

# Evangelicals, Evolution, and the Bible: *Moving Toward a Synthesis*

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## Introduction

How can Evangelical Christians who accept evolution as a viable model of human origin also continue to value Scripture as God's word? In this essay, I will attempt to move toward an answer by outlining the specific hermeneutical and doctrinal problem as I see it. Rethinking how one reads the Bible and what one even expects from it may be a key for moving Evangelicals toward a more meaningful synthesis.

I realize that not everyone may be convinced of the pressing nature of the problem caused by evolution for Evangelical views of the Bible. Most Evangelicals, however, at least in my experience, sense the seriousness of the hermeneutical, theological, and doctrinal issues raised by evolution and are not content to keep the Bible at arm's length. They have come to this realization not because they have a weak view of the Bible. Rather, they have come to accept as compelling the findings of several generations of scientific inquiry. Some may have significant first-hand experience with the scientific details of this theory, while others may have a less sophisticated grasp of the data, but who nevertheless accept it. Members of this latter group accept evolutionary theory either because they trust the work of the scientific community in general, or because they may trust those scientists who have made peace with their scientific work and their Christian faith. Regardless of how they come to their views of evolution, they know there is a problem and are looking for ways to bring together their faith and their intellect.

## The Issue is "Christianity and Evolution," not "Science and Faith"

There is a vast amount of literature that addresses how science and faith can and should be partners rather than enemies. Many different angles are taken to tackle this problem, but the basic compatibility of science and faith is a view shared by scientists and theologians across the ideological spectrum.<sup>1</sup> I agree with this basic position, but my perspective is that of a biblical scholar. What is not always addressed in the science/faith discussion is the more focused, and I feel ultimately more important and problematic, issue of biblical interpretation. This is particularly important when the topic is evolution. There, "science and faith" is not really the issue. Rather, evolution raises problems for how Christians have normally understood pivotal sections of the Bible. In other words, the problem for many Christians is "If evolution is true, what do I do with my Bible?"<sup>2</sup> The hermeneutical issue concerns not only the creation stories in Genesis 1-3, but more acutely Paul's handling of Adam in Romans 5:12-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 44-49. The dilemma is almost self-evident, and it is not long before these passages are brought into the discussion.

The science vs. religion question, although relevant, does not address the true heart of the hermeneutical and doctrinal problem and misses why significant tensions continue to exist. Other scientific issues, like the heliocentric solar system or age of the universe, are things that most Christians have more or less reconciled to the Bible's geocentric and "young earth" view.<sup>3</sup> Most Christians understand that, even though the Bible assumes a certain way of looking at the cosmos, from a *scientific* point of view the Bible is *wrong*. And that is perfectly fine. The conclusion most draw is not that the Bible falls short of being a sacred

text, but that it speaks in an ancient idiom, and so cannot be expected to speak to modern scientific matters. Problem solved.

When it comes to evolution, however, this “science and faith” rapprochement is not adequate. Evolution strikes at issues that are of central importance to anyone whose Christian faith involves a serious accounting of the Bible. Evolution poses that humanity is not the product of a special creative act by God, but of a process that began with the simplest of one-cell life forms and over billions of years developed into the vast array of life on this planet—plants, reptiles, fish, mammals, etc., and, of course, humanity. These humans also happen to share a common ancestry with primates. One can certainly posit God’s role in initiating and providentially guiding such a process, but that is not the point here. The tension evolution creates with the Bible is far more significant than heliocentricity or the age of the universe, and the reasons are well known to anyone who has thought about this issue.

To cut to the chase, if evolution is correct, one can no longer accept in any true sense of the word “historical” the instantaneous and special creation of humanity out of dust as described in Genesis. Some might hypothesize that there is a point in the evolutionary chain where humanity was elevated to the status of image bearer of God (Genesis 1:26), and so Bible and science are minimally reconciled. That may very well be true, but the tension still exists, since the proposed scenario is *ad hoc* and still light years from what the biblical writers assume. For them, the first human, Adam, was created from a non-living substance, dust. He had no living ancestors to which he was genetically related.

