

God, Adam, and You: Biblical Creation Defended and Applied. Edited by Richard D. Phillips. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2015. 210 pages. \$14.99.

Reviewed by Ted Van Raalte (June 16, 2015)

Church leaders must be noticing something. This is at least the third book in 2015, written by confessional Reformed and Presbyterian authors, defending the biblical doctrine of creation. Consider how Joel Beeke opens his essay in the book at hand, “Carl Trueman has written that the historicity of Adam is the biggest doctrinal issue facing this generation” (15).

2015 has already seen William Van Doodewaard’s *Quest for the Historical Adam: Genesis, Hermeneutics, and Human Origins* (RHB, 2015). It is a tour de force, surveying in 400 pages the entire history of the church’s stand regarding the historical Adam. A much shorter work has also just been published by Richard Gaffin, entitled, *No Adam, No Gospel: Adam and the History of Redemption* (P&R, 2015). He mounts an exegetical defense from Scripture of the teaching that all human beings descend from Adam. The volume at hand, *God, Adam, and You: Biblical Creation Defended and Applied* contains ten essays, edited by Richard Phillips, a minister and prominent leader in the Presbyterian Church of America. The essays were composed by well-known professors and pastors: Joel Beeke, Kevin DeYoung, Liam Goligher, Richard Phillips, Derek Thomas, and Carl Trueman.

It’s noteworthy that all of these men are noticing the need to defend the biblical teaching of creation. They’re not doing so simply because evolutionary teaching is out there in the world, but because it is making remarkable inroads in the church. The essays first saw life as speeches at the Philadelphia Conference of Reformed Theology, sponsored by the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, in 2013. As the footnotes in this book demonstrate, these scholars were well aware of radical trajectory of Peter Enns and the compromising views of Bruce Waltke and Tremper Longman III—all of whom had once taught Old Testament at confessional Reformed seminaries—as well as the white paper of Tim Keller and other postings at the Biologos website. These things gave their conference (and this book) a sense of urgency.

Theistic evolution, in various forms, was and is being promoted among Christians via speeches, conferences, courses, and educational centres. For example, since 2008 the Biologos Foundation in the United States and the Faraday Institute in Great Britain have received huge grants from the Templeton Foundation to promote evolution among Christians (Biologos has received about [9 million dollars](#) since 2008, to be precise \$8,735,123). More about all this another time, D.V. This just to say that defending biblical creation is an urgent and timely matter. Those in the know are probably not surprised at the appearance of [creationwithoutcompromise.com](#).

God, Adam, and You contains some very fine essays. Most are written at a grade 10 or lower reading level and most are quite understandable to the average reader. Some will move you to praise the Lord as you contemplate his greatness in creating this beautiful world. This is what Derek Thomas first highlights: creation exalts God (3–8)! Overall, the book’s authors advance a

clear antithesis between creation and evolution. The question of what it means that God created Adam and Eve in his image returns several times.

In chapter 2, “The Case for Adam,” I appreciated the clear way Joel Beeke arranged arguments and responses. He often engages arguments found on the Biologos website, for example, “Genesis 1 does not say that God gave his image to beings that already existed [a common assertion of theistic evolutionists], but that ‘God created man in his own image’ (Gen. 1:27)” (28). He also makes the fundamental point, “The Christian faith is built on history. In the end, if you undermine its historical foundations, then the whole of Christianity collapses into subjective opinions and feelings. But mere subjective feelings cannot save you” (41).

Chapter 3, by Kevin DeYoung, contrasts “Two Views of the Human Person,” the view advanced by evolution vs. that advanced in Scripture. His essay is easy to follow and grasp. DeYoung closes with two pages on the glory of heaven. Beautiful!

Liam Goligher’s exposition of Adam’s place in the temple-like Garden of Eden utilizes some of the results of recent biblical exegetical scholarship. Although he also studies the theological implications of God’s relationship with Adam prior to and after the fall, his presentation is uncomplicated, with short sentences and a spoken style. Similarly, Beeke’s second essay, chapter 8, reads like an edifying sermon.

Richard Phillips, the editor, wrote chapters 5, 6, and 9. He makes the point well that the theory of evolution uses the death of inferior members of the (human) species as its instrument for progress, and as such that theory must regard death as essentially good (97). This leads him to say, “Evolution cannot be grafted onto the structure of biblical Christianity, but replaces it with a different structure, a different ethic, a different story of salvation, and a different religion altogether” (100). Further, he has a message for those who want to compromise with evolution’s proponents, particularly regarding Adam, in order to gain credibility: “[T]he events of Christ’s life that we proclaim are as unacceptable to the postmodern worldview as the special creation of Adam” (101). In other words, why bother?

In chapter 7 Derek Thomas helpfully summarizes one of the popular syntheses of evolution with creation, that of Denis Alexander (founder of the Faraday Institute mentioned above). “Alexander’s thesis is that modern humans emerged 200,000 years ago, and that language developed 50,000 years ago. Sometime between 6,000 and 8,000 years ago, God took a couple of Neolithic farmers and revealed himself to them in a special way. This divine revelation constituted Adam and Eve as *homo divinus*, bearing the image of God” (131). Readers should note the word “constituted”; there is a major reinterpretation going on here.

Finally, Carl Trueman presents a more complicated but highly worthwhile account of how six major liberal theologians have treated the doctrine of original sin. He observes that all of them participated in the Enlightenment critique of classical orthodoxy; all repudiated the idea of the imputation of Adam’s guilt upon humanity; all rejected the relevance of Adam’s historical

reality. As a result, in each case “there is no movement from innocence to guilt to condemnation in history” (207); humans were not perfect from the start.

I have a few minor concerns with the book. First, the order of the chapters. Perhaps they reflect the order of the conference speeches, but re-ordering the chapters would have provided a much more logical flow to the book. Second, some inevitable overlap occurs within the book, but generally this serves to reinforce important points. Third, Chapter 9, entitled, “From God’s Garden to God’s City,” didn’t real live up to its title. I also wondered, fourthly, about Phillip’s interpretation of “And the sea was no more” (Rev. 21:1). He appears to take this literally, but is this correct? He also asserts that there were no naval heroes in Israel (174). However, Solomon actually built a fleet of trading ships that were successful. Later, Jehoshaphat tried to imitate this but his ships were destroyed (see 1Kings 9:26; 10:22; 22:48).

These minor concerns aside, as far as the faithfulness to Scripture and clarity of the arguments, I highly recommend this book. If the whole topic of creation and evolution is daunting for you, I suspect this book will make things fairly clear and will leave you thanking God for his wonderful and gracious revelation regarding our origin as his created children, via Adam and Eve.