

# THE BIBLE, SCIENCE AND SCHOLARSHIP<sup>1</sup>

Firstly, a passage to ponder, by Herman Ridderbos:

We may not apply to the Scripture standards which do not suit it. Not only does it give no exact knowledge of mathematics or biology, but it also presents no history of Israel or biography of Jesus that accords with the standards of historical science. God speaks to us through the Scriptures not in order to make us scholars, but to make us Christians. To be sure, to make us Christians in our science, too, but not in such a way as to make human science superfluous or to teach us in a supernatural way all sorts of things that could and would otherwise be learned by scientific training and research. What Scripture does intend is to place us as humans in a right position to God, even in our scientific studies and efforts. Scripture is not concerned only with persons' religious needs in a pietistic or existentialistic sense of that word. On the contrary, its purpose and authority is that it teaches us to understand everything *sub specie Dei* - humanity, the world, nature, history, their origin and their destination, their past and their future. Therefore the bible is not only the book of conversion, but also the book of history and the book of creation.<sup>2</sup>

In this short paper, which does not aspire to any great theoretical sophistication, I am going to discuss very briefly the relationship between the bible — its teaching and authority — and the carrying out of our tasks as scientists and scholars. I will endeavour to indicate that there is a

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<sup>1</sup> First given as a paper to the First Reformed Post-Graduate Students' Conference held at Knox Presbyterian Church, Wantirna, Victoria, Australia, on 20 February 1993. In the course of my closing address to the first Reformed University Students' Conference, entitled *A High Challenge for Tough Times*, I made the following statement in the context of discussing fundamentalist views of the authority of the scriptures for science and scholarship:

“present day fundamentalists do at least proclaim the relevance of the bible for the whole of life, including science and scholarship. They then fall into a serious error: they start to talk as if the bible itself was some sort of actual — or potential — work of scientific reference. This is to misuse the bible. The scriptures are indeed a light on our path; but they are not the path itself. We must always respect the religious and revelational scope and intention of scripture. The truth is that the bible does not tell us all about all things; it tells us what all things are all about. It is not scientifically encyclopaedic but religiously directive; and that is why I prefer to speak of biblically directed learning”.

After the conference I was asked to develop these points with reference to the study of the sciences and humanities. This paper was my response to that request.

<sup>2</sup> Herman Ridderbos, *Studies in Scripture and its Authority*. St. Catharines: Paideia Press, 1978, 23-24.

truly Reformed alternative to the positions adopted by both fundamentalists and liberals. I am not going to discuss specific questions such as how we are to understand and appropriate the creation and flood narratives in the book of Genesis. I'm not presuming to rule such discussions as being off-limits or too controversial. We should be able to discuss anything. In this paper, however, I want to examine what should be our understanding of biblical authority as we come to such discussions.

Moreover, I am not claiming any great originality for the position that is outlined here. Rather, it is an expression of a view that has been long adopted by Reformed thinkers and writers, as the prefatory extract from Herman Ridderbos serves to indicate. It is the position implied by John Calvin (when he said that the science of astronomy was to be learned by observing the skies and not from the book of Genesis) and cogently articulated by Herman Bavinck.

From the outset, let me make it clear that I would wish to affirm the view of the inspiration and authority of the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments expressed in the historic statements of the Calvinistic Reformation. Moreover, without endorsing any specific theories on the subject, I would want to also affirm that the scriptures do not err in what they teach, and do not fail to teach us what is needful. A further point: in all that follows I am assuming that there is no true conflict between the bible and science because the God of the bible is the God of creation. On this basis, we may argue that the conflicts that come to mind are apparent rather than real. These conflicts may be seen to arise from erroneous interpretations and appropriations of scripture, or erroneous or defective hypotheses and theories in science, or a combination of these. In other words, the Inspirer of the bible is the Creator of all things visible and invisible.

The first problem I would like to look at is that presented by fundamentalism. Often, and in a poorly examined manner, fundamentalists presume a certain body of propositions about the physical and biological aspects of the creation to be asserted and authenticated by specific biblical texts, and therefore to carry the authority of God himself. This can have the effect of imposing prescriptive restrictions on the whole enterprise of scientific research and theorising. Quite often, I suspect, Christians of this sort find themselves living in fear. They are fearful of science itself. They worry about what unsettling discoveries the scientists will come up with next, as if scientists deliberately set out to undermine the view of creation and the cosmos that they fervently believe to be the one that God is teaching them.

