"Anyone struggling to relate Genesis 1–11 to modern knowledge should welcome Collins's work. His literary, rhetorical, and theological analysis breaks the bonds of literalism that bind many scholars and fundamentalists, showing how the text 'gives the faithful the divinely approved way of picturing the events and that there are actual events that the pictures refer to.' His approach, indebted to C. S. Lewis, allows modern readers to appreciate the familiar ancient stories more richly—to read them well!"

Alan Millard
Emeritus Rankin Professor of Hebrew & Ancient Semitic Languages, The University of Liverpool

"In the beginning and throughout the process of reading, there is interpretation. This is true of all books but especially of the Bible. The peoples of the earth have for centuries been reading Genesis according to their own hermeneutical kinds. And God saw that it was *not* always good. I therefore thank God for Jack Collins's masterful guide to reading Scripture's good-faith communication in good faith, with literary sensitivity, an ear to the history of interpretation, and an eye on the present scientific context. *Reading Genesis Well* lives up to its title and then some. The first third treats biblical interpretation in general and is itself worth the price of the book. The rest of the book puts his reading strategy to work. He builds on C. S. Lewis's critical and imaginative approach to reading then offers a contextually sensitive account of just what the author of Genesis is saying and doing in chapters 1–11. It's important for reading the rest of Scripture to get the beginning right, and Collins here provides the resources for doing just that."

Kevin J. Vanhoozer
Research Professor of Systematic Theology, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

"An intelligent and well-informed discussion about reading the Bible sensibly and sensitively, especially the early chapters of Genesis. Collins brings the delightful common sense of C. S. Lewis to this confused and controversial area, and the result is a book that not only develops a coherent approach to reading but is also entertaining to read. There is an overwhelming amount of literature on the topic of how to read Genesis: It is worth taking time for this one."

Kristen Birkett
Lecturer in Ethics, Philosophy, and Church History, Oak Hill Theological College

"*Reading Genesis Well* is a book aptly titled. Jack Collins once again shows himself to be a careful exegete and wise guide. He skillfully examines the biblical text with an eye attentive to both its ancient Near Eastern setting and its divine revelatory content. His treatment of the relevant biblical, theological, literary, historical, and scientific questions is masterful and judicious."

Paul Copan
Pledger Family Chair of Philosophy and Ethics, Palm Beach Atlantic University, and coauthor of *Creation out of Nothing: A Biblical, Philosophical, and Scientific Exploration*

"Since I first came across Jack Collins's work (some twenty-odd years ago), it stood out for me as a model of honest and respectful interaction between reading the Bible and science. I've always been impressed by his way of combining respect for the Bible's teaching, willingness to let the Word of God speak for itself (without superposing foreign categories on it), insights from modern linguistics, and a thorough concern for dialogue with science."

Lydia Jaeger
Directrice des études, Institut Biblique de Nogent, Nogent-sur-Marne, France

"This book is full of good sense about biblical interpretation. Readers who work through the principles and examples in the early chapters will be prepared for an approach to Genesis that prioritizes the intended message of the sacred text rather than modern disputes. Those who want the Scriptures to set the agenda regarding creation will benefit from this careful appropriation of C. S. Lewis's literary wisdom. Jack Collins has the spiritual sensitivity, exegetical skill, and theological savvy to be a trustworthy guide."

Dan Treier
Knoedler Professor of Theology and PhD Program
Director, Wheaton College Graduate School

"In *Reading Genesis Well*, C. John Collins teaches us how to be good readers of Genesis 1–11. Collins guides conservative readers between the twin errors either of interpreting the text in a woodenly literalistic fashion or of segregating Genesis and science into entirely different realms. Rather, he leads the reader to approach Genesis with linguistic and literary tools provided by C. S. Lewis. The result is an excellent theological reading of the first chapters of Genesis."

Kenneth Keathley
Senior Professor of Theology, Jesse Hendley Endowed Chair of Biblical Theology, and Director of the L. Russ Bush Center for Faith and Culture

"Jack Collins provides the kind of work on Genesis 1–11 we need today: a careful, balanced analysis that will guide readers of good will to greater understanding. Collins cuts through liberal and conservative rhetorical politics to help readers see what is really in this great summative passage."

Paul House
Professor of Divinity, Beeson Divinity School, Samford University

"A trenchant and yet irenic critique of literalistic interpretations of Genesis 1–11, whether on the part of skeptics or of 'Bible-science defenders' . . . an impressive inter-disciplinary investigation that is both informative and thought-provoking."

William Lane Craig
President, Reasonable Faith, and Professor of Philosophy,
Talbot School of Theology and Houston Baptist University

"As a religious Jew, I found Jack Collins's *Reading Genesis Well* to be a highly erudite and fascinating exposition by a religious Christian of the foundational stories of Genesis 1–11. The author is a superior scholar—thoughtful, cautious, measured, and ethically sensitive. I appreciated very much the wealth of information on Christian perceptions of Genesis. It was also encouraging to learn that, both in terms of his methodology of analysis and religious understanding, a considerable fortuitous overlap exists between Christian and Jewish comprehensions. For all the reasons mentioned above, I heartily recommend the book."

Professor Jeremiah Unterman
Herzl Institute and author of *Justice for All: How the Jewish Bible Revolutionized Ethics*

"We know what Genesis says. But how many of us are confident that we know what it means? In this insightful and imaginative volume, Jack Collins gives us the tools we need to understand these vital opening chapters of the Bible. With C. S. Lewis as a conversation partner, Collins walks us through contested terrain with the settled step of a seasoned trail guide. His writing is precise but not pedantic, learned yet practical. *Reading Genesis Well* delivers even more than it promises, teaching us skills and principles that also apply to the entire Bible."

Rebecca Rine
Assistant Professor of Biblical and Religious Studies, Grove City College

"Every student and scholar of Scripture should read Collins's *Reading Genesis Well*. It is that rare piece of biblical scholarship that manages to be thoroughly conversant in the wide-ranging scholarship relevant to its subject, while managing to be quite readable and intuitive. In the process, it offers a fresh and compelling way of reading the Bible and the opening texts of Genesis with integrity. Collins has found a way through the interpretive thicket that frustrates ordinary Christians and misleads many prominent biblical scholars. Whether you have studied the Bible for decades or just want to read it more carefully, you will benefit from this book."

Jay Wesley Richards
Assistant Research Professor, Catholic University of America

"Just when I think C. John ("Jack") Collins has had his last word on the opening chapters of God's Word, he goes and outdoes himself! In *Reading Genesis Well: Navigating History, Science, Poetry, and Truth*, Collins invites us to sit at the feet of a literary genius—C. S. Lewis—and learn how to read Genesis 1–11 wisely. Drawing insight from the disciplines of linguistics, literary study, and rhetoric, and with help from Lewis, Collins guides us toward a critically rigorous reading strategy that applies not only to Genesis 1–11 but to any and all texts. Become a better reader of Genesis 1–11 by becoming an apprentice of C. S. Lewis—what a novel idea! What a great book! I highly recommend!"

Todd A. Wilson
President, The Center for Pastor Theologians

"What does it mean to be a faithful reader of the Bible? How are we to understand the creation account and the early chapters of Genesis? How does God's revelation in the Word illuminate his created world? How do Christian faith and science relate? These are critical questions facing Christians today. C. John Collins has been at the forefront of giving faithful answers to these questions for years, and with this groundbreaking book, *Reading Genesis Well*, he remains there. Collins gives attention to the text of Scripture and how we are best to read and understand God's revealed, authoritative account of creation. Situating himself in Genesis 1–11, Collins adeptly navigates through this labyrinth by addressing vital issues that impact reading the biblical text well, by focusing on history, poetry, science, and, ultimately, truth. Grounded in the inerrant and authoritative Scriptures, affirming the literal sense along with literary sensitivities, Collins builds on the conventional tools of exegesis by including the literary and linguistic insights of C. S. Lewis. This is a brilliant move to use Lewis as a conversation partner and glean from his literary insights as a gateway to a better understanding of Genesis, along with hermeneutical methods that shed light on reading other texts of Scripture as well. This is a must-read for pastors, biblical scholars, theologians, and scientists. And once you have read the book, teach the material to others. Superbly done!"

Greg Strand
Executive Director of Theology and Credentialing, EFCA,
Adjunct Professor of Pastoral Theology, TEDS

"This new book from the pen of Jack Collins is a treasure, representing the coming together of Collins's multiple interests and competencies in a compelling case for how the early chapters of Genesis should be read. Well written and wide ranging, this book is about much more than just Genesis 1–11 or even the interplay of Bible and science; it is a guide to how to read the Bible as it is meant to be read. Collins asks the right questions and puts his readers on the path of discovering well-founded answers."

V. Philips Long
Professor of Old Testament, Regent College, Vancouver

"This is a book to be read by theologians and scientists alike. Using C. S. Lewis as his guide, Collins brilliantly synthesizes ideas from modern linguistics to show what the much-debated opening chapters of Genesis do say and what they don't. Taking these chapters of Genesis as the introduction to the big story of the Bible, meant to shape the worldview of ancient Israel and their heirs (the church), Collins credibly argues that interpreting these chapters as ancient science is misguided and rooted in the mistaken idea that scientific language is the most accurate and therefore the most truthful kind of discourse. I highly recommend this book to fellow scientists as it has deepened my own understanding of the frontiers of biblical scholarship, increased my appreciation for the complexity of textual interpretation, and invited me to develop a much more nuanced understanding of the features of Genesis 1–11 and their relation to science."

Arend J. Poelarends
Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy, Wheaton College

READING GENESIS WELL

Navigating History, Poetry, Science, and Truth in Genesis 1-11

C. JOHN COLLINS

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ISBN 978-0-310-59857-2

Cover design: Gore Studio, Inc.
Cover image: Shutterstock
Interior composition: Kait Lamphere

Printed in the United States of America

18 19 20 2122 23 24 25 26 27 28 /DHV/ 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

For Diane, Joy, and Joseph, with all my love

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As I write these Acknowledgements, the fear of leaving someone out almost paralyzes me. It's inevitable, I suppose: But I apologize beforehand.

This monograph results from a project I carried out as a Senior Research Fellow at the Carl Henry Center of Trinity International University in Deerfield, Illinois, with a generous grant from the Templeton Religion Trust. My contract "requires" that I mention this arrangement, but no requirement is needed, as my gratitude exceeds my ability to express it. At Templeton, I especially thank Michael Murray and John Churchill for encouragement and helpful conversations. At Trinity, the whole University showed enormous hospitality, and faculty members Richard Averbeck, Ingrid Faro, Brad Gundlach, Dana Harris, Tom McCall, Kevin Vanhoozer, Lawson Younger, together with my fellow research fellows John Hilber, Clinton Ohlers, Todd Patterson, and Hans Madueme, provided friendship, Christian love, and intellectual stimulation (even sometimes disagreement!). And the Henry Center administrative staff, Geoffrey Fulkