

Ephesians 4:7-16: Moving the Science/Faith Discussion Forward

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In my earlier essay, we looked at the importance of Christian unity in the science/faith discussion on the basis of Ephesians 4:1-6. In this essay, we will be looking at what may be called “front edge” areas for forward motion in ongoing healthy dialogue in the field of science and Christian theology, areas which are specifically theological in nature. These are important issues around which fruitful dialogue may occur to take the discussion forward.

Ephesians 4:7-16

7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. 8 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people."

9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) 11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

I offer first three comments on this text before turning to nine specific issues directly relevant for discussing some “front edge” issues.

(i) **But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it (v. 7):**

Christian unity is a unity with diversity, not uniformity: it involves valuing the particularity of the person-in-community, the “each” in the community, the one in the many, especially with respect to their giftedness and contribution to the whole.

For those within this dialogue (like myself) who are plagued with self-doubt and wonder what they can possibly contribute in such august intellectual company, and in the struggles of often lonely and discouraging research and scholarship on these issues, Paul’s words about the worth and dignity of the charisms each has been uniquely given are especially important. Each has been given these charisms by *Christ* according to this passage but all passages taken together inform us that each of the persons of the Holy Trinity has, in a perichoretic fashion, been engaged in this act, such is their value. To say nothing of the cost of those gifts, which was Christ’s descent to earth to accomplish redemption, or the significance of those gifts—they signify the triumph of his ascension.

That triumph is described in a way that is most apt for the subject of scientific pursuit: *in order to fill the whole universe*. Without elaborating on all that this phrase may mean, I wish to assert that it re-establishes a conviction within a theology of creation that should unite us all—that creation is good, and that matter matters, and that the scope of the reconciling and resurrection ministry of Christ was all of

creation, and that its intent was not to take us out of creation, but to reaffirm creation, and to equip us to caringly reign or steward creation with that exalted last Adam!

For those alternatively, who are overly confident that they have all the answers and need no dialogue with others, may I exhort you to value the gift of the “each”—not just you, but others. No person defined Christologically and Trinitarian-ly is self-sufficient, but rather deeply present to the other and dependent on the other for being and for growing into the fullness of truth.

(ii) It is a unity that has the capacity to mature (vv. 13-16):

Verses 13-16 in particular guide us in understanding the goal of the efforts of each in their charisms and contributions.

The oneness of a baby is real enough but it is not the mature oneness of the grown man or woman. The need for maturity of thought for Evangelicals in the area of science and faith, and indeed any area of intellectual pursuit, has been made glaringly obvious to us by folks like Mark Noll in *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*.

The journey towards intellectual and character formation of the whole people of God must be a common passion for all of us in this dialogue. The tendency to cast out those who are arguing within the Tradition of orthodox faith comes far too readily in Evangelicalism. Karl Barth was fond of saying that church unity is not so much created as it is discovered.¹ What he meant by “discovered” was by means of the sometimes long and arduous process of research to clarify points of dissonance and points of consonance. This process of building towards a more mature unity is what is required whenever the church encounters new reality.

While there are sad chapters in ecclesial history when parties reacted with excommunications, and worse, about the likes of whether the sun revolved around the earth, or *vice versa*, in our “more mature” age of the church’s history, hopefully we can be different. The issues are always those of biblical hermeneutics and what in new science is trustworthy.

The church does itself no favors though when it buries its proverbial head in the sand when scientific evidence arises. It must be critical of scientism and of the presuppositions of science, yes. But it must equally be critical of its own enculturations and presuppositions with respect to biblical hermeneutics that have often proved to be less than stellar in the past.

This growth towards maturity in the area of the science of origins and Christian faith is needed not only because this is what God intends for his people, but because the mission of that people is severely hampered by biblical illiteracy and intellectual dwarfism. I will never forget the day when, unwisely and uncharacteristically, I questioned a grade I received from J. I. Packer on a paper on Jonathan Edwards and the Trinity (an area in which I have since done some writing). He responded with a well-crafted letter in which he referred to my perspective as “naïve and picayune.”