The problems (perhaps I should really say pseudo-problems) come thick and fast when we are called upon to believe that the inspiration and authority of the scriptures necessarily imply that the bible is or can function as a 'text book for science'. Persons of undoubted zeal may tell us that if we 'really' believe in the bible, then we cannot doubt that it is 'scientifically true'. Such an approach is very dangerous — not least because it represents a serious over-estimation of science and scholarship.

We engage in science and scholarship for the purpose of gaining a disciplined, ordered and systematic knowledge and understanding of the cosmos and ourselves. Science and scholarship, with all their techniques and findings, are human endeavours — and as such they are in every respect characterised by incompleteness and fallibility. We are on safer ground when we talk about scientific knowledge, rather than scientific truth. Scientific knowledge, however well 'established', is always provisional — always open to further amplification, revision and correction.

The fundamentalist seems to imply that unless we successfully substantiate the 'scientific truth' of the bible, then it will no longer be possible to receive its message as inspired and authoritative. There are *two* problems with this sort of position. Firstly, this sort of viewpoint in effect ascribes a certain infallibility to statements that are truly and yet only scientific. The fundamentalist view seems not to take into consideration that a statement might be genuinely 'scientific' — (intended to express an ordered and systematic understanding of a given feature of the cosmos), and at the same time turn out to be wholly or partly erroneous. The truth is that science is never complete - never fully accomplished - it is a wholly human, and therefore highly fallible, enterprise.

Secondly, we must always remember that the bible addresses us in terms of its own agenda, with its specific scope and intention. I would argue that the latter is always foundationally religious and as such the scriptures address all humanity in every age. At the same time, while the message transcends the intellectual and cultural milieu of biblical times, the words used to convey that message inevitably arise from, and reflect that milieu. Indeed, knowledge of that milieu may often serve to enrich profoundly our understanding of the scriptural message. Our interpretation of scripture should never be divorced from its original context. Even though the full meaning of biblical texts may transcend the immediate meaning that they had for the first authors/hearers/readers, we are not entitled to impose upon the text interpretations that are unhistorical.

This is not to say that the scriptures do not speak to us in our scientific and technological age. The bible speaks to every age and generation concerning the creation of all things, the basis of our existence, the status and condition of humanity, of righteousness and judgement, and of the renewal of all things in Christ. This message is for all, and it transcends the cultural context in which it was originally given.

At the same time, the fact that the wording employed by the biblical writers inevitably reflects a long past historical context does not serve to verify or authenticate the cosmologies or customs or opinions of distant eras as these are expressed and reflected in the scriptures. Perhaps a few examples will serve to make clear what is involved. Exodus 20:4 certainly refers to the three-tier cosmology generally accepted in the ancient Near East. There we read:

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to thousands who love me, and keep my commandments. (Exodus 20:4-6).

Modern sophisticates, with a presumed cleverness that is so often the mark of profound ignorance, take it upon themselves to ridicule both the bible and Christianity by insisting that Christians are here required to believe in a three-tier universe. In this, as in many other things, clarity would be achieved by reading the Bible carefully. An examination of the text itself will make clear that the bible does not actually teach or endorse a three-tier cosmology — it uses the language of the day to convey its own message — a message true for all times. Once we grasp this distinction we can see that a full recognition of the historicity of the bible can deliver us from obscurantism, but does not commit us to any kind of relativism. It shows us why we are to take the bible seriously in both its original context and in our own.

The alternatives can be quite perverse. If we insist that every statement in the bible is to be unquestionably received as ‘scientifically factual’ (whatever that might mean!) we will certainly undermine its true authority and pervert its meaning. Take, for example, the statement in Mark (4:31) where Jesus says that the “mustard seed” is “the smallest seed”. As a statement of botanical fact this is woefully inadequate. There are many smaller seeds; some are microscopic. If we stake our belief in the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures on the assertion that all of its statements amount to ‘absolute scientific fact’, then this passage alone would serve to wreck our position — for here we have Jesus himself proposing and scripture

teaching a manifestly erroneous proposition. This is the result of reading the bible as if it purported to offer such information.

