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BIB303 NOA – Christian Thought

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October 10, 2020

Book Review

Old Earth or Evolutionary Creation?: Discussing Origins with Reasons to Believe and BioLogos, Kenneth Keathley, J.B. Stump, Joe Aguirre, 2017. There are conflicting perspectives that most people view when it comes to science and Christian theology. This book is a decade's worth of dialogue between Reasons to Believe's (RTB) old earth creation and BioLogos' evolutionary creation. It serves the purpose of demonstrating two creationists views that have agreements on key topics and strong disagreements, and yet still treat each other with respect and willingness to hear out the opposing stance. It is meant for lay people who have struggles with faith-science issues and for those who are interested in learning how to integrate both faith and science. The book is organized in a way that in the beginning and as it progresses, it provides the "whos" and "whats" the organizations are about: people running the organization and who are under them, their mission, their different beliefs, the reasoning behind such beliefs, their goals, and defining views about earth. Aside from science and faith, the authors touched on biblical authority, the history of Adam and Eve, the complication of natural evil, naturalism, genetics and common descent.

Old Earth or Evolutionary Creation? discusses the origins of the world through the lenses of two organizations, RTB and BioLogos. It uses multiple voices from each of the sides instead of just the heads of the organizations. Mainly, RTB sees science as a means in evangelism, commits strongly to the inerrancy of the Bible, and views creation as accounted in

the story of Genesis 1-11 (Keathley et al., 2017, p.16), whereas Biologos takes the proofs of the world through the eyes of evolutionary development over the course of billions of years (Keathley et al., 2017, p.10). Besides the narration of RTB and BioLogos' exchange of views, they invited moderators from Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), playing the role of conservative evangelicalism who guides the conversation and asks the needed questions regarding faith and theology (Keathley et al., 2017, p.6). Laying out the discourse of crucial concerns about faith and science, the book became the outcome of these meetings.

In the conversation about biblical authority, both RTB and BioLogos believe and strongly asserts biblical inspiration and authority. The two organizations "affirm that God reveals himself through both the book of nature and the book of Scripture" (Keathley et al., 2017, p.39). Their difference lies in hermeneutics. RTB believes in a soft concordist perspective, reading less into the biblical text. This can be a problem as it may lose the truths along the way. As for BioLogos, they depend on the book of nature and reading Scripture in a different light. Scripture conveys theological truths, while the book of nature conveys scientific truths.

To understand creation, both looked at understanding the first biblical couple, Adam and Eve. Loren Haarsma from BioLogos explains the view of human evolution through Adam and Eve. Drawing from the interpretation of Acts 17:26 and Romans 5, she provided scenarios wherein Adam and Eve are a transformed pair, a small group of ancient representatives, a pair of recent representatives, and literary figures of all ancestors (Keathley et al., 2017, p.53-54). RTB offers an alternative perspective about the identity and role of Adam and Eve. Because RTB believes in the old earth creation, their view is traditional and theologically conservative. They believe Adam and Eve to be created as fully functional human who were created in the image and likeness of God, making them the progenitors of humanity. The way BioLogos explained

was well stated and sounds convincing, although RTB is more persuasive because it makes sense with the account of Adam and his descendants (Keathley et al., 2017, p.59)

From Adam and Eve, sin entered the world. RTB and BioLogos went over the issue of natural evil. Like most people, there are questions and the particular problem for Christians regarding God, who is all-knowing and powerful, allows evil events (death, suffering, and pain) to happen in life and nature. Through their discourse, both organizations share similar views on this topic. Both acknowledges God's ways are higher than humans' ways. God's sovereignty is still evident, despite the natural evil (earthquakes, hurricanes, sickness, etc.) existing. They cite stories from the bible about the evil experienced by Job, Joseph, and Daniel, and how God turns it for the greater good (Keathley et al., 2017, p.78). Although there is some confusion, they were able to resolve the misunderstandings associated to their positions, making their argument convincing.

One of the important questions raised by the moderator is about God's role in the world, specifically in scientific theories. What theological explanations can account for the natural events happening in earth? Stump from BioLogos points out "natural theology", while Zweerink restates their purpose—to spread the gospel through understanding science. BioLogos explained natural theology may require methodological naturalism, which he has a balance view of (Keathley et al., 2017, p.110). RTB goes on to explain scientific predictions through the lens of a concordist perspective (Keathley et al., 2017, p.112), but was a bit vague since the biblical passages that were cited may support a broader range of theories. At the end of this discussion, both were able to give helpful clarifications.

Considering how the discourse of science and theology contain significant issues, it can be seen how much effort is put into the book (Keathley et al., 2017, p.220). Christian theology in

itself is a life-long study, and integrating science puts it in a whole new level. As the readers read *Old Earth or Evolutionary Creation?*, one can discern that it not only teaches how people can bring together faith and science, but it also contains the underlying theme of how Christians can still lovingly seek to reconcile issues even in controversies. Their discourse holds many disagreements on certain topics and their differences lies deeper despite being Christian organizations. However, they still provided an example of charitable Christian dialogue, especially in this day and age with the culture of rising polarization.

References

Keathley, K. (2017). *Old-Earth or evolutionary creation?: Discussing origins with Reasons to Believe and BioLogos* (J.B. Stump & J. Aguirre, Eds.) [PDF]. IVP Academic, an imprint of InterVarsity Press.