Once I looked up the latter word in the dictionary to discover what it meant (“of little value or account”), I took the lesson to heart. I sometimes wish that all our research and writing in the science/theology of origins might be subject to similar rigor and scrutiny!

(iii) It is a unity accomplished by the search for truth and speaking it to one another in love (v. 15):

The “love” emphasis I have already referred to. It is the truth part I wish to emphasize here. Paul uses an interesting expression here for “speaking the truth.” It is sometimes expressed as “truthing” in love.

I am going to make an interpretive move here that may seem more like a leap, but it is a leap I think worth taking. When Paul asks the community to speak the truth in love to each other, and particular its gifted leaders of a fivefold kind, he is not just asking them to repeat and reiterate the gospel truths of the creed he has outlined in vv. 4-6. I am sure he must have anticipated the development of truth as the church engaged with new cultures and new facts and as it discovered its canon in the years ahead of him.

Although I cannot demonstrate that from this text alone, I suggest that the whole of the New Testament (NT) revelation and church history has confirmed what I am saying. The people of God were to pursue second order truth grounded in first order confessional truth expressed in the creeds. And they were to be a community in dialogue as each spoke to one another in order to refine second order truths in order to mutually edify the other. This is the task of Christian theologians including those with a particular interest in the first of God's two books, that of creation.

Now we look at the nine specific nodal points for taking the theology of origins forward. I am fully aware that I will in this section begin to show where my own leanings are in the dialogue. I therefore ask that these are received only as part of the dialogue, and not because I think I have now found new light and irrevocable solutions. My musings here will be more questions than answers.

1. The issue of interplay: degrees of freedom of created matter.

As Christians we reject the theory of total randomness and nihilism. We affirm nevertheless that God is distinct from creation and that creation and created humans have some degree of agency.

The doctrine of the Trinity and the incarnation is crucial to the notion of this agency. We make an important distinction between the eternal generation of God the Son out of the essence of the Father, and the creation of the universe in accordance with the will of God, at a distinct point or at points in time. We also note the biblical emphasis on the Son as the agent of God in creation as the one foreordained to participate in humanity at the incarnation. There is thus an ontological remove between God and creation.

At the same time, Christian tradition is fraught with emphasis on the dependency of creation on God and even a doctrine of the participation of all created things in God's life. Certainly, creation has no existence apart from God. Calvin in his commentary on Genesis 2:2 ("and he rested on the seventh day") writes:

The question may not improperly be put, what kind of rest this was. For it is certain that inasmuch as God sustains the world by his power, governs it by his providence, cherishes and even propagates all creatures, he is constantly at work. Therefore that saying of Christ is true, that the Father and he himself had worked from the beginning hitherto, because, if God should but withdraw his hand a little, all things would immediately perish and dissolve into nothing, as is declared in Psalm 104:29. And indeed God is rightly acknowledged as the Creator of heaven and earth only whilst their perpetual preservation is ascribed to him. The solution of the difficulty is well known, that God ceased from all his work, when he desisted from the creation of new kinds of things.²

Is there some happy medium between the kind of control that ends up making God the efficient cause of evil, and the kind of freedom that leads to a nihilistic view of the universe that undergirds evolutionism (dysteleological evolution) as opposed to teleological evolution under the providence of God?

It would be naive to assume this is a new issue. There has been a dialogue that goes back centuries. On the one hand there is a stream of thought from Augustine onwards that may be articulated as a

participatory view of creation. This is grounded in the belief that correspondence between the Creator and the creation is analogical, not univocal. The doctrine of the *analogia entis* is at the heart of Catholic thought and a modification of it has been proposed within the Protestant tradition by Bonhoeffer and Barth, termed the *analogia relationis*. Both are agreed that creation is not stridently autonomous.

Much has been written in recent days about where Aquinas stood with respect to these issues. The traditional take on Aquinas is that he differentiated between truth accessible to all humanity even after the Fall, and truth that could be attained only by faith. Thus the existence of God and indeed all matters of science could be attained by reason whereas the truth of the Trinity and redemption could only be attained by faith.

