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REVIEW

Still More Thoughts on the Historical Adam

Reflections on *Perspectives on the Historical Adam and Eve: Four Views*. Ed. Kenneth D. Keathley. 2024. Nashville: B&H Academic. 230 pp.

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Core Academy of Science

Christian beliefs about origins—of the cosmos, the earth, life, and people—have been flashpoints of controversy for centuries now, at least dating back to Isaac de la Peyrère's "pre-Adamite" humans[1] (and even further if one considers Christian refutations of Aristotle's eternal cosmos). The arguments persist today with a new wardrobe of fossils, genomes, and hybrids, but beneath this dressing, the fundamental questions remain much the same. To what extent should we read Genesis 1-11 as an account of history and therefore binding on our beliefs about the past? Or can we understand these primordial stories as a sort of theological fable without worrying about the details? Or is there a *via media*, where we might retain certain details as necessary historical beliefs that are expressed within parabolic or hyperbolic narratives?

One could also divide up Christian reactions to creation along a more non-scriptural, scientific axis. Some scholars accept scientific models of the past as well-supported and generally correct. Others insist that claims about the past are speculative and erroneous and that the evidence is best interpreted according to a more literal reading of Gen 1-11. Still others take that middle route, accepting certain scientific claims as accurate while questioning others.

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The four main authors of *Perspectives on the Historical Adam and Eve: Four Views*, edited by Kenneth D. Keathley, offer us four positions that represent various nexus points along these different ideological trajectories. Kenton Sparks represents a willingness to understand Genesis as nonhistorical, while Marcus Ross affirms the major events of Genesis 1-11 as historical. The views presented by Andrew Loke and William Lane Craig select only certain textual claims of Genesis as true historical claims. Along the science spectrum, Sparks, Craig, and Loke present their views as largely accepting of conventional claims about human evolution, while Ross offers a substantial re-interpretation of paleoanthropology.

Following the format of other multi-view books, each author's essay is followed by short responses written by the other authors, to which the essay's author then replies in a rejoinder. Unlike some multi-view books, the appearance of this volume was preceded by a personal meeting of the authors and other scholars, at which drafts of the essays were presented and audience members could then offer their own reviews and responses. I attended this meeting, hosted by Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, as one of the respondents. Only two authors presented in person: Ross and Sparks. Loke joined us from Hong Kong via teleconferencing, and Craig unfortunately missed due to a COVID-19 infection. In the published volume, the authors mention the meeting as an important component of the composition of this book and as an exemplar of cordial interaction. Sparks in particular seems to have received a warm welcome, despite his

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self-admitted role as the "proverbial 'liberal'" (p. 20).

In a brief introductory essay, Keathley presented a short orientation to the topic and then explained the goals of the essays. Each author is expected to address three questions. "1. How does your position interpret the biblical witness concerning the historicity of Adam and Eve? 2. How does your interpretation integrate with the current scientific consensus concerning hominids? 3. How does your position impact the message and ministry of the church?" (p. 15).

Sparks opens the volume with his essay on the nonhistorical Adam position, which can be summarized rather succinctly. The Bible as a whole contains discrepancies and even errors that falsify the claim of inerrancy. Since the Bible is as errant as any other ancient document, we should not expect it to correlate especially well with extrabiblical evidence and science. Consequently, the science of anthropology can be left to its own work studying the evolution of humanity without any worry about the existence of Adam and Eve. The witness of the church can only be improved by separating the gospel from the far-fetched hermeneutics or specious science of the other three views.

Craig's essay on the "mytho-historical Adam" is a condensation of his book *In Quest of the Historical Adam*[2] and presents a more complicated argument. Craig focuses on the genre of Genesis 1-11 by presenting a series of criteria for recognizing myth, of which the biblical text exhibits eight. In his essay, Craig focuses mostly on the etiological nature of myth, particularly showing the way Genesis 2-3 fits the mythical bill. But Craig acknowledges that there is more going on in Genesis, especially in the way the stories create a forward momentum, framed by the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11. When considered with Paul's citation of a real, historical Adam in Romans 5, this historical concern of Genesis 1-11 suggests that this is a mythical work containing some historical details, a *mytho-history*. Adam then is a "progenitor of the entire human race through whose disobedience moral evil entered the world" (p. 82). Craig then turns to the science of paleoanthropology to attempt to identify when this Adam might have lived. Using criteria for behavioral modernity from a paper by McBrearty and Brooks,[3] Craig deduces that Neandertals and *Homo heidelbergensis* must be included in the human family as descendants of Adam. He concludes with speculations about how that initial Adam came to be and what future research might reveal but curiously omits Keathley's third question regarding the ministry of the church.

