

*Controversy of the Ages* (2017) by Theodore J. Cabal and Peter J. Razor II has been praised by various Christian scholars and displays some noteworthy endorsements. The book is, for the most part, another episode of old-earth creationists rebuking those who insist that the biblical creation narrative be taken literally (while out of the other side of their mouths offering an interpretation that amounts to little more than a condescending, 'let's just agree to disagree').

My review[1] of *Controversy of the Ages* for the *Journal of Creation* can be found [here](#). Even though it is of considerable length, I would have been glad to address many additional concerns had space permitted. God willing, in the future I will take up some of those other issues here.

For now, one point that I will reiterate is that 'six-day creation' was written into the great seventeenth-century reformed confessions. No one is arguing that this historical fact *proves* that a literal six-day creation week is the correct exegesis of Genesis chapter one and other relevant passages of Scripture. That must be proven from the text itself (and has been done necessarily *ad nauseum* in response to the persistence of evangelical compromise with "science"). But the point here is relevant because it shows that the predominant belief in church history up through the seventeenth-century was that God created the world and all that is in it, "in the space of six days, and all very good" (1689 LBC, 4:1).

In the review, I contend that

*"... science should play no role in exegesis but that the student of Scripture adhere to the grammatical-historical hermeneutic.[2] Such was the interpretative method that gave rise to the great Reformed confessions, all of which attested to the creation of the world in six literal days. This is significant because the formulation of the confessions predates the YEC/OEC controversy. Why did the framers of these theologically robust confessions bother to include a statement on the days of creation? It certainly wasn't because of some particular scientific data (or lack thereof). And it wasn't because they had an unbalanced obsession with the age of the earth and any such 'level-three' doctrine. Their systematic formulation of key doctrines was rooted in Scripture as the source of knowledge rather than the imprecise epistemological smorgasbord so favourable to modern evangelicalism.[3] The Westminster Confession (1646), Savoy Declaration (1658), and London Baptist Confession (1677/1689) all maintain that God created 'in the space of six days, and all very good'. Yet, when YECs speak with unwavering confidence in the perspicuity*

*of the Genesis text and defend this historic formulation of the doctrine of creation, they are rebuked for making third-order doctrines primary.”*

I did not, however, attempt to take up the potential objection that perhaps the framers’ interpretation of “six days” would have *allowed* for the vast eons produced by the imaginations of Hugh Ross, Ken Keathley, and other contemporary old-earthers.

At his excellent blog, Brandon Adams directs us to a lecture by one who is eminently qualified to take up that objection. With Brandon, I encourage you to listen carefully to Dr. James Renihan’s lecture titled “In the space of six days”.

“Young-earth” (biblical) creationists like those at CMI, ICR, CRS, and AiG have written volumes defending the historic position on the doctrine of creation which was not subverted until the rise of uniformitarian geology. But on the particular point of the *unconfessional* nature of old-earth creationism, it is helpful to hear a scholar from outside the creation ministry camp and well inside the historical study of reformed confessions.

Thanks again to Brandon Adams, here is Dr. James Renihan’s lecture: In the space of six days



[1] Sabato, N., Faltering between two opinions: The epistemological conundrum of old-earth creationism; book review of *Controversy of the Ages*, by Theodore J. Cabal and Peter J. Rasor II, *Journal of Creation* 31(3):28-32, 2017.

[2] Sabato, N., A theologian’s disappointing departure from biblical creation, *Journal of Creation* 28(3):125, 2014.

[3] “[Empiricists] have exchanged infallible propositional revelation ... for fallible sense experience ... . Thomas Aquinas, the great thirteenth-century Roman Catholic theologian, tried to combine two axioms in his system: the secular axiom of sense experience, which he obtained from Aristotle, and the Christian axiom of revelation, which he obtained from the

Bible. His synthesis was unsuccessful ... . Today the dominant form of epistemology in putatively Christian circles ... is empiricism. Apparently today's theologians have learned little from Thomas' failure." Robbins, J.W., *Without a Prayer: Ayn Rand and the Close of Her System*, The Trinity Foundation, Unicoi, TN, p. 337, 2006.

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