The autonomy of natural reason was important to Aquinas. As Jamie Smith writes, “Neutral epistemic access to an autonomous metaphysics spawns a secular politics and natural morality that are both accessible and applicable to all.”³ The tendency, therefore, to separate faith and reason was also unfortunately present in the history of theology, especially that of Scholastic theology.

As Lesslie Newbigin wrote: “One can say, therefore, that what Augustine had held together Aquinas had put asunder. Faith is no longer *the way* to knowledge; it is one of two alternative ways: there are things that we can know by the use of reason, other things that we can know only by faith.”⁴ On this account, it is argued that it took Duns Scotus (1265/66-1308), a Scot from Duns (in the Scottish Borders of the High Middle Ages), and Bonaventure (1217-1274) to take theology out of this dichotomy.

Radical Orthodox theologians have revised this, suggesting that the closer relationship between faith and reason in Augustine is actually present in Aquinas. I am in agreement with Jamie Smith’s assessment that this is a re-creation of Aquinas in the image of Augustine. Aquinas is more Aristotelian than the neo-Platonic Augustine.

The point for our purposes here is that Augustine and Aquinas represent two slightly different views of the degrees of freedom in creation. Augustine very much emphasized the idea of the participation of creation in God; that is, that it has no existence apart from God, and that it is under the providence of God. Aquinas wished to emphasize the freedom of creation to be creation, for fear that the Platonic view appears to run the risk of being monistic or pantheistic. This must be very finely nuanced.

It is important in evaluating Aquinas to recognize that he did not believe in a graceless nature. Even nature was endowed with grace because creation is gift. He also did not, in his desire to maintain the integrity of creation, think of it as having a “brute autonomy” or a “seized autonomy” but rather a graced or gifted autonomy.

If Newbigin’s assessment that the Thomist proposal of two ways of knowing anticipated the separation of faith and reason in Modernity seems harsh, it should be said that the greater concern for Aquinas’s viewpoint is the failure to take sufficient notice of the influence of the Fall on reason as Romans 1 outlines this—the truth even of the existence of God is suppressed by fallen humans and their minds are darkened.

Smith has suggested that the idea of a secular realm, which is religiously neutral, is a myth. This affects how we view the conclusions even of science. I am not suggesting that non-Christians can’t do good science—their formal capacity for reason is extant after the Fall, as even Calvin would agree. Rather it is the prejudices that precede all experimentation and that govern metaphysical conclusions of scientific fact that urge us towards caution with respect to the meta-narratives of science.

It is not that we want to dismiss modernity and its amazing scientific accomplishments—no culture is ever thoroughly bad—but it is always a product partly of the image of God and party of the corruption or

misdirectedness of sin and idolatry. Autonomous reason is not only a myth, as post-modernity has shown, nor is it an innately neutral faculty. But as Smith has said, reason is a capacity for grasping the creation, but as with every other creational structure, it is corrupted by the Fall such that the structure is misdirected.

The myth of a *saeculum* in a neutral moral, religion-free arena needs to be exposed by the Christian church, including the realm of science. There is no such thing as secular knowledge or autonomous philosophy. However, let it be clear that our goal is not to return to the pre-modern era, nor to recover a new Constantinianism, but to redeem Modernity and what is called Postmodernity which is in fact sometimes more like Hypermodernity.

If Aquinas is not really to blame for the disconnection of faith and reason in the Enlightenment, who is? One school of thought has attributed this to Duns Scotus or even to Bonaventure before him (Heidegger developed this concept in more recent times).

These theologians proposed a univocity between the existence of God and His creation. The idea here is that the being in creation and the being in the “Being of beings,” or God, are of the same order. There is a fundamental concept of being that is truly predicable of everything that exists, including God. Some have argued that this construal attributes to the concept of “being” a notional significance higher than God, thereby threatening the transcendent uniqueness of the wholly Other God. It does, however, result in the attribution of a greater degree of freedom for creation than the concept of analogy and participation.