The truth is, of course, that the purpose of Exodus 20:4 and Mark 4:31 is not to offer us descriptions that are cosmologically or botanically rigorous. The purpose and intention is that of the scriptures generally. Accordingly, Exodus teaches that we are not to worship anything anywhere in the creation as if it were the Creator. And in Mark, Jesus teaches a fundamental truth concerning the coming and character of the Kingdom of God. In both cases the cosmological and botanical references reflect the state of knowledge and understanding in the times in which they were made, but they do not in any way mitigate the commandment or diminish the message. The text of scripture speaks to us in the language of biblical times.

A moment's reflection will surely show that there was no alternative! Biblical language is both descriptive and poetic — and we would have considerable grounds to doubt its veracity if it did not employ the notions and terminology of ancient and classical times. What was original and unique was what was being revealed, and it is that revelation, now given to us in the scriptures, that has spoken to all subsequent generations, and that now speaks to us.

Some further points — the entire body of scripture was inspired and recognised as canonical prior to the rise of science in anything like its modern form. Does this mean that the bible is redundant? Are those people right who say that the modern age of science and technology can no longer identify with the pre-scientific ethos of the biblical text?

In response I would point out that the bible is *pre-scientific* rather than *un-scientific* — and never *anti-scientific*. Indeed, I suspect that we may be prone to underestimate how the teaching of Scripture concerning a creation order, (rather than a cosmos liable to be manipulated by the pantheon of rival deities), has profoundly encouraged ordered reflection on the cosmos 'and all that therein is'. Moreover, the mighty word 'You shall not bear false witness' (Exodus 20:16) may be seen as the basis of the intellectual honesty without which science is bound to fail.

Also, we should not forget that the bible is *pre-scientific*, not only in the sense that it historically pre-dates the rise of modern science, but also in the sense that it addresses us *prior to* our scientific and scholarly theorising. It is not irrelevant to such things. It is foundational to such things by addressing us first and foremost as men and women created by God as his image bearers on earth, and born to enjoy conscious communion with him. Accordingly, the bible was not written by and for scientists as scientists, or by and for

theoreticians as theoreticians. It was inspired for the instruction of people as people. In this sense we are all open before the scriptures — all open and exposed to their convicting power and authority as the Holy Spirit works in us (Hebrews 4:12).

How, then, does the bible relate to science and scholarship and learning? In answering this question it is necessary to distinguish between the world and life view of the biblical writers and their milieu, and the world and life view enunciated in the biblical message itself. The former is often that of the three-tier cosmos, and one that knew of no seeds smaller than the mustard seed. As to the latter, the world and life view taught by the scriptures themselves, the bible does not fail or err in teaching us that the LORD he is God, and that there are no other (true) ‘gods’; that all things were created by him and depend upon him; that although the creation was good, it has been profoundly affected by human disobedience and its consequences, that — in spite of this — the cultural calling of all humanity still stands; that God has purposed to deliver his people and accomplish the redemption and reconciliation and renewal of all things through his Son in the communion of the Holy Spirit.

It follows from all of this that we are not entitled to impose a ‘scientific’ or any other extra-biblical agenda upon the biblical authors. In the field of medicine, for example, we could recognise that some of those seen as ‘demon possessed’ in the gospels might well, in our age, be diagnosed as epileptic — a diagnosis that does not in fact set aside anything that the bible reveals to us concerning the relationship between sin and the evil of disease, or of the ultimate deliverance from sin and all of its consequences that will be ours in Christ.

Accordingly, although we are not bound to specific pre-medical or any particular medical-scientific views of homosexuality (be they ancient, classical or modern), all generations are bound to the biblical revelation that homosexual *conduct* is always an abomination in the sight of God and subject to divine judgement. And, if we are attempted to dwell upon this self-righteously, we should not forget that all disobedience is subject to judgement, and that all have sinned and fallen short.

A ‘Christian world and life view’ emerges, I would suggest, as the Holy Spirit directs our perceptions, our thinking, and our actions to conform to what is revealed to us in scripture. To the extent that our science and scholarship is so directed it may, I would argue, be called ‘scripturally directed learning’. There is a vast difference between this and a fundamentalist ‘bible science’ that anachronistically binds itself to the cosmology, and state of knowledge, of the biblical writers.