Attempts to reconcile Genesis and evolution are admirable, but invariably lead to serious adjustments in the biblical story. It seems that anyone even minimally interested in having science and Genesis talk to each other need to make some sort of decision—often on the fly—about how Genesis should be read differently. And those decisions, at the end of the day, move us away from a strictly literal/historical reading of Genesis toward something else, which we may call “symbolic” or “metaphorical.” In a nutshell, the issue before us is “How non-literally should we—can we—read Genesis? What are the parameters that the Christian faith sets for answering this question?”

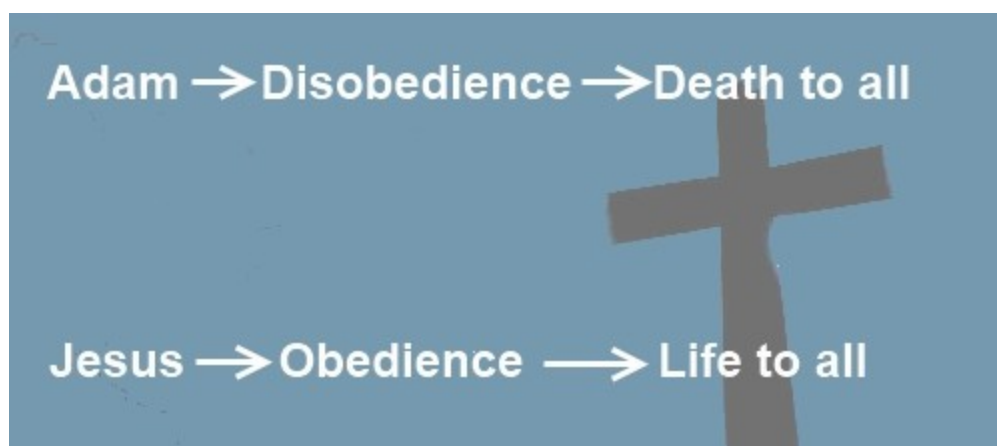
Perhaps the area where these questions are most pressing concerns the origin of death and the fall. Is Genesis to be taken literally here or are these to be understood symbolically? “How far can we go” and still call it “Christian?” The origin of death was already an issue well before Darwin came on the scene. Geologists in the eighteenth century came to the conclusion that the earth is many millions of years old, a scenario not envisioned in Genesis.<sup>4</sup> One reason for arriving at this conclusion was the fossil record, which shows that, many millions of years before the first humans came on the scene, life forms *died* and left their mark, quite literally, in earth and mud. The traditional Christian understanding of *death entering the world* through Adam’s disobedience (based on readings of Genesis 3:19 and Romans 5:12) is in some tension with the fossil record. Did Adam’s disobedience cause death or did it not? True, it is possible to understand Genesis 3:19 as referring only to human death, so the record of non-human death is irrelevant, but this reading seems *ad hoc*. Moreover, there is still the hominid fossil record that extends back much further than the chronology of Genesis allows. At what point does death count? There are answers offered to these and other related questions, and we should keep our minds open to various possibilities. The point, however, is that *any* such solution requires some hermeneutical adjustment of reading Genesis or Paul, whether or not that adjustment is explicit or implicit.

It does indeed take a lot effort to harmonize a literal reading of Genesis and the fossil record, but that effort is regularly expended because the stakes are seen to be so high—higher than with heliocentricity and the age of the universe. For many, the Gospel itself is under threat. If the fundamental

historical value of Genesis is called into question, and if therefore there was no first pair created by God and who disobeyed and “fell”—as the argument goes—you are not far from questioning how Jesus’ crucifixion can really be about reversing a fall that never happened. It is easy to see how some Christians continue to insist on some sort of literal/historical interpretation of Genesis even while being comfortable with non-literal readings of Scripture elsewhere, even in sections of Genesis in close proximity to the creation story (Flood and Tower of Babel). As we can see, the issue before us is not whether science and religion *in general* can be reconciled but evolution and one religion, Christianity, *specifically*.