Loke's essay purports to present "The Genealogical Adam and Eve Model" not by showing that his model is correct but by showing that his model is merely *possible*. Thus, the burden of proof will be on those who disagree to show that his model is *not* possible (along with all possible variants of his model). Unfortunately, his essay struggles to present the elements of his model succinctly and clearly. Instead, the reader must glean the details from his prose, which from my reading seems to depend on four main claims. First, the Bible does not contradict evolutionary biology. Second, the Bible does claim that Adam was the first bearer of God's image. Third, the image of God consists minimally in the ability of humans to have a relationship with God. Fourth, by distinguishing a genealogical ancestor from a genetic ancestor, we may understand Adam to be a biological *Homo* sp. chosen from a large number of conspecifics to receive the image of God. The reader would benefit greatly from having read Swamidass's *The Genealogical Adam and Eve*[4] prior to reading Loke's essay. Loke concludes with a short paragraph that highlights a personal testimonial of the importance of apologetics for sharing the gospel.

Ross's essay rounds out the book with a view that closely tracks with my own. Briefly, the Bible describes the events of Genesis 1-11 clearly enough for us to discern their doctrinal importance, especially for the doctrine of the Fall. Attempts to harmonize biblical teachings with evolution fail. Ross spends quite a bit of time on the Flood in order to lay the foundation for his version of Flood geology. His presentation of

paleoanthropology incorporates my own work on hominin baraminology as well as a review of archaeology that emphasizes how well the behavioral evidence fits with the baraminological analyses. Ross's discussion of Christian ministry emphasizes the need for a consistent, biblical theology in our missions outreach.

The book concludes with a reflective essay by Joshua Swamidass that essentially reviews the chapters and emphasizes the need for Christian unity in our exploration. He sees the different views falling along three lines: 1. Whether we should accept conventional evolutionary science, 2. Whether Adam is ancient or recent, and 3. Whether there could be people outside the garden. He claims that the plurality of available views is a strength to be valued.

Obviously, the quality of any multiple-views book will depend greatly on the reader's own preferences and prejudice in addition to the quality of the essays. Multi-view books certainly have their uses in helping students parse through issues in a succinct and affordable fashion, and the responses and rejoinders can give even more insight into the positions and their proponents beyond what might be discernable from an isolated set of monologues. For the rest of us, what is to be gained from these books and from this book in particular? For the present volume, I think its greatest asset is not the most recent positions represented (both of which can be examined in greater detail elsewhere) but in the opinions that rarely appear for public discussion.

On the one hand, Sparks's essay does indeed represent the "token liberal" of the volume, but here we have a very frank and very well-written exposition of the errantist perspective. For decades, young-age creationists have warned of the doctrinal costs of accommodating theology to evolution. Paper after paper, lecture after lecture, and meme after meme try to show how the doctrine of creation connects inextricably to other Christian doctrines that are perceived as more valuable and essential. We cannot compromise on creation without losing much of what makes us uniquely Christian, says the creationist apologist. On the one hand, Sparks's essay appears to confirm many of our worst fears with the loss of the doctrine of inerrancy, but upon closer inspection, the careful reader will note that Sparks has done something much more challenging.

Because of course, Sparks does *not* proceed with a desire to reconcile evolution to the Bible and thereby conclude that inerrancy must be wrong. Instead, he presents a review of many well-known textual problems within the Bible itself and attempts to explain them with one simple conclusion: The Bible contains errors. The Bible is simply a product of its time, with its own ancient idiosyncrasies and flaws and tall tales. With that as his premise, he sees no need to reconcile the Bible to human evolution, or the Big Bang, or germ theory, or any of the other myriad scientific ideas of today. The Bible simply isn't about that, and we do it a grave disservice when we torture the text in search of these sorts of answers.

