. Eckelmann Jr., *Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1977), 59–60, 105–23; Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time*, 122, 134; Ronald Youngblood, *How It All Began: A Biblical Commentary for Laymen: Genesis 1–11* (Ventura, Cal.: Regal Books, 1980), 89–91; Youngblood, introduction to *The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, vi (quotation); Davis A. Young, *Christianity and the Age of the Earth* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1982), 59, 152. Buswell had anointed Green's "Primeval Chronology" a "classic" as early as 1965; Buswell, letter to the editor, 22.
32. John C. Whitcomb Jr. and Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record and Its Scientific Implications* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1961), 476; Morris, *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1976), 45–46, 285, 309 (modified); Whitcomb, *The Early Earth* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1972), 107–10 (absurdity); Morris, *Many Infallible Proofs: Practical and Useful Evidences of Christianity* (San Diego: Creation-Life Publishers, 1974), 290 (much-maligned). See also Morris, *Biblical Cosmology and Modern Science* (Nutley, N.J.: Craig, 1970), 66–67. On Whitcomb and Morris, see Numbers, *The Creationists*, 184–213. On the "impropriety" and "absurdity" of using

Certainly that was the opinion of the contentious Canadian creationist Arthur C. Custance, who denied the existence of any genealogical gaps at all, arguing speciously that the alleged gaps were only apparent, because the Bible itself actually filled them in elsewhere. Despite an extensive familiarity with biblical languages and anthropology—and a willingness to concede immense amounts of time *before* Adam—Custance regarded Ussher's chronology as "a serious contribution to understanding the Bible," defective only "in small details." Green he condemned for abandoning Ussher's time scale "on biblical grounds" and for thus disastrously admitting "the thin edge of the evolutionary wedge."³³

Green may not have opened the door for evolution, but the hyperbolic Canadian was correct in asserting that Green had facilitated the accommodation of modern anthropology through biblical means. That in itself was unusual. Throughout the nineteenth century discoveries in geology and astronomy had driven Christian apologists to reinterpret the Scriptures, reading the "days" of Genesis 1 as ages, for example, or shrinking Noah's flood to a regional event. Those who did so often sought the sanction of biblical scholarship, but the impetus came from science. Just the opposite occurred with anthropology. Green provided a rationale for rejecting Ussher's chronology *before* Christian anthropologists began demanding more time, thus smoothing the way for the acceptance of discoveries yet to come. In that sense, and for evangelical Christians in America, he may well have made the most important biblical discovery of his time.

Green to justify a great antiquity for humans, see Marvin L. Ludenow, *Bones of Contention: A Creationist Assessment of Human Fossils* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 1992), 227–29.

33. Arthur C. Custance, *Hidden Things of God's Revelation*, vol. 7 of *The Doorway Papers* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1977), 222 (no gaps, small details), from an essay "The Genealogies of the Bible: A Neglected Subject," first published in 1967; idem, *Two Men Called Adam*, 4–6 (thin edge). On Custance, see Numbers, *The Creationists*, 170–71, 175–76, 255–56, 271–72.