With respect to an issue like heliocentricity, most agree that the biblical authors were only expressing their *assumptions* about the nature of the cosmos. But with the biblical account of the origin of humanity, we seem to be dealing not with assumptions but with *biblical teachings* that have formed the foundation of the Christian faith, stemming from no one other than the Apostle Paul. If Genesis were the only portion of the Christian Bible that referred to the story of the creation of Adam and Eve, the path to reconciliation with evolutionary theory might not be as formidable. But Christians have to reckon not only with Genesis but with Paul. Here we come to the heart of the matter, what I believe is the ultimate source of the dis-ease for Christians who are seeking a synthesis between the Bible and modern thought.

After a virtual scriptural silence on the subject in the intervening centuries from Genesis on,<sup>5</sup> Paul suddenly appeals to Adam and holds him side-by-side with Jesus (Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15). Paul draws an analogy between them, arguing that Adam’s disobedience has universal and absolute significance. Just as the first Adam introduced sin and death to all humanity through his disobedience in the garden, now the second Adam (Jesus) introduces life through his obedience on the cross. The first Adam is a “pattern” for the second (Romans 5:14), and Paul’s point looks straightforward enough.<sup>6</sup>



As the argument goes, for the analogy to have any force, the first Adam must be every bit as much an *actual* historical figure (not metaphorical, symbolic, mythical, etc.) as the second. The implications can be quickly grasped. Evolution demands that the special creation of the first Adam as described in the Bible is not literally historical. Paul, however, seems to require it. What purpose does the obedience of the second Adam have if not to counter the actual disobedience of the first Adam? If there really was no first Adam, from whom every human is descended, then there is no fall. If there is no fall, there is no true inescapably sinful condition where we are “dead” in sin (e.g., Ephesians 2:1ff.; Colossians 2:13). If we are not dead in

sin, there is no need for a Savior. Christianity, for those who track with this line of thinking, seems to need the Adam story to be an essentially accurate literal/historical account of human origins. Hence, evolution can be acceptable in some a limited sense (micro-evolution), but when it comes to the origin of humanity (macro-evolution), it is completely out of bounds, for, if macro-evolution is true, then Christianity is false. The latter is unthinkable, therefore the former must be judged incorrect, regardless of how eager most Christians are to accept most any other scientifically supported theories about other natural phenomena. This is a conclusion drawn not simply by isolationist Fundamentalists, but by thoughtful, well-versed Christians.

With this in mind, we can see that the ultimate issue for many<sup>7</sup> Evangelicals is very specific. Which is right—what evolution tells us about human origins or what Paul tells us about Genesis? Deep Christian commitments lead one to read Paul with utmost seriousness, but scientific sensibilities do not allow one to dismiss evolution. This is the conundrum, and, as I see it, there are essentially four options before us:

- 1. *Accept evolution as valid and embodying tremendous explanatory power, and reject Christianity on the whole as untenable;***
- 2. *Develop a true scientific model, open to peer review, that supplies Christian theology with a first pair of some sort and so reconcile Christianity and evolution;***
- 3. *Rethink the biblical origin story and related passages so as to synthesize Christianity with scientific reality;***
- 4. *Accept Paul's understanding of human origins as scientifically accurate and reject evolution.***

The second option is somewhat problematic. If one understands the first human pair of Genesis, not on scientific grounds but on theological grounds, as, for example, (1) the progenitors of Israel (not all of humanity) or (2) the first hominids imbued with the image of God (and hence “created”), the impasse with evolution is lessened significantly. Yet, one must admit that this is an *ad hoc* move to “find an Adam” somewhere on the evolutionary process. It also disrupts significantly Paul’s logic in Romans 5:12-21, where Adam is neither a progenitor of Israel nor a first pair chosen among other hominids to bear the image of God. For Paul, Adam certainly seems to be the first person created from dust, and Eve was formed from him. There are certainly ways of reconciling evolution and a general notion of a first pair of some sort, but these explanations are driven by perceived theological needs rather than the kind of evidence that raised evolution as a problem to be reckoned with. One can certainly accept a hypothetical first pair in an effort to salvage Christian theology, as long as we are very clear that that is exactly what we are doing: “creating” an Adam without scientific support. This second option maintains some sort of Adam, but, I feel, at the expense of inadequately engaging the hermeneutical issues involved in understanding both Genesis and Paul. Ironically, such an *ad hoc* approach leads to so many qualifications of the biblical portrait of origins as to defeat the purpose.<sup>8</sup>

The fourth option is untenable as members of the human race in the twenty-first century. Ignoring the scientific and archaeological evidence is not an option.

