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BOOK REVIEW

J. B. Stump, ed. *Four Views on Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017. Counterpoints: Bible and Theology. 235 pp. Pbk. ISBN 978-0-310-08097-8. \$19.99.

In 1999, Zondervan published *Three Views on Creation and Evolution* (edited by J. P. Moreland and John Mark Reynolds). What justifies there now being another book on this same subject by the same publisher? The answer is threefold. First, Zondervan's initial publication contained only three views (Young Earth Creationism, Old Earth Creationism, and Theistic Evolution), while *Four Views* has the welcome addition of the Intelligent Design position and also relabels of some of the other three views (see below). Secondly, *Four Views* has a change of format from the previous volume, as the contributors themselves (instead of outside authors) respond to each other's chapters. The book also allows each contributor "a rejoinder," which provides the opportunity to engage with the responses to his or her chapter. Thirdly, a significant number of major scientific discoveries that are relevant to our understanding of origins, as well as advances in other disciplines that are also of great import to the topic at hand, have reshaped the landscape of this rather controversial subject, thereby warranting an update to 1999's *Three Views*.

There is no overlap between the contributors of these two volumes. In *Four Views* Ken Ham represents Young Earth Creationism, Hugh Ross represents Old Earth (Progressive) Creationism, Deborah B. Haarsma represents Evolutionary Creation, and Stephen C. Meyer represents Intelligent Design. While none of these contributors are professionally trained in philosophy, theology (either systematic or historical), or biblical exegesis, editor J.

B. Stump states, “The topics involved in the origins discussion are necessarily interdisciplinary, and it is consistent with the broader academic field of science and religion that many of the leading voices are scientists who have acquired fluency in the theological topics” (15). He also asserts that “all of the contributors in this volume are experienced at explaining both scientific and theological facets of the origins debate to general audiences” (15). These statements are true and accurate. Ham serves as the president of Answers in Genesis, Ross is the president of Reasons to Believe, Haarsma is the president of BioLogos, and Meyer has helped to found the Center for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute. I applaud Stump for his fine selection of authors.

The primary goal of this book is to serve as “an accurate snapshot of the origins conversation in America right now” (16). In order to focus the discussion accordingly, the contributors wrote their chapters with the following questions in mind: (1) “What is your position on origins—understood broadly to include the physical universe, life, and human beings in particular?”; (2) “what do you take to be the most persuasive arguments in defense of your position? What are the biggest challenges for your view?”; (3) “how do you demarcate, correlate, and use evidence about origins from current science and from divine revelation?”; and (4) “what hinges on having the correct view of origins?” (all quotations from 15)

In light of this goal and these focusing questions, I think the contributors are to be commended. The interactions, though forthright and candid, are, for the most part quite clear, cogent, respectful, and congenial, free of *ad hominem* attacks and straw-man arguments. For instance, Ross states in his rejoinder, “Despite the differences outlined in the pages of this book, I remain hopeful . . . If we commit to thorough integration and consistency in our interpretation of God’s revelation and commit to treat one another with respect as brothers and sisters in Christ, we will surely find pathways toward resolution” (123). In a similar vein, Haarsma states in her rejoinder, “All four authors affirm Christian faith. Christ calls us to unity despite our clear differences. As Ham notes, that unity is founded on the essential

beliefs of Christianity. Yet the call to unity also includes living with our differences on secondary issues (e.g. Rom 14)” (176).

Ham in particular should be commended for being fair and amicable. He is a famously staunch supporter of his position, and he maintains this reputation in *Four Views*. For example, he writes, “Genesis 1–11 is foundational to the gospel and the ideas of evolution and millions of years do massive damage to the truth and authority of that foundation . . . Unless we are persuaded from the Scriptures that we are wrong, we will not recant our teaching and defense of young-earth creation” (69–70). In contrast with Haarsma, he believes these matters to be *essential* beliefs of Christianity, not matters of secondary importance. For this reason, his willingness to be part of a volume such as this and to interact with the positions and viewpoints of each of the other authors without outright questioning their faith, integrity, or fidelity to the Scriptures is, in my opinion, quite remarkable. Admittedly, though, Ham does consistently seem to take the moral high ground, as is noted by Stump and a few of Ham’s fellow contributors. I therefore especially appreciate the following statement by Ross:

I find most ironic Ham’s claim that old-earth creationism “creates doubt in God’s Word” (p. 45). Throughout my forty-three years as a pastor and evangelist, I’ve seen the opposite. My own story and countless others contradict this claim. The more closely I studied the world of nature, the more reasons I found for complete confidence in the truth of his Word (54).

This response is cogent, fair, and well put.

The same cannot be said, however, of some of Stump’s comments with respect to Ham. Stump states that Ham’s initial essay was much longer than the others and that Ham “was unwilling to cut anything further, believing it only fair that he should be given more space than the others since he was the only one defending the young age of the earth and ‘the authority of Scripture vs. the authority of the scientific majority’” (233). He further says that “each of the other contributors could come up with reasons why they should be entitled to extra space too,” but his “rationale did not persuade” (233). Interestingly, while Haarsma includes seven

figures in her initial essay, in comparison to two figures in Ross's essay and no figures in Meyers' and Ham's respective essays, the total page length (not word count) is not much different between these four essays. Thus, Stump's comments seem somewhat uncalled for.

With respect to the rejoinders, though one appreciates the opportunity that the authors have to clarify and specify their points and to respond to their fellow contributors' comments and critiques, the bulk of the rejoinders are not spent covering new ground but simply rehashing previously stated convictions and values. The bulk of the information in these sections can just as easily be found on the websites connected with the contributors and their organizations. Thus, though the intricacies and specificities of the rejoinders are appreciated, the space could have been better used.

Another criticism I have with respect to this volume is the lack of a pastoral reflection or voice. Given that none of the contributors are professionally trained as Christian religious leaders, would it not have behooved the editor to include some sort of specific ministry reflection by a trained professional or professionals? This is done in *Four Views on the Historical Adam* (edited by Matthew Barrett and Ardel B. Caneday, 2013), in which Gregory A. Boyd and Philip G. Ryken offer pastoral reflections. This is especially desirable in light of the fact that Stump identifies with and "generally subscribe[s] to the position of evolutionary creation," having "worked for BioLogos for several years" (15). Surely the decision to incorporate some external and more objective voices in the concluding-thoughts section would have been a most welcome (and, dare I say it, even a most necessary) component of this text.

Perhaps my largest complaint about this volume is that there are no indices whatsoever. To say that this omission is highly regrettable is a gross understatement. How is one expected to use this volume as a reference tool for further study without any indices? *Three Views* included a person/subject index that, I believe, immeasurably increased the usefulness of the volume, and Stump would have done well to follow suit.

Be that as it may, *Four Views* is a welcome addition to the

ongoing discussion concerning this complex and controversial issue. Its clear layout, irenic contributors, and up-to-date content will equip the reader to engage positively with this much-debated topic from an informed perspective. Its primary readers will be laypersons, pastors/ministers, and undergraduate and graduate students.

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