



James C. Peterson

Live and Learn

It is a standard phrase that “we live and learn.” Indeed, it is usually in that order. I often take solace in saying to myself, “Well, at least I will not need to make *that* mistake again.” Been there. Done that. Time to go on to new mistakes. Anyone successful in scientific research, experiences such many times.

We see a willingness to change an approach and interpret things in a new way, several times in this issue of *PSCF*. It is characteristic of genuine improvement. There is no intellectual growth when we only understand exactly as we did years before. Even the most important truths that we hold should gain nuance and application. David Barnard, President of the University of Manitoba, writes of this in his communication. It is in looking back that Barnard can now see our Lord’s plan and work, whereas he was not always aware of it at the time. Hindsight might not be twenty/twenty, but a person can see now more than he or she could before. Such is reminiscent of the repeated pattern of the Psalmist who dwells on how God has provided before, to encourage trust for his now-tested present and for a hopeful future.

Robert Branson raises a test case for the idea that God chooses to assure the scientific accuracy of every statement in scripture. He looks in particular at multiple biblical references to the functions of particular human organs. There he finds, for example, the heart thinking and the kidneys as the source of our emotions. He notes that if God did not preserve the authors from mistaking what the human heart and kidneys actually do, why think that God guarantees other assumptions about the workings of physical creation? The texts are teaching crucial truths about God and God’s work in and through us, not physiology. Branson calls for some interpreters to adjust the expectations that they bring to the text.

Roy Clouser begins his article by affirming part of what he wrote in *PSCF* in 1991, but just as clearly

rescinds a position that he advocated then. He thinks that he allowed the Augustinian tradition of interpreting the second chapter of Genesis as a second account of creation, to blind him to how the text actually reads. Clouser now sees Genesis 2 as a recounting of Adam and Eve receiving the breath of God in relationship with God—that is, Adam and Eve were the first fully human beings. They are presented as the start of the story of responsibility and redemption, the first covenant people of God, and not as the first anatomical *Homo sapiens sapiens*.

In his article, geologist Lorence Collins explains why a formation on Mount Ararat that is celebrated to this day by some as the petrified remains of the wood of Noah’s ark, is not the ark. While he would be happy to find remains from Noah’s ark, this site is a routine volcanic flow. Later in this issue, Collins recounts, in his letter to the editor, that David Fasold, who first brought this formation to his attention, spent his savings and mortgaged his house to spread the news that these rocks were what was left of Noah’s ark. But when convinced by further investigation that they were not petrified wood after all, Fasold withdrew his own book that was gaining substantial royalties. Fasold pursued the truth and was willing to change his mind, even at great financial cost.

There is a cost to testing and developing one’s understanding. It can be psychologically disorienting. It can trigger censure from those who liked former agreements better. The demands incurred by a paradigm shift often require the coming of a new generation that is not so invested in the former approach. But rather than waiting for generations to come, our generation would do better to emulate the Bereans in Acts 17:11. They received words with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily to see what was so. ☆

James C. Peterson, *editor-in-chief*