Perhaps this is the point at which to touch upon the question of evolution. Among many bible-believing Christians this is a highly charged subject. The bible clearly teaches that, apart from God himself, *all that is* (large and small, visible and invisible, abstract and concrete) *has been created*. And every creature has come into being in response to the Word of God as expressed in his law. Perhaps we should see God's laws as his 'creatures of governance' by which all things are subject to God's sovereign will.<sup>3</sup>

Now, the scriptures certainly teach *that* all living creatures have thus come to be, but they do not explain *how* each species has arisen in relation to other species and its habitat. Perhaps the question of 'evolution' would be less fraught if we could bring ourselves to consider the possible 'processes of species distribution, differentiation and extinction'.<sup>4</sup>

The truth is that the bible does not answer the *how* question. That is not its purpose or intention. What the bible does teach is that there are no uncreated processes or entities or beings alongside God, upon which God depends, or which are in any way independent of God. This means that if the evidence leads us to theorise that processes of species differentiation have been at work, then these processes also are governed by and subject to God's law for his creatures.

We are not entitled to restrict prematurely and dogmatically the range of our hypothesising, as if God 'cannot have done it in such-and-such a way'. It is not for us to set limits on the Creator's versatility. This is why the scientist must test every hypothesis. In its exploration of the order of creation, science must be as open-minded as God is sovereign. When we understand this we can see the inner relationship between the sovereignty of God and the scientific method.

Moreover, once this is grasped, we can distinguish between 'processes of species differentiation' and what might be termed *evolutionism*. The former may be understood as a result of God's law-order for organic creaturely life. The latter, however, is a dogma in its presumption that evolution itself is the ultimate governing principle of life. And as a dogma it transcends the limits of what the scientific method as such can establish, and exhibits a pagan religious character, 'evolution' itself functioning as the 'god' upon which all else depends.

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<sup>3</sup> There is no Word of God for sin. God never said: 'Let there be sin'. Sin is nothing in itself. It has no God-given creaturely integrity. It is a falling short of the mark, 'a transgression of the righteous law of God'. *The Confession of Faith*, Chapter VI:6.

<sup>4</sup> The question of the 'days' of Genesis 1 is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that I believe that, apart from any question of astronomical or geological evidence, there are considerable exegetical objections to reading these 'days' as periods of 24 hours of 60 minutes each.

It should be clear that the ‘biblically directed learning’ that I am advocating is not religiously neutral. Such supposed neutrality does not exist in science, or scholarship, or in any other facet of human life. At the same time it should be said, loud and clear, that biblically directed learning is not unscientific. Based on and arising out of a biblically ordered world and life view, Christian science and scholarship refuses to award a divine or quasi-divine status to any abstract idea, or material thing or aspect of the creation. Naturalistic evolutionism is a good example. It awards a divine status to the processes of species change and differentiation. Evolution is given what we might call ‘God-status’. Naturalistic evolutionism makes divine what is creaturely.

When this happens (when something in the creation is regarded as divine or quasi-divine) in theorising and hypothesis formulation it is a sure sign that an idolatrous principle is at work. Such idolatry (for that is what it is) has the effect of retarding and impeding the advancement of scientific understanding. By contrast, scripturally directed learning is not bound by such ‘absolutes’ and ‘-isms’ in its investigations and hypothesising because it knows — even as we know in our hearts — that God alone is Sovereign. Indeed, I would want to argue that the very God-given structure of theorising is such that if we do not worship the LORD our God in our theorising we will find ourselves awarding divine or quasi-divine status to some aspect or feature of the creation (such as biological adaptation) and thereby lapse into some sort of idolatry. And such idolatry always distorts our theorising and lowers the quality and cogency of our science — even if its ruling idolatry is in line with that of the current research/science establishment!<sup>5</sup>

On this basis we may see that a scripturally directed world and life view does not constitute an attack upon science. On the contrary, it is its foundation and charter and the very basis of the freedom without which science and scholarship cannot flourish. Our view of science and scholarship is not therefore weird and esoteric. While the bible is not a book *of* science, it is a book *for* science. Without this foundation in biblical religion, science, scholarship, and the whole enterprise of learning will in the long run lapse into paganism and superstition.