The first option, rejecting Christianity, is more viable than the fourth and does not suffer from the *ad hoc* posture of the second, but it is certainly not the necessary one. Another option remains, the third listed above: synthesis. In my opinion, it is with this third option that our intellectual energies are most profitably expended, and that should be the focus of future theological and hermeneutical work.



It is important to note that the other three options all share an assumption about the Bible, although they address it differently. They assume that it is proper and necessary to bring the Bible's presentation of physical reality into some conversation with contemporary scientific perspectives. The fact that Genesis and science are incompatible explanations of the physical world, therefore, explains why some reject faith (option one), why others work hard to reconcile the two (option two), and why others simply reject the science (option four). It is the third option that attempts a true synthesis that *respects* the two elements by asking what they are each uniquely prepared to deliver. In effect, the issue before us is to explore and then articulate convincingly what the biblical part of that equation is prepared to deliver. This is a fundamental question that is not always raised in this debate, and it moves beyond piecemeal attempts to "reconcile" science and faith. It calls for a reorientation of what informed readers of the Bible expect from Genesis or Paul on the question of origins.

Such a reorientation is needed. It is important (1) to explore fresh ways for how evolution and a biblically informed faith can be in conversation with each other rather than rejecting, forcing them together artificially, or worse—keeping the two at a safe distance from each other, a path that often leads to unbearable cognitive dissonance; (2) to investigate how other Christian traditions, that do not share Evangelical convictions, have already addressed this issue so we can learn and, if necessary, rethink those theological convictions.<sup>9</sup>

## Sketching the Nature of the Hermeneutical Reorientation

There are three areas that must ultimately be addressed in order to foster an Evangelical hermeneutical reorientation. The first concerns Genesis, the second concerns Paul, and the third concerns what the Bible as a whole is, i.e., what is often referred to as Doctrine of Scripture.

*What Is Genesis?* The conversation between evolution and Christianity does not just depend on what one thinks of evolution, but of the Bible, and the place to start is Genesis. Too often one's view of Genesis is seen as a non-debatable starting point and science needs to be adjusted to it. But what if our understanding of Genesis is actually contributing to the problem?

A way to encourage a reorientation toward Genesis is to become familiar with two important issues that have come to be pillars of contemporary Old Testament scholarship. These issues came to a head in the nineteenth century and have succeeded in reorienting the kinds of assumptions that informed readers make about Genesis, namely: *when* was Genesis written and *how* would it have been understood by the ancient Israelites. Briefly stated, not only Genesis but the Pentateuch—as well as most of the Old Testament—received their final, canonical form sometime during or after Israel's exile to Babylon. Put differently, much of the Hebrew Bible is a *response to Israel's national crisis* and served as a vehicle for national self-definition: Who are we? Are we still Israelites? How are we still connected to our past as the people of Yahweh? Have we been rejected? These were deeply religious and pressing questions at the time. Genesis, as much as any other portion of the Old Testament, is a statement of Israel's *self-identity* as a people under the rule of Yahweh but who had experienced God's rejection in Babylon. Walter Brueggemann puts it well:

It is now increasingly agreed that *the Old Testament in its final form is a product of and response to the Babylonian Exile*. This premise needs to be stated more precisely. The Torah (Pentateuch) was likely completed in response to the exile, and the subsequent formation of the prophetic corpus and the