In practical terms, what an ontology of univocity assumes is that “the world can be properly understood in itself – that is, without reference to its transcendent origin.” A participatory ontology, by contrast, “understands transcendence as an essential feature of material reality.”⁵

Alternatively, as Loren Wilkinson points out, the Franciscan tradition originating with St. Frances of Assisi (1181-1226) himself, and Bonaventure offered a new kind of attention to the particulars of creation, as a seedbed for science. Their prodigy, Duns Scotus, a careful thinker dubbed the “subtle doctor,” offered a defense of the centrality of the will (voluntarism) in God’s creation, and challenged Aquinas by suggesting that both creation and the incarnation transcend reason and are evidence of “irrational love” or its extravagance.

Scotus, in affirming the univocity of being—that we can indeed speak univocally of God with respect to our being (God exists and we exist)—recognized the risk in the assertion that we don’t exist by participation and that our being is our own. The risk is that humans will take up their autonomy as independent of God. However, Scotus avers that from the beginning God had willed to assume the consequences by way of the cross. Thus creation was itself a kenotic act of God.

Whatever we think of Scotus, hero or villain, he is to be credited with an awareness of the irreducible uniqueness and particularity of things, that is, the “thisness” (*haeccitas*) of things, that encouraged the pursuit of science. His view also of the “the primacy of Christ”, of creation for Incarnation, not vice versa, has much to contribute towards a theodicy.

How is all this relevant to the science of origins?

First, the pursuit of human knowledge in all realms, including science, was intended to be carried out in relationship with God, with whole persons in participation with God using reason and all that makes for tacit knowing, in embodied ways.

Second, No Christian theologian scientist can avoid the notion of an *ex nihilo* creation of at least something, for it is this which distinguishes God and His creation. Whether it is the first sub-atomic particles or atom or the first cluster of atoms or molecules that formed the Big Bang or all of creation in a fiat

moment (Augustine, based on Ecclesiasticus 18:1 which he considered to be canonical), none can avoid the *ex nihilo* piece of creation.

However, after the creation of the first piece of matter it seems that creation is imparted some degree of freedom and some degree of participation in God. Or perhaps in the spirit of Karl Barth, the God who loves in freedom has granted to his creation freedom but it is a freedom found in his freedom. Creation acts in freedom as God acts in freedom, and in his acting in freedom, creation acts in freedom. This seems to preserve both the ideas of freedom and participation.

When does the creation of the first items of matter or pre-matter happen in the creation of the universe? And are there moments of divine intervention along the way?

The concept of irreducible complexity is sometimes invoked to determine when those moments might be. This refers to certain biological systems considered too complex to have evolved. Frankly, surely even the simplest hydrogen atom is irreducibly complex. Biologists may assume irreducibly complex systems, but theoretical chemists and physicists know of a complexity equally irreducible in one atom. I am not certain that I can invoke this principle into the discussion whenever there are gaps we cannot account for.

Furthermore, how do we account for the randomness of nature as evidenced by electron motion as predicted by the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, for example, or even genetic accidents that lead to abnormalities and cancer? One has to believe that the providence of God is such as to work through this randomness in the creation process, and that he is also at work to redeem it through the cross in ways we may not always fathom. A theology of providence must assume that God is not just involved in the gaps, but that he is always involved, yet in a manner that permits freedom for matter. This already anticipates the second major nexus for discussion.

2. The issue of intervention.

The assumption of those who invoke divine intervention (Intelligent Design (ID) advocates, progressive creationists) within a process of evolution must answer the question of where God is the rest of the time.

The God of the gaps approach must be assessed in light of the question of providence and freedom. It is not that intervention is counter to the historic creedal faith perspective. God clearly intervenes in resurrecting Jesus. It is also not that the idea of special creations of species is counter to the idea of creation, as all must assume *ex nihilo* creation of at least the first piece of matter. But it seems to me that the resurrection of Jesus is a very special case in fact profoundly related to the first creation. And all miracles are intended as signs or harbingers of the new creation, and therefore should not be invoked to justify these speciated special creations.

What will take this discussion forward is discussion of the nature of God and matter, and what the providence of God means. In a real sense, concordist evolutionary creationists (those who believe for example, that evolutionary creation gave rise to *homo sapiens*, but that a “coronation” event happened at some point to the one man, Adam, or the one community, Adam, in which God established humanity as being in his image, with all that this entailed – relationality, reason, co-creating rule) have quite a lot in common with people of the ID persuasion in and around this issue of intervention. There is much room for mutual listening and dialogue in this area.