It is greatly tempting to read his essay with all the usual ideological blinders and to fall back on the usual apologetic explanations of these textual "problems." I certainly bristled at his assertion that "Conditions outside of the garden were harsh" (p. 39), which is not a claim of Genesis. But before we become too distracted by these details, we should observe the more potent element of his presentation, namely its parsimony. According to the principle of parsimony, the simpler explanation is to be preferred over the more complex explanation. In this case, the simpler explanation (errors in the Bible) should be preferred against however many volumes of *Bible Difficulties Explained* can fill a library. To a traditional inerrantist such as myself, Sparks's essay is by far the most unsettling of this entire volume.

Even as I recognize the power of a parsimonious explanation, I also must say that many of the apologetic responses resonate with me. Some of the so-called "problems" really do appear exaggerated and eisegetical, while many others have very plausible explanations. Still, there exist more than one stubbornly

uncertain passage, such as the identity of Goliath's killer (2 Sam 21:19), Luke's extra Cainan (Luke 2:36), or Matthew's citation of Jeremiah (Matt. 27:9-10). Clear away the chaff in whatever idiosyncratic fashion you like, and these puzzling passages remain. It is with these that Sparks offers his strongest case for biblical errors.

Responding to a parsimonious model requires a parsimonious model of our own, and this format does not afford me the space to compose a decisive rebuttal. Yet, I wonder if this form of argument is the best for a Christian to adopt? After all, we do not doubt God's goodness even amidst the most difficult of personal circumstances. Why would we doubt the truthfulness of God's Word even amidst challenging passages? The question ought not be whether such errors might occur in modern Bibles, but rather, what made us think the Bible was inerrant in the first place? Here, we are on much firmer, and I might add, more parsimonious, ground. First, there are copious places in the Old and New Testaments that affirm the truthfulness and reliability of Scripture. Jesus himself tells us that, "until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished" (Matt 5:18, ESV). Thus, before judging the Bible's reliability, the reader must wrestle with its claims *about itself*. Second, I look to the basic theological principle that doctrines with many scriptural attestations should be affirmed. I find it difficult to claim that biblical truthfulness is not a claim of many passages of Scripture. Third, have other Christians of the past—especially our leading theologians—observed the same doctrine of biblical reliability as I perceive? Again, I can hardly cite everyone, but I find the truthfulness of Scripture is a longstanding doctrine of the Church. I quote here only Augustine in one of his letters to Jerome, "I have learned to yield this respect and honour only to the canonical books of Scripture: of these alone do I most firmly believe that the authors were completely free from error."[5] Inerrancy is no modern theological novelty.

At this point, a skeptical reader could complain that I've constructed a circular argument, that the Bible is without error because the Bible says it is without error. The formula at present requires some anchor to make us think that the major claims of the Bible, among which is its truthfulness, are to be affirmed as true, and that anchor I see in Christ's resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit, both of which manifest in the transformed lives of the saints down through the ages (including my own). The Christ who claimed that even the biblical jots and tittles are important is the same Christ that God raised from the dead. He is the same Christ that the Father affirmed, "This is my beloved Son; hear him." And when we listen to the Son, we hear him quote the Bible as decisive over and over again. Can we, Jesus' disciples, rightfully question the authority and deep truthfulness of the written Word? It would appear that Jesus has not left us that luxury. The truthfulness of God's Word is a matter of faith, as are all the other doctrines faithfully inferred from God's Word. Considering all of these evidences, the Bible's own claims, the historical witness of the church, and the miraculous confirmation of Christ's ministry, Biblical truthfulness is a most parsimonious conclusion indeed.

None of this explains any specific textual challenge or excuses poor scholarship in brushing away the challenges, but then, what doctrine does offer comprehensive explanations for our individual circumstances? Christians continue to endure real pain and suffering despite confessing God's goodness and power to intervene. In the same way, even as I observe these puzzling passages of Scripture, I confess the eternal and unerring truth of the Word of God. Problems arise not from the written revelation but from my own misunderstandings, and if I am to resolve the problems, I must investigate my own misunderstandings. Again, I recognize that this leaves a myriad of details to be worked out, not the least of which would be Sparks's own detailed perspective on what the truthfulness of the Bible actually entails (and which no doubt he affirms). But I can only offer this meager framework of a response in this review. There are three other essays to consider.