“writings” [i.e., poetic and wisdom texts] as bodies of religious literature (canon) is to be understood as a product of Second Temple Judaism [=postexilic period]. This suggests that by their intention, these materials are...an intentional and coherent response to a particular circumstance of crisis....Whatever older materials may have been utilized (and the use of old materials can hardly be doubted), the exilic and/or postexilic location of the final form of the text suggests that the Old Testament materials, understood normatively, are to be taken precisely in an acute crisis of displacement, when old certitudes—sociopolitical as well as theological—had failed.<sup>10</sup>

This is not to say Genesis was written from scratch after the exile. In fact, Genesis is certainly made up of older, traditional material likely going back hundreds of years. But in the form in which we have it, it functions to speak to how Israel sees herself as God’s people after the exile. In other words, it is not an “objective account of origins,” but an encultured declaration of faith.

The postexilic setting of the Pentateuch as a whole came to be generally accepted by the time we get to the nineteenth century. During that time, another factor came to light that likewise affected how Genesis should be read. The burgeoning discipline of archaeology introduced texts and artifacts from the ancient Near Eastern world, Israel’s neighbors and predecessors. These findings revealed something of the intellectual world in which the Bible was written. This provided a basis for *comparison and contrast* between Israel and the surrounding nations. Perhaps the best known of these is the discovery of a Babylonian creation story known to us as *Enuma Elish*. It is hard to overstate the immediate and lasting impact this text has had on how people have come to understand Genesis 1. However distinct Genesis 1 and *Enuma Elish* were from each other in some important respects, it was quickly seen that they were also disturbingly similar in how they described the creation of the world. This raised rather obvious questions about the uniqueness of Genesis as revelation from God, as well as its value as an historical document. To put it bluntly, however much the stories of the early chapters of Genesis may have looked fanciful to modern readers beforehand, there was now concrete evidence that Genesis was somehow connected to the mythologies of other ancient peoples.

What these extra-biblical creation stories highlight for us is how very much at home Genesis is in the ancient world—it speaks their language, “breathes the air” of the time. It is certainly not oriented to modern questions of origins, but ancient ones. And those questions were not primarily abstract questions of universal scientific interest, but very practical questions of how we—the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Israelites (among others) came to be. It is about “us” and our place in the world. To expect Genesis to answer our questions is to ignore its ancient setting and purpose—which is to say, it is to not truly read Genesis. Much has happened over the last 200 years (roughly) that have affected how Genesis should be read. Understanding something of these developments will help us see the kinds of questions Genesis is prepared to answer—and conversely, not answer.

## How Do We Understand Paul?

The central issue for Christians is Paul’s use of the Adam typology, particularly in Romans 5 and in 1 Corinthians 15 as well. As mentioned above, the analogy seems to rest on the unquestioned historical nature of both Adam and Jesus, and if one of those figures is deemed unhistorical, the entire analogy falls apart, and therefore the Gospel. But Paul’s understanding of Adam is not a simple matter of proof-texting the “plain meaning” of a few verses in Paul’s letters. How Paul understands Adam must be seen in the

context of other factors that are not always considered in the context of the evolution debate. For example,

(1) How does Paul's view of Adam square with the Old Testament in general and Genesis in particular? Does either say or imply that every human is dead in sin by inheriting the guilt of the first human, as many Evangelicals understand Paul to be saying? What is the "fall" in Genesis? Does the Old Testament teach or assume that either humanity in general or Israel in particular are slaves to sin?

(2) How does Paul's interpretation of the Adam story square with how he uses the Old Testament in general? Does Paul typically handle the Old Testament literally or more creatively? How much of Paul's handling of Genesis or any portion of the Old Testament affected by his Second Temple Jewish environment? How does Paul's Greco-Roman context affect how he understands things like the cosmos, biology, and anthropology?

(3) As obvious as it may seem, what exactly is Paul getting at in Romans and 1 Corinthians? What is the theological logic of the Jesus/Adam parallel specifically? What is Paul's purpose in the theological logic of those letters generally for appealing to Adam the way he does? How does Adam function theologically in these two correspondences?