3. The issue of the interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2

Of relevance here for ongoing progress in the dialogue is both the recent turn to the Fathers *and* the research of critical scholarship of Modernity.

Interestingly, Augustine recognizes that the interpretation of the creation story is extremely difficult, and remarks that we should be willing to change our mind about it as new information comes up. I think many Evangelicals are under the false impression that until the advent of modern geology in the nineteenth century, which proposed the concepts of an old earth and death before the appearance of man and the emergence of the theory of evolution around the same time, there was only one interpretation of Genesis 1—the literalistic twenty-four hour day view, and that all theologians believed in a literal flood which covered the whole earth.

This is simply not so, as study of Augustine will reveal. Augustine moved from an allegorical interpretation of Genesis 1 when he wrote his commentary on Genesis to a literal one in his late fifties just before he wrote *City of God*. As Davis Young has pointed out:

Given his strong commitment to literal interpretation, it is fascinating to recognize that the outcome bears absolutely no resemblance to modern literal interpretations. For example, he concludes that in Genesis 1 the terms "light," "day," and "morning" bear a spiritual, rather than physical, meaning. Yet for Augustine, spiritual light is just as literal as physical light, and the creation of spiritual light is just as much a historical event or fact as the creation of physical light. What is literal for one person may not be literal for others.⁶

It seems to me that the most important issue is not whether “literal” interpretation is correct. It is to ask within the commitment to normal interpretation what kind of texts we are reading.

The work of Iain Provan,⁷ John Walton, Bruce Waltke⁸ and Dan Harlow⁹ on Genesis must be taken into account here. As Provan often says, we Moderns tend to ask questions of Genesis 1 and 2 that it was never intended to answer.¹⁰ Walton, along with other Old Testament scholars, has opined that Genesis 1 should be seen as “a creation account focusing on the cosmos as a temple. It is describing the creation of the cosmic temple with all of its functions and with God dwelling in its midst.”¹¹ In light of this, Walton writes,

If the seven days refer to the seven days of cosmic temple inauguration, days that concern origins of functions not material, then the seven days and Genesis 1 as a whole have nothing to contribute to the discussion of the age of the earth...The point is not that the biblical text therefore supports an old earth, but simply that there is no biblical position on the age of the earth.¹²

It is crucial for us to understand what type of literature and what literary genre this chapter is, and to understand it in light of other ancient Near Eastern stories about the origin of the world and to recognize that most importantly this chapter is about theology, not chronology. It is important also to recognize that the point of this and other creation texts is not to present biology or cosmology consonant with the latest scientific findings of our age, but much more important theological issues.¹³

Walton continues: “The most respectful reading we can give to the text, the reading most faithful to the face value of the text—and the most ‘literal’ understanding, if you will—is the one that comes from their world, not ours.”¹⁴ This is actually not new. John Calvin in his commentary on Genesis already wrote

that Genesis 1 and 2 were written from the perspective of a Hebrew observer and were not to be considered as a modern scientific account. For example, here is Calvin’s comment on Genesis 1:16 (“the greater light”):