As I previously confessed, Ross's essay most closely tracks with my own perspective on the historical Adam. With Ross, I see the biblical account of Adam's creation and subsequent fall inextricably entangled with other doctrines of more obvious importance. Insofar as human evolutionary science wreaks havoc on the biblical depiction of Adam, it also wreaks havoc on Christian theology itself. Like Ross, I hold these entangled doctrines as a matter of faithful conviction, and that leads me to seek answers to the scientific challenges in the science itself, even as I continue to study the biblical witness. I would add that this surely is a matter of basic logic, that an apparent conflict between two witnesses requires a careful evaluation of *both* witnesses. Yet Ross seems to be the only one here willing to critically question and challenge the scientific witness (although I confess that Sparks's position is one of indifference to the science and thus he has no motivation to question it).

Beyond this superficial agreement, Ross presents a striking essay in what it lacks. Unfortunately, young-age creationists have become known for a type of overconfidence bordering on delusion or dishonesty in their assertion that evolution has no affirming evidence and all the scientific evidence agrees with a young-age creationist perspective. Whether or not this is a fair critique or just a stereotype, Ross displays none of that bluster here. Instead, he affirms that creationism offers "investigative *methods* that address the relevant scientific data" (p. 150, emphasis mine) and that the Bible provides only "a temporal scaffold to guide our investigations of the natural world" (p. 166). He calls his own essay "a rough outline" with "numerous questions, challenges, and problems" (p. 185), and he acknowledges that "current proposals are not the final word" (p. 176). Perhaps in sensitivity to the scoffing creationist stereotype, Ross goes out of his way to emphasize the tentativeness of his own position and the many open questions.

Without overselling his view as more powerful than it is, Ross's essay is uniquely inviting in the present collection. His tentativeness leads him to seek further clarification and discoveries that will confirm or clarify his own ideas. Readers are explicitly invited to join this work of studying the details of God's world and discovering answers to the many open questions. Perhaps this should not be surprising, given he is the only scientist contributing an essay, but his explicit commitment to building community around our search for answers is commendable.

Even with all these positive qualities, Ross's essay notably ignores the genomic evidence, which is sorely missed, given the importance of genomic evidence to the recent renaissance in evolutionary creation. Likewise, the issue of genealogical ancestry, the subject of Loke's essay, also does not appear. Given the assumptions of the genealogical ancestry model (discussed below), it surely is of no use to Ross's model, but how then does Ross account for the demographics of a growing human population arising from a single founding pair? Again, though, we must remember that Ross does not intend to provide comprehensive answers for every question but rather an outline of how scientific evidence might be re-interpreted in ways more agreeable to the biblical witness. And he only has 8,000 words to do it. Perhaps we should be happy with what we have and hope for future opportunities to elaborate the genetic side of the creationist model of human origins.

The other two essays in the book provide perspectives on what Keathley calls dramatic shifts in the debate over the historical Adam (p. 2). As noted, Craig's essay is a condensation of his book, with attention on the interpretation of Genesis 2-3. His position essentially seems to fall into two relatively independent arguments. First, the mytho-historic interpretation of Genesis represents similar positions advocated in the past by the likes of Peter Enns, John Walton, and even Kenton Sparks. Though Craig can (and does) dispute the details of these authors' positions, the central concept that Genesis communicates timeless truths in a non-literal package of fantastic tales is common. Call it narrative theology, mytho-history, or what have you, it does not strike me as a dramatic development in the historical Adam debate.

Much more unique is Craig's approach to the scientific data, the second component of his position. Rather than assuming that humans are *Homo sapiens sapiens*, as most other evolutionary creationist and theistic evolutionist authors have done, Craig examines scientific records and concludes that he cannot deny the humanity of Neandertals and *Homo heidelbergensis*. Evidence he cites for this includes the remarkable Schöningen spears and the curious stone arrangements in Bruniquel Cave.[6] Young-age creationists have claimed Neandertals as human for years,[7] but to my knowledge, this is the first evolutionary creationist to make a similar claim. By extending the category "human" to include other *Homo* species, Craig moves the historical Adam earlier than a half million years ago (on the conventional calendar, which he accepts), much earlier than the Neolithic Adam of more typical evolutionary creationism.