All of these questions have been or are being addressed by biblical scholars, thus even giving a glimpse of the state of the discussion would take us far beyond the purposes of this essay (and the allotted space). It is enough to know that these questions are not obscurantist or rebellious, but fully legitimate and important in view of the issue before us. The bottom line is that Paul's use of the Adam typology is not a straightforward matter, and his ancient assumptions of human origins cannot be expected to direct or influence scientific models of human origins.

## What is the Bible and what does it mean to read it well?

This is perhaps the most important issue of the three, for thinking differently about the nature of the Bible and what it means to read it will allow greater flexibility in how Evangelicals address Genesis and Paul.

To be sure, the biblical view of human origins reflects "ancient science," but it is not enough merely to say so and press on, with a quaint nod or an embarrassed shuffling of the feet. The truth is deeper and more significant than that and touches upon the very nature of the Christian faith. It is important for future generations of Christians, now more than ever, to have a view of the Bible where its rootedness in ancient ways of thinking is a *theological positive*. It is not a problem to be overcome. It shows us the glory of God. One way theologians have expressed the theological potency of the Bible's ancient feel has been to draw an analogy between the person of Christ and Scripture.<sup>11</sup> Although no analogy is ever complete, fully consistent, or without other problems, they serve a valuable role in offering creative intellectual models for addressing difficult concepts. With that in mind, Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck puts the matter succinctly. He writes that a Doctrine of Scripture,

is the working out and application of the central fact of revelation: the incarnation of the Word. The Word (logos) has become flesh (sarx), and the word has become Scripture; *these two facts do not only run parallel but are most intimately connected*. Christ became flesh, a servant, without form or comeliness, the most despised of human beings; he descended to the nethermost parts of the earth

and became obedient even to death on the cross. So also the word, the revelation of God, entered the world of creatureliness, the life and history of humanity, in all the human forms of dream and vision, of investigation and reflection, *right down into that which is humanly weak and despised and ignoble....* All this took place in order that the excellence of the power...of Scripture, may be God's and not ours.<sup>12</sup>

Bavinck, here and elsewhere,<sup>13</sup> is certainly enthusiastic to draw a vital connection between the nature of the Bible and Christ's incarnation and to highlight the positive theological value of Scripture's "state of humiliation," so to speak. There is a reason why Scripture looks the way it does, with all its bumps and bruises, peaks and valleys, gaps and gashes—it is to exalt *God's* power, not ours. This accent on the Bible's humanity should not be misunderstood as a failure to give the divine authorship of Scripture its due place—this is a common yet regrettable mistake among Fundamentalists and some Evangelicals. Rather, to accent the notion that Scripture reflects the ancient contexts in which it was written is to proclaim as good and powerful what that divine author has actually, by his wisdom, produced. The status of Scripture as God's word is not minimized, but actually upheld precisely *by* Scripture's humiliation.

For Bavinck, the "creatureliness" of Scripture is not an obstacle to be overcome, but the very means by which Scriptures can be truly seen as God's word. To put it another way, Scripture's "divinity" can *only* be seen *because* of its humanity—God's chosen means of communication—not by looking past it. And it is not just humanity as a safe theoretical construct. It is a humanity that is "weak and despised and ignoble." *That* is what points us to the divine, just as Christ does in his state of humiliation. To marginalize, or minimize, or somehow get behind the Bible's "creatureliness" to the "real" word of God is, for Bavinck, to strip God of his glory.

In a more popular vein, C. S. Lewis addresses this same issue in his preface to J. B. Phillips's translation of the New Testament letters into contemporary English. Although the topic here is translation, Lewis's defense of Phillips is clearly relevant for our topic.<sup>14</sup> Lewis observes that the Greek style of the New Testament betrays writers for whom Greek was not a language at their full command. He writes:

Does this shock us? It ought not to, except as the Incarnation itself ought to shock us. The same divine humility which decreed that God should become a baby in a peasant-woman's breast, and later an arrested field-preacher in the hands of the Roman police, decreed also that He should be preached in a vulgar, prosaic and unliterary language. If you can stomach the one, you can stomach the other. The Incarnation is in that sense an irreverent doctrine: Christianity, in that sense, an incurably irreverent religion. When we expect that it should have come before the World in all the beauty that we now feel in the Authorized Version we are as wide of the mark as the Jews were in expecting that the Messiah would come as an earthly King. The real sanctity, the real beauty and sublimity of the New Testament (as of Christ's life) are of a different sort: miles deeper and *further in*.<sup>15</sup>

