

Letter

reference formats vary from chapter to chapter. Overall, this detracts little from a broad and insightful volume.

I disagree with the authors on several points; sometimes I disagree strongly with their conclusions. That is, perhaps, what the authors intended. In line with van Huyssteen's career, they are willing to engage in meaningful conversation, to bring the best of their fields to a common dialogue and to reveal their own presumptions in a way that allows all of us to come away with a deeper understanding. We do not all agree on what it means to be human, but anthropology and theology have important, even indispensable, things to offer in the conversation. We cannot know how they will interact until we bring the best of our reason and knowledge to the table. Van Huyssteen models this, and Lilley and Pedersen give us ample proof that it works. When we are willing to listen and to engage with others in careful, thoughtful, and compassionate dialogue, we are never alone.

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Letter

Mind and Heart

I wish to comment on Luke Janssen's article "'Fallen' and 'Broken' Reinterpreted in the Light of Evolution Theory" (*PSCF* 70, no. 1 [2018]: 36–47). I write from the vantage of two overlapping worlds, one as an active member of a conservative evangelical (largely "creationist") Christian faith community, and the other as a university professor and scientist who has concluded beyond reasonable doubt that the evolutionary model (descent with modification) best explains the many evidential trains that inform questions of biological origin. I also seek to build upon a 2017 essay in *God and Nature* titled "With All Your Mind," which I wrote during a sabbatical leave that included an objective to "construct a bridge over the perceived gulf that forces so many conservative Christians into having to choose between either their faith or the overwhelming picture of our origins that science is painting."

Generalizations are always treacherous, but I think it is safe to say that we scientists enjoy loving God with all of our minds. We are evidence based by training and often by personality archetype. Good scientists thrive on questioning orthodoxies and rethinking models when confronted with clear and compelling data that point in a different direction. Thus, it is probably no surprise to find large communities of committed Christian men and women in organizations such as the ASA and BioLogos who do not feel threatened by evolution theory. We appreciate the overwhelming scientific evidence supporting evolution and are willing

to seek common ground with our Christian faith. But as Janssen's article lays out, simmering beneath any effort to reconcile evolution and conservative Christian faith lie profound questions of theology, not the least of which concerns the "Fall" and the Christian understanding of why nature and humanity are the way that they are.

As Janssen points out, the embrace of evolution theory necessitates a shift in the conservative Christian understanding of "The Fall" from one in which nature and humanity were originally "good" (essentially perfect), but subsequently cursed by God because of the sin of Adam and Eve, to one in which neither nature nor man were ever "good" (in the sense of being essentially perfect) to begin with. That is, when God declared that his various creative acts were good, and humankind very good, he was speaking of the same cosmos and humanity that we experience today. The problem is that this view presents an enormous stumbling block for many conservative Christians who are desperately trying to make sense of this world.

After all, we are not called to love God with just all of our mind, but also with all of our heart and being. How can I love a God who created a natural system capable of inflicting unspeakable pain and misery upon human beings (think cancer, debilitating birth defects, natural disasters here), and who populated it with humans who are capable of inflicting unspeakable pain and misery upon each other? Many conservative Christians conclude that it is logically and morally impossible for a good God to create this world and this human species in its current form—humankind and nature must have fallen!

We scientists need to take ownership of this problem of pain and deeply empathize with our creationist brothers and sisters if we are to ever have a substantive conversation with them. Dealing with the theological implications of evolution, as Janssen has done in his article (and others before him), is a necessary first step, but it cannot end there or the conversation will go nowhere. I struggled with this issue for years, and it was only through the insightful musings of C.S. Lewis in *The Problem of Pain* and some of his other writings that I began to find a way to reconcile my science and faith. This is not the venue to recount that journey and share my own musings, but please let me plead to my brothers and sisters in Christ who are scientists and comfortable with evolution theory that we have to deal with the heart as well as the mind, and do so very gently when it comes to reaching out to our creationist brothers and sisters. Many thanks to Luke Janssen for starting that process in my own mind and heart.

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