I note that these two components of Craig's view are largely independent, in that one could affirm a mytho-historical view of Genesis without also affirming Neandertals as human (as Sparks does), and one could affirm Neandertals as human without accepting the mytho-historical view (as Ross does). Whether Craig's particular union of these ideas proves durable is anyone's guess, but his vulnerabilities are on full display in this volume. In both his biblical and scientific arguments, Craig proceeds by defining a category according to a list of criteria, and then demonstrating how particular instances fulfill the criteria necessary to be included in the category. On the biblical side, he defines the category *myth* according to ten criteria and purports to show that Genesis meets enough of those criteria to be classified as *myth*. On the scientific side, he defines the category *human* according to four criteria and explains how Neandertals and *Homo heidelbergensis* meet those criteria. Naturally, one could dispute Craig's position by disputing the criteria, and that is exactly how Loke and Ross address him in their responses. Loke disputes his human criteria, and Ross disputes his myth criteria. If Craig's position has any lasting presence, I suspect it will be in the nitpicking of his criteria and their application.

In that spirit then, allow me to express a few nitpicks of my own. I find the myth criteria curiously unequal in importance. For example, his first criterion "myths are narratives" does not identify anything particularly distinctive or useful about a myth. Criteria 5 and 7 are redundant (primordial/primeval setting), as are criteria 3 and 4 (sacred stories of belief). In his book, Craig disputes the relevance of criteria 8 and 9. Ross's conclusion that these criteria essentially can be reduced to two (myths are etiologies and contain fantastic elements) appears mostly correct, despite Craig's protests to the contrary. And since etiologies need not be false, the question of historicity is reduced entirely to the question of the fantastic elements contained within Genesis 1-11. Ironically, even as I affirm the core historicity of Genesis 1-11, I too acknowledge the presence of fantastic elements in the form of miracles. Hence, I agree with Craig that Genesis gives us a fantastic etiology of the world, yet I do not conclude that this constitutes myth. In my case at least, the criteria failed.

On Craig's anthropology, I agree with Ross that his circumscription of humanity is probably too narrow. Based on his book, I think Craig would argue that the lack of significant material culture from *Homo erectus sensu lato* during a million years on the conventional calendar mitigates against their humanity. Yet I wonder at the completeness of the record of *Homo erectus*. There are many fewer skeletal specimens of *H. erectus* compared to Neanderthals. With such a sparse record, should we expect to find much of an archaeological record? Aside from these speculations, what we have of erectine material culture attests to their intellectual sophistication. Sites with evidence of ancient controlled fire are common enough, including Swartkrans,[8] Koobi Fora,[9] and Gesher Benot Ya'aqov.[10] Also at Gesher Benot Ya'aqov, we have rather clear evidence of cooking.[11] Additionally, the presence of Oldowan lithics on Soqotra suggests a considerable seafaring ability.[12] All of these evidences suggest the same level of behavioral sophistication as seen in Neandertals. The puzzle for Craig's model is why more of this evidence does not exist if erectines are human and really did endure for a million years of history.

Loke's genealogical Adam model is simultaneously the most unique and least persuasive essay in the book. Brought to the attention of evangelicals through the work of Joshua Swamidass, the genealogical Adam depends on the surprising discoveries of Joseph T. Chang in 1999 and 2004 that demonstrated that a biparental population of constant size has a surprisingly low number of generations before a common ancestor is reached. In his initial 1999 paper, Chang showed that a population of constant size N has approximately $\log_2(N)$ generations separating it from its most recent common ancestor (MRCA).[13] Chang acknowledged that his model was not directly related to models of genetic ancestry, such that the MRCA need not contribute any genes to the present population, while still appearing in the genealogical family tree. Going back generations before the MRCA, we eventually come to a point where the individuals in the population are either ancestors of all current population members or of no current population members. This generation is reached in approximately 1.77 $\log_2(N)$ generations. For a population of a billion people, this would mean the MRCA was only about 30 generations back (at most 1,200 years for humans) and all ancestors become common ancestors about 53 generations back (at most 2,120 years for humans). In a subsequent study, Chang's research group showed that the time to these two ancestral generations remained quite short even with more realistic models of population partitioning and migration.[14]

The relevance of these observations to the existence of a historical Adam will depend entirely on how well one believes this genealogical common ancestor actually fits the description of Genesis. Loke argues for a population of individual *Homo* sp. living at the same time of Adam and Eve. This comes as no surprise. Such proposals have become commonplace from those who seek to reconcile human evolution to the Bible. What distinguishes Loke's model is the detailed description of these people outside the Garden (POGs). In Loke's view, POGs could be biologically, intellectually, and culturally indistinguishable from Adam and Eve but not made in God's image. Thus, the large population of POGs can provide a gene pool to the newly-created people in God's image (PIGIs) with no barrier to mating (and no need to invoke bestiality). For Loke, the image of God readily spreads through the population in subsequent generations by virtue of offspring having at least one PIGI parent. Given Chang's results, the image of God should spread quickly, making Adam and Eve true recent common ancestors of everyone alive while humans still possess a diverse gene pool, the history of which could extend back millions of evolutionary years.