I have said, that Moses does not here subtly descant, as a philosopher, on the secrets of nature, as may be seen in these words. First, he assigns a place in the expanse of heaven to the planets and stars; but astronomers make a distinction of spheres, and, at the same time, teach that the fixed stars have their proper place in the firmament. Moses makes two great luminaries; but astronomers prove, by conclusive reasons that the star of Saturn, which on account of its great distance, appears the least of all, is greater than the moon. Here lies the difference; Moses wrote in a popular style things which without instruction, all ordinary persons, endued with common sense, are able to understand; but astronomers investigate with great labor whatever the sagacity of the human mind can comprehend. Nevertheless, this study is not to be reprobated, nor this science to be condemned, because some frantic persons are wont boldly to reject whatever is unknown to them. For astronomy is not only pleasant, but also very useful to be known: it cannot be denied that this art unfolds the admirable wisdom of God. Wherefore, as ingenious men are to be honored who have expended useful labor on this subject, so they who have leisure and capacity ought not to neglect this kind of exercise. Nor did Moses truly wish to withdraw us from this pursuit in omitting such things as are peculiar to the art; but because he was ordained a teacher as well of the unlearned and rude as of the learned, he could not otherwise fulfill his office than by descending to this grosser method of instruction. Had he spoken of things generally unknown, the uneducated might have pleaded in excuse that such subjects were beyond their capacity. Lastly since the Spirit of God here opens a common school for all, it is not surprising that he should chiefly choose those subjects which would be intelligible to all. If the astronomer inquires respecting the actual dimensions of the stars, he will find the moon to be less than Saturn; but this is something abstruse, for to the sight it appears differently. Moses, therefore, rather adapts his discourse to common usage. For since the Lord stretches forth, as it were, his hand to us in causing us to enjoy the brightness of the sun and moon, how great would be our ingratitude were we to close our eyes against our own experience? There is therefore no reason why janglers should deride the unskilfulness of Moses in making the moon the second luminary; for he does not call us up into heaven, he only proposes things which lie open before our eyes. Let the astronomers possess their more exalted knowledge; but, in the meantime, they who perceive by the moon the splendour of night, are convicted by its use of perverse ingratitude unless they acknowledge the beneficence of God.¹⁵

In sum, it is important to recognize that the primary intent of Genesis 1 is to show that the one true God is not the hapless victim of the chaotic forces of nature but is the sovereign Creator of all things. Whereas all other ancient Near Eastern creation stories depict untameable forces of nature, Genesis stands out for its presentation of the Creator God who reigns supreme over creation’s forces.

My main point here is this—naiveté about this text and its interpretation leads to the confusion of essentials with peripherals at best, or even, at worst, to interpretations and standards of orthodoxy that are simply plain wrong, and out of harmony with the great tradition of Christian orthodoxy ... they lead to divisiveness over non-essentials, and they place missional blockages up for seeking people that do not need to exist.

4. The problem, if evolutionary creation is true, of the strong Pauline theology of the headship of the human race under the first and last Adams (Romans 5, 1 Corinthians 15).

If the first Adam is not historically literal, or a community, then are we running the risk of compromising the historicity of Jesus?

Paul may, like Moses, be accommodating the view of origins of his time. James G. Dunn, a well-respected NT scholar in the Pentecostal tradition, has commented that Paul's putting together of a character from *story* with a character from *history* (the first and the last Adams) is not problematic.¹⁶

My own tendency is to believe that at some moment there was a coronation of an evolved single human, who was by being brought into conscious relationship with God, endowed with the image of God. There are of course, serious problems with this view, but I cannot solve those here, and simply point to it as an area of ongoing research.

5. The problem of death before the Fall if evolution did occur.

Interestingly, Augustine, who articulated the doctrine of original sin most clearly, did not envision original sin as originating structural changes in the universe, and he even suggests that the bodies of Adam and Eve were already created mortal before the Fall. It is not just evolutionary creationists who need to grapple with the reality of animal death before the fall. Progressive creationists must do so also.

The primary solution to the coming of death upon humanity after the Fall is that this is a spiritual death, that is separation from God of the inner person or the whole person after the "resurrection of the unjust." To suggest that there is clarity in this area is to be overly optimistic, I think, and I have not yet heard a solution that satisfies me completely.

6. The intriguing issue of the priority of the incarnation in the purposes of God.

This has a bearing on #4 above, in that it makes the issue of who Adam was a lot less important. Was creation for the incarnation, or was incarnation for creation? Duns Scotus proposed "the primacy of Christ" and creation for incarnation, not vice versa. Having arrived at the [supralapsarian](#) belief that God planned the creation with its reconciliation already in mind (i.e., the cross of Christ was not an afterthought with God, see Acts 2:23; Rev.13:8; 1 Pet. 1:18-20), I am in favor of the notion of incarnation before creation in the mind of God. This does not reduce creation in its value, but rather gloriously unites the Logos with the creation in ways that seem consonant with Johannine expressions.