Lewis's observation is marked with a rhetorical flourish many admire, and he echoes what we see in Bavinck. Neither Jesus nor Scripture are quite what we might have expected. And it is precisely that fact that drives us to see a more real sanctity, a more real beauty, and a more real sublimity in *both*. Again, as Bavinck put it, it is through Scripture's, and Christ's, ignobility that the *power* of God is exalted.



The theological point made by Bavinck and Lewis should be applied to the evolution issue. Might it be that it is in the very offense of the Bible looking so “ancient,” getting is so “wrong,” that we really see God’s hand at work? Could it be that we see God’s superintendence of the Gospel itself, not despite the “messiness” of the Bible, but precisely in it? Might it be that we see God’s hand at work, not by a simple and brief collection of things to believe or not believe (a doctrinal statement or the like)—something that could be more easily controlled and transmitted through the centuries—but by seeing the lengths to which he has gone to enter the human drama, with all the risk that entails?

The state of scientific knowledge at this moment in history is driving us to ask questions such as these. The challenges presented to Christianity by the various scientific disciplines, most formidably those that pertain to evolutionary theory, cannot be swept aside with the wave of a doctrinal hand. They are here to stay, and we must decide whether to address them and so make adjustments to our understanding of the Bible, or to declare that no force in heaven, on earth, or below the earth can affect what we already know to be the case. That is our choice, and this essay is written for those who adopt the former point of view.

## Notes

1. This point is made most recently in several essays in Ronald L. Numbers, ed., *Galileo Goes to Jail: And Other Myths about Science and Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).
2. Recently, Denis O. Lamoureux has brought a deliberate hermeneutical dimension to this discussion in his *Evolutionary Creation: A Christian Approach to Evolution* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008) and in his popular treatment *I Love Jesus and I Accept Evolution* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009). Lamoureux advocates an “incarnational” approach to biblical interpretation, whereby the thoroughly encultured nature of Scripture is understood as a necessary element of inspiration rather than obscuring it (*Evolutionary Creation*, 169-76). My own work expresses the matter similarly (*Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005]).
3. I say “most” because, amazingly, there are fringe groups that do not seem to have caught on yet. Yes, there is a “flat earth society.” “Deprogramming the masses since 1547” ([http://www.alaska.net/~clund/e\\_djublonskopf/Flatearthsociety.htm](http://www.alaska.net/~clund/e_djublonskopf/Flatearthsociety.htm)).
4. See the recent comprehensive and authoritative treatment, Davis A. Young and Ralph F. Stearley, *Rocks and Time: Geological Evidence for the Age of the Earth* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008). Dave Young.
5. After Genesis 5:3, Adam is mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament only in the genealogy in 1 Chronicles 1:1. An “adam” is mentioned in Joshua 3:16 and Hosea 6:7, but this is a place name in Joshua and almost certainly in Hosea, too (or perhaps a reference to humanity as a whole, but certainly not to the Adam of Genesis). This is further complicated by the fact that the Hebrew word ‘adam can refer to an individual by that name or to humanity in general. In the New Testament, Adam appears in two genealogical contexts, Luke 3:38 and Jude 14. The only place in the Bible, other than Genesis 2-5, where Adam is of any theological importance is Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15, mentioned here, and 1 Timothy

2:13, where Paul is addressing the role of women in church matters. The importance Paul places on Adam relative to the apparent lack of importance elsewhere, especially in the Old Testament, seems like a matter worth considering seriously, which we will do in a later section of this paper. Also, Eve is not mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament, and only in two polemical passages in the New Testament (2 Corinthians 11:3 and 1 Timothy 2:13).