My reaction closely tracks with the responses recorded in the book. With Sparks, I find the model quite implausible, since it does not really fit what the biblical author seems to be saying. The ancient authors of Scripture did not imagine Adam and Eve as two among many. All of the ancient extrabiblical testimony we have (which admittedly is centuries after the composition of Genesis) indicates that Adam and Eve were taken as the absolute progenitors of humanity. The Bible and its earliest interpreters recognize no POGs at all. With Craig, I find Loke's understanding of the image of God to be unworkable. Craig falls back on his own criteria for what makes someone human and therefore in the image of God. I would argue that the best understanding of the image entails *imaging*, namely a relationship to those observing that is at least as important as the relationship to the one being imaged. If POGs cannot be distinguished from PIGIs by any kind of ordinary observation, then PIGIs fail to have the image. Further, if Loke were to respond that the image would be observable in the relationship PIGIs have with God, this too fails to persuade since unrepentant PIGIs would act just like POGs and be therefore indistinguishable from them. The image of God is not a collective that all PIGIs manifest together but an individual feature that every PIGI must possess (hence the prohibition against murder in Gen. 9:6). In this genealogical model, until such time that all people are PIGIs (at least $\log_2(N)$ generations), the image would therefore fail to be the image.

Ross raises the additional chilling conclusion that by spreading the image of God through the POG population, PIGIs also brought death and condemnation, since Adam and Eve had already fallen. Oddly, in his original essay Loke affirms that, like any other animal, POGs could enjoy God's love, comfort, and even

an afterlife (p. 130). Ross rightly recognizes that this creates a remarkable moral conundrum. If God does grant some kind of mercy to POGs, surely POGs would have been better off avoiding PIGIs altogether! Loke dismisses this as a "misrepresentation" of his model, yet Loke provides little detail to explain why this rather obvious moral deduction is not a valid consequence of his proposal.

Ultimately, while some people feel a measure of excitement over the genealogical Adam model, I see little value here unless one is already committed to human evolution. For those of us committed to Adam and Eve as sole progenitors like the Bible portrays, the distinction between genetic and genealogical ancestor is unhelpful and unnecessary. For those who allow some form of human evolution, this genealogical ancestry might help resolve tensions over Adam as the ancestor of all people, but given the weaknesses of Loke's model, such scholars still have work to do.

All of these comments on Loke's essay are complicated by his unwillingness to present a straightforward model as the other authors have done. Where Sparks, Craig, and Ross each make a series of assertions and subsequent conclusions, Loke instead tries to present only a *possible* explanation for his claim that human evolution and the Bible could both be true. As a result of this, Loke could simply deny any or all of my concerns by insisting the vulnerabilities only exist for one possible version of his model among many. Such maneuvers smack of special pleading rather than an actual model.

Regarding the book as a whole, what we have here are two essays that take relatively straightforward positions: Sparks sees the Bible as prone to ancient errors and therefore not authoritative on questions of anthropology and origins. Ross affirms the Bible and Christian theology as completely intertwined with recent human creation and therefore concludes that the anthropologists have erred on a number of very consequential matters. Whether or not you accept Ross's scientific discussion is not really relevant to his biblical claims. One could easily imagine many different versions of scientific anthropology that would accord with Ross's perspective on the Bible and theology. To oversimplify then: Sparks concludes that the Bible is an unreliable witness to scientific matters, and Ross contends that the Bible is reliable on the very same questions. Consequently, their essays display a certain simplicity and therefore believability.