7. Clarifying Enculturation.

I have referred to this already. The accusation that is often meted out in the heat of debate on origins, especially of those on the literalistic (not "literal" a la Walton and Waltke) side towards evolutionary creationists, is that the latter have sold out to scientific culture. Just how much credibility can we give science and scientists given the influence of the Enlightenment and its presuppositions over the past 300-400 years? The evolutionary creationists will likely respond by asking "will the enculturated scientists please stand up!" The literalistic ways of interpreting Genesis 1 and 2 are actually, as we have noted above, the result of the influence of Enlightenment or Modern thinking on fundamentalism. All this requires ongoing irenic thought and discussion.

8. Reaching agreement based on realism about what levels of certainty can ever be known in some of the areas of this complex interface of science, biblical scholarship and theology.

9. Finding ways to engage in mission that assert *that* God created but offer various thoughtful options about *how* he created it.

Countering the popular assumptions of the Modern age that science and faith are at odds is a daunting task that must unite us. I suggest that whenever we give serious intellectual rigor to the specific area of the origin of the universe, whatever our viewpoint, we go a long way towards overcoming this gap. To also know what the limitations of our viewpoint are and to separate it from higher order confessional theology will lead to some progress towards removing this as a stumbling block for thinking people seeking God.

Offering a variety of options that include evolutionary creation will, I think, show progress in this regard. Hear the words of Augustine again on this matter:

Usually, even a non-Christian knows something about the earth, the heavens, and the other elements of this world, about the motion and orbit of the stars and even their size and relative positions, about the predictable eclipses of the sun and moon, the cycles of the years and seasons, about the kinds of animals, shrubs, stones, and so forth, and this knowledge he holds to as being certain from reason and experience. Now, it is a disgraceful and dangerous thing for an infidel to hear a Christian, presumably giving the meaning of Holy Scripture, talking nonsense on these topics; and we should take all means to prevent such an embarrassing situation, in which people show up vast ignorance in a Christian and laugh it to scorn. The shame is not so much that an ignorant individual is derided, but that people outside the household of the faith think our sacred writers held such opinions, and, to the great loss of those for whose salvation we toil, the writers of our Scripture are criticized and rejected as unlearned men.¹⁷

Notes

1. I was reminded of Barth's penchant for saying this by reading it in Adam Neder's book *Participation in Christ: An Entry Into Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 92. This work contains a fine illustration of the methodology of setting up gracious and nuanced dialogue between parties (Barthian and Orthodox views of participation) both of whom argue their positions from within the orthodox Christian tradition, with a view to reaching consensus.
2. *Calvin's Commentary on Genesis*, (trans. John King; London: Banner of Truth, 1965), 103-4.
3. James Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 157. (Baker Academic, 2004)
4. Lesslie Newbigin, "The Trinity as Public Truth" in Vanhoozer, ed., *The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age*, 4.
5. Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 185.
6. Davis A. Young, "The Contemporary Relevance of Augustine's Doctrine of Creation," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 40 (3/1988): 1:42-45.
7. See "Encountering the Book of Genesis: A Study of Its Content and Issues, E-book," and "Creation and holistic ministry: A study of Genesis 1:1-2:3," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 25 (2001), 292-303.
8. Bruce Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001).
9. Daniel C. Harlow, "After Adam: Reading Genesis in an Age of Evolutionary Science," *American Science Affiliation*, 62/3 (September 2010), 179-95 (www.asa3.org). Isn't this the article in *PSCF*??
10. Lecture given each year to pastors in science/faith cohorts at Regent College, sponsored by The John Templeton Foundation.
11. John Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009), 84.
12. Walton, 2009a, 95.

13. "Concordist" readings of Scripture err in that they assume that we can correlate in detail biblical cosmology and biology with the latest scientific understanding.
14. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One*, 106.
15. *Calvin's Commentary on Genesis*, 1:4, 79, 86-87.
16. '... an act in mythic history can be paralleled to an act in living history without the point of comparison being lost.' James G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8* (WBC 38A; Dallas: Word, 1988), 289. I am indebted to Dan Harlow for this reference.
17. Augustine, *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 1.42-43.