6. In Romans 5:18, Paul says that Jesus' act of obedience brought "life for all," although in vv. 15 and 19 it is "many." I don't consider this a problem. To attribute life to "all" as a result of Jesus' death and resurrection hardly makes Paul a universalist. It is just a matter of maintaining the force of the analogy. The fact that Paul twice switches to "many" seems to be a clear indication that he knew exactly what he was doing, and that he himself realized the analogy is not perfect.

7. I want to be clear that this is certainly not the case for *all* Evangelicals—although even the fluidity of the term "Evangelical" in recent years counsels caution in how such judgments are made. The difficulty is that others who consider themselves within a general Evangelical paradigm have already made hermeneutical adjustments that, for other Evangelicals, puts them outside of "Evangelicalism" in any traditional sense of the word, e.g. as defined by the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy and the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics. This is because hermeneutical issues, and their doctrinal implications, are part of Evangelicalism's *raison d'être*. A meaningful synthesis between evolution and Evangelicalism will require the latter to make hermeneutical adjustments that have been resisted for much of its history, and still exist today.

8. Readers interested in a balanced and popular treatment of this issue can see Denis Alexander, *Creation or Evolution: Do We Have to Choose?* (Oxford: Monarch, 2008).

9. Without expanding on this point too much, it seems that a fair degree of Evangelical difficulties with evolution and other areas of science is a sociological boundary issue. Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism were born out of conflict and so the protection of borders often surfaces as a prime objective. To boot, although much of Evangelicalism's doctrinal roots are intellectually and exegetically engaged, they are so within pre-modern (i.e., post-Reformational) paradigms. When intellectual categories shifted, it was not always easy to rethink doctrinal commitments when those commitments were tied to earlier intellectual paradigms. Other Christian traditions have not had the same sociological history as Evangelicals have, and the latter might very well learn from the former. For a succinct summary of the history of the current Evangelical problem, see Mark Noll, "Evangelicals, Creation, and Scripture: An Overview," n.p. [cited 10 March 2010]. Online [http://biologos.org/uploads/projects/Noll\\_scholarly\\_essay.pdf](http://biologos.org/uploads/projects/Noll_scholarly_essay.pdf).

10. W. Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 74-75.

11. The implications of this analogy is one I attempt to explicate in my *Inspiration and Incarnation*. I address various nuances of this analogy, including its shortcomings, at <http://peterennsonline.com/2009/09/13/fleshing-out-an-incarnational-model-of-the-bible/>. Also, some of my thoughts here are fleshed out more

fully in “Preliminary Observations on an Incarnational Model of Scripture: Its Viability and Usefulness,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 42/2 (2007): 219-36.

12. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Volume 1: Prolegomena* (trans. J. Vriend; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003) 434–35; my emphasis.

13. “[T]he organic nature of Scripture...implies the idea that the Holy Spirit, in the inscripturation of the word of God, did not spurn anything human to serve as an organ of the divine. The revelation of God is not abstractly supernatural but has entered into the human fabric, into persons and states of beings, into forms and usages, into history and life. It does not fly high above us but descends into our situation; it has become flesh and blood, like us in all things except sin. Divine revelation is now an ineradicable constituent of this cosmos in which we live and, effecting renewal and restoration, continues its operation. *The human has become an instrument of the divine*; the natural has become a revelation of the supernatural; the visible has become a sign and seal of the invisible. In the process of inspiration, use has been made of all the gifts and forces resident in human nature” (*Reformed Dogmatics* 1.442–43; my emphasis).

14. I should add that Lewis’s views on Scripture are hardly systematic and so somewhat difficult to discern. He certainly was quite in touch with the many difficulties inherent in a literalistic view of inerrancy, for example, but “The issue simply did not assume for him the monumental importance it currently receives in religious circles” (Michael J. Christensen, *C. S. Lewis on Scripture: His Thoughts on the Nature of Biblical Inspiration, the Role of Revelation and the Question of Inerrancy* [Waco: Word, 1979], 23).

15. C. S. Lewis, “Introduction” to J. B. Phillips, *Letters to Young Churches: A Translation of the New Testament Epistles* (New York: Macmillan, 1953), vii-viii.