In this context, we would do well to reflect on how it can be that such a supposedly ‘scientific’ age has increasingly fallen under the spell of ‘new age’ styles of neo-Hinduism. The truth is that science is like any other human endeavour: it can only be fully itself as it bows in humble obedience to the triune God. Such is the massive formative power of science

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<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, we should not accept Ian Plimer’s implication (*Telling Lies for God: Reason versus God*. Sydney: Random House, 1994) that the only choice is between fundamentalism and his ‘rational’ alternative.

and technology in our society (and these things are not wicked in themselves) that unless a biblically directed viewpoint is articulated with abundant clarity we may well find that Christian groups (the Churches not excluded) will not simply be marginalised in our society (as they already are) but they will themselves become increasingly sub-Christian. This is one of the reasons why I would judge the establishment of institutions of Christian higher learning to be the single highest priority facing us today.

So far I have discussed, I admit very briefly, the relationship of the bible to science and scholarship. I have sought to show that scripture is directive for the whole of our lives — including our science and scholarship — and at the same time I have argued that the fundamentalist view of the question is incorrect, even if well intended. In considering these questions we need to remember that fundamentalism is a reactionary movement. It emerged among bible-believing Christians as a response to ‘liberalism’ and the ‘higher critical’ approach to biblical research. The latter had its origins in the seventeenth century, but only came to full fruition as part of the development of the European historical consciousness during the nineteenth century, when it influenced all branches of Protestant Christianity.

Here, it seemed, it was not so much a question of “What is the relation of the bible to learning?”—but ‘What is the relation of science and scholarship to the bible?’ — it was the text of the bible that was now coming under scientific and especially philological and historical scrutiny. It is important to understand that this development arose from the Protestant desire to understand the scriptures better. To this end linguistics and history were pressed into service, and in the process their techniques became increasingly sophisticated.

My own discipline (history) owes much of its rigorous methodology to this movement which first applied such techniques to the biblical and classical texts. No historians today would be worthy of the name if they did not practise the critical analysis of written texts and other kinds of evidence. Here, as in all other sciences, analysis, hypothesis and theoretical formulation and argumentation must be offered on the basis of a rigorously empirical examination of the evidence.

When it came to the books of the bible, the results of such procedures — at least as they were actually followed — proved to be most disconcerting. Different source documents, or traditions, were discerned in the books previously ascribed to Moses. Isaiah was seen not to have been written entirely by Isaiah. Old puzzles were given an added significance. Did David really kill Goliath? (II Samuel 21:19, *cf.* I Chronicles 20:5). Was Jonah literally true or was it parable? And did Daniel really foretell events that actually transpired during the

times of the neo-Babylonian and Persian Empires — or was the book the work of other later authors?

In reality none of the issues raised by the scholarship of the nineteenth century has actually undermined what the bible teaches concerning its own inspiration and authority. They have served to emphasise the historicity and all that goes with the humanity of the scriptures. The bible never offers a view of itself or of its own authority that would preclude a complex authorial, editorial and therefore textual history. We are simply taught, *inter alia*, that “everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope”. (Romans 15:4).

And in all this we should not lose sight of the fact that it was human beings that the Holy Spirit used in the process of the composition, writing, editing and compiling of the scriptures as we now have them. The teaching that the scriptures are “God-breathed” does not preclude this: it requires it (*cf.* II Timothy 3:16). I could live with the statement that the scriptures are of divine inspiration and human composition provided that it is clearly recognised that the initiative in the process lay always with the Holy Spirit even where the inspired authors utilised pre-existent writings. The problem in the nineteenth-century (and subsequently) lay not so much with the critical-historical method as such — although no technique is perfect — no, the problem was not really with the method, but with the rationalistic and syncretistic pre-suppositions with which the method was employed and that in practice has directed its use.

As the assumptions of the so-called ‘enlightenment’ came into play, as men insisted that miracle-events were simply impossible, as they excluded the Almighty by insisting that the Old Testament amounted to a record of Israel's growing monotheistic consciousness independent of any divine initiative, many felt that the ‘sure foundation’ of their religion had just drained away to nothingness and that all that was left was doubts and confusion. In the nineteenth-century many came to the point where they rejected Christianity because they became convinced that any serious Christian profession was inconsistent with intellectual honesty.

All this hit evangelical Christianity in the mid and late nineteenth-century very hard — at a time when the theories of Darwin were also starting to cause considerable consternation. And these challenges served to expose evangelicalism's weak areas. Very strong on ‘preaching the gospel’, but not so clear on the scope of its implications, evangelicalism was also highly individualistic, and in this respect at least it drew upon the principles of the enlightenment

more than has generally been realised. The individual spiritual experience was over-emphasised at the expense of corporate scientific and scholarly endeavour.

The 'individual gospel' indeed 'saved souls', but as a distinctive and recognisable body and viewpoint evangelical Christianity generally failed to exhibit the scientific and intellectual mettle to effectively respond to the challenges before it. This is not to deny that some individual evangelical Christians made important contributions in science and scholarship. They did. But such endeavours never stood at the centre of evangelical life, and by the early twentieth century evangelicalism exhibited a tendency to become increasingly fundamentalist, with an almost obscurantist attitude towards science and scholarship.

Some evangelicals seemed to prefer not to think at all if the alternative was to address uncomfortable realities and disconcerting theories. The response to modern science and scholarship was too often one of obscurantism. 'Stay away!' — for to get too close was to court temptation, and that itself was sin. Among the more able young people there have always been those who have detected intellectual cowardice in attitudes which present themselves as 'avoiding the wisdom of the world', and who have responded by departing from the faith while remaining sceptical about the prevalent world-view of the secular university. In this manner some of the most able young people have been lost to the faith, while many beyond the churches have concluded that Christianity is not an honest option.

A legacy of anti-intellectualism has resulted in our having inherited such a situation. And it still goes on. Many who profess Christ still want to wash their hands of a biblically directed learning, while uncritically and unconsciously absorbing the ideologies and neo-paganisms of our times. Among such Christian people you would never believe that 'Rabbi' — teacher — was a title of honour in New Testament times. We are a regressed and compromised people.

I would like to argue that evangelical Christianity was seriously caught out in the nineteenth-century by its own strongly anti-intellectual impulse. When the 'liberal' and 'critical' approach to the bible came along, as the great age of the cosmos became clear, when Darwin's theory was given out, bible-believing Christianity in the English-speaking world paid a very heavy price for having neglected its calling to articulate our Christian world and life view in a philosophically and scientifically rigorous manner. Their appropriation of the gospel message seemed to have little room for a genuinely scriptural insight into the order of creation.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> According to the scriptures, our problem is not that we are creatures - our problem is that we are sinners. Without a positive insight into the order of creation we are repeatedly prone to speak of our creatureliness as if it were sinful. The gospel is misrepresented when it is preached as an ethereal alternative to our creaturely status. The teaching of the New Testament is that the entire order of creation is and will be restored in Christ.

Failure here meant that Evangelicalism was unable to analyse and criticise the fundamental presuppositions of these new developments with philosophical articulation and intellectual strength. Such a task was beyond theology or dogmatics as traditionally understood. It could not be done satisfactorily from within the ambit of theological colleges and other institutions designed to train persons for preaching office in the church.

What was needed, and what is still needed, is not obscurantism, or an accommodation to the passing intellectual fashions. What is needed is a biblically ordered and directed science and scholarship that will engage in foundational research in the encyclopaedia of the sciences. We need a philosophically tight and historiographically deep analysis of the pre-suppositions that lie at the very basis of the questions that are being asked, the theories that are being formulated, and the answers that are being given in the special sciences. Only then will we start to get a grip on things and be able to speak with authority in contemporary culture.

Why is it that we always seem to be going backwards — even as we live in times of great spiritual hunger? There has been no widespread and authentic renewal of bible-believing Christianity in English-speaking countries since the publication of *The Origin of the Species* (1859), and the emergence of fundamentalist literalism as a misplaced response to that perceived challenge.<sup>7</sup> The truth is that neither obscurantism nor accommodation is the answer. Ultimately obscurantism repudiates the cosmos that God loves and that Christ rules. Accommodation fails also. Where it does not secularise Christianity outright, accommodation nevertheless facilitates secularisation in the long run by continually adjusting the faith to the spirit of the age.

In Christ, in whom all things cohere (Colossians 1:15-20), we need something else: a Christian higher education and scholarship that will not be formed by the contemporary ideologies of unbelief and revolution, rationalism and irrationalism, but that will be a means of re-forming our entire view of the creation and redemption according to the Word of God.

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<sup>7</sup> This form of literalism seems to have entered evangelicalism by way of pre-millennial speculation on the books of Daniel and Revelation: modern fundamentalism later applied the same hermeneutic to Genesis and the Psalms.