In contrast, the proposals of Craig and Loke depend on very complex reasoning about the biblical text and the scientific evidence. In some ways, the biblical proposals floated by these authors are very counterintuitive and sometimes convoluted. Loke admits that the Bible describes the Flood as global but that this is only hyperbole (p. 125). Craig claims that the fantastic elements of Genesis 1-11 cannot be believed as written but instead are indicators of myth, which does not mean that the message of Genesis 1-11 is false, even though false claims are elements needed to recognize myth in the first place. Craig's analysis of the science neglects indicators of humanity in taxa other than *H. sapiens*, Neandertals, and *H. heidelbergensis*. Loke's genealogical model requires you to think of Eve not as the mother of all living but merely the mother of PIGIs. As far as popular ideas go, I see these two models having very little longevity. Their complexity works against them. This is not to argue they are false *per se* but that people are unlikely to favor these ideas in the future.

From my perspective, one lingering question is whether one could advocate both inerrancy and human evolution while insisting that the precise details of the synthesis are currently unknown. I imagine here not of a multiverse of possible models, as Loke argues, but rather a simple insistence that no current model is adequate to answer all the questions. This would be the evolutionary mirror of my own position: That the Bible speaks truth about the detailed history of humanity even if we do not yet fully understand how the science could be consistent with this history. Perhaps here I might note that Craig's effort to distinguish assertorical from illustrative references might be one way to approach this problem of the compatibility of

inerrancy and evolution.

Still, even if there were such a position, the larger theological problem of theodicy and the Fall strikes me as an insurmountable barrier to evolution. Ross emphasizes this in his chapter and his response to Sparks, and to his credit, Sparks concedes that he has "more theological work to do" (p. 65). I see multiple difficulties related to the problem of evil. First, natural selection operates by killing countless scores of creatures: The weak and weary and wounded are not loved and cared for, but ruthlessly eliminated in favor of creatures that possess attributes better suited to their environment. This is how evolution proceeds. The idea that God would use natural selection to create the diversity of life including humans and then admonish us to show mercy, turn the other cheek, and care for the suffering seems inconsistent and a frankly monstrous way of creating.

Second, moving beyond natural evil, where should we place the blame for human evil? As Ross points out in his article, evidence of interpersonal human violence is very old, certainly older than the Neolithic. Yet Paul in Romans and 1 Corinthians seems very firm that sin entered the world by Adam. If there are POGs, are they not sinning when they do the very same acts for which PIGIs would be condemned to death? Is this justice? Beyond even that peculiar model, within the evolutionary paradigm, early hominins surely lived in a world of violence, of "kill or be killed." Are we to understand that God created us by this violence but then demanded that we forsake our evolutionary impulses and love one another instead? Did God just set us up to fail?

Third, Paul links the death brought by Adam directly to Jesus' resurrection (1 Cor 15:20-22). In this way, Paul indicates that the death that Adam brought was physical death, since the resurrection of Christ was a physical resurrection. But in these evolutionary scenarios, not only is suffering and death the mechanism by which creation is accomplished, but for physical human death, it is not a consequence of sin. The most common explanation for this discrepancy is to argue that the threat of death in the Garden was a threat of spiritual death, estrangement from God. Yet the Bible speaks of Adam returning to dust, God banishes them from the Garden to prohibit eating the fruit of life and living forever, and Paul connects Adam's death directly to Christ's resurrection. And if Christ be not raised, our faith is in vain.

In my view, this book accomplishes a service primarily by showing us the weakness of the models in the middle. Not only do Craig's and Loke's models suffer from specific weaknesses, but they face profound difficulties reconciling the classical Christian God of mercy and love with the brutal God of natural selection and with explaining the origin of human death by sin. Sparks's model *appears* attractive, yet the price is too high. In his model, we reject a major doctrine with broad biblical support. If we identify the "real truth" of the Bible in repeated claims from the Old and New Testaments, then why would we dispense with the repeated affirmations of the truth and reliability of biblical claims? And if we do not identify the "real truth" of the Bible from repeated claims with broad biblical support, what then is Christian theology at all? The best solution to bring together Christianity and anthropology, as scientifically unlikely as it may seem to some, is a version of Ross's model, a model that offers "a robust path forward" (p. 150).

Regarding Keathley's third assigned question, the implications of these models for Christian ministry, one cannot help but notice the similarity in the three responses given. They are primarily concerned with spreading the gospel and Christian testimony. Sparks, Loke, and Ross tell us that by avoiding wrong beliefs and presenting a rationally sensible gospel message, we can convert nonbelievers. These are unquestionably valid concerns, yet surely the ministry of Christ extends beyond this. Becoming like Christ begins at salvation. It is followed by a lifetime of sanctification and discipleship and culminates in eschatological glorification in Jesus' presence. In what way then does the quest for the historical Adam

help us love God or neighbor? How do these disagreements make us more like Jesus? These are questions I have wrestled with myself, as I recognize failures earlier in my career that were very unchristian indeed. Over the past decade, I have found that unexpected relationships with Darrel Falk and others who are ideologically opposed to young-age creationism have sharpened and changed me. Through this crucible of a relationship divided by such differences but united by the Holy Spirit, I have indeed become more like Jesus. Not that I have attained, of course. I still struggle with my own sinfulness, but I have found that remaining isolated in an echo chamber degrades my Christian character and derails my discipleship. By engaging deeply with intellectual opponents, I am constantly challenged to consider what it means to follow Jesus. For me, Keathley's third question is the most important of all. If disputing the details of fossils, genes, or texts does not make us more like Jesus, we need to bring those activities back under the lordship of Christ. If we cannot glorify God or disciple one another with our doctrinal and scientific obsessions, perhaps we should reconsider our priorities.

Notes

1 Isaac de la Peyrère, *A Theological Systeme upon That Presvpposition, That Men Were before Adam* (London, 1655).

2 William Lane Craig, *In Quest of the Historical Adam: A Biblical and Scientific Exploration* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021).

3 Sally Mcbrearty and Alison S. Brooks, "The Revolution That Wasn't: A New Interpretation of the Origin of Modern Human Behavior," *Journal of Human Evolution* 39, no. 5 (November 1, 2000): 453–563, https://doi.org/10.1006/jhev.2000.0435.

4 S. Joshua Swamidass, *The Genealogical Adam & Eve: The Surprising Science of Universal Ancestry* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Acdemic, 2019).

5 Augustine, *Epistula* 82.3.

6 Hartmut Thieme, "Lower Palaeolithic Hunting Spears from Germany," *Nature* 385, no. 6619 (February 1997): 807–10, https://doi.org/10.1038/385807a0; Jacques Jaubert et al., "Early Neanderthal Constructions Deep in Bruniquel Cave in Southwestern France," *Nature* 534, no. 7605 (June 2016): 111–14, https://doi.org/10.1038/nature18291.

7 George McCready Price, *The Predicament of Evolution* (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association, 1925), 61.

8 C. K. Brain and A. Sillent, "Evidence from the Swartkrans Cave for the Earliest Use of Fire," *Nature* 336, no. 6198 (December 1988): 464–66, https://doi.org/10.1038/336464a0.

9 Sarah Hlubik et al., "Hominin Fire Use in the Okote Member at Koobi Fora, Kenya: New Evidence for the Old Debate," *Journal of Human Evolution* 133 (August 1, 2019): 214–29, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhevol.2019.01.010.

10 Naama Goren-Inbar et al., "Evidence of Hominin Control of Fire at Gesher Benot Ya`aqov, Israel," *Science* 304, no. 5671 (April 30, 2004): 725–27, https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1095443.

11 Irit Zohar et al., "Evidence for the Cooking of Fish 780,000 Years Ago at Gesher Benot Ya'aqov, Israel," *Nature Ecology & Evolution* 6, no. 12 (December 2022): 2016–28, https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-022-01910-z.impacting various biological and social aspects, when intentional cooking first began remains unknown. The early Middle Pleistocene site of Gesher Benot Ya'aqov, Israel (marine isotope stages 18–20; ~0.78 million years ago

12 V.A. Zhukov, *The Results of Research of the Stone Age Sites in the Island of Socotra (Yemen) in 2008-2012* (Moscow: Triada, 2014).

13 Joseph T. Chang, "Recent Common Ancestors of All Present-Day Individuals," *Advances in Applied Probability* 31, no. 4 (December 1999): 1002–26, https://doi.org/10.1239/aap/1029955256.

14 Douglas L. T. Rohde, Steve Olson, and Joseph T. Chang, "Modelling the Recent Common Ancestry of All Living Humans," *Nature* 431, no. 7008 (September 2004): 562–66, https://doi.org/10.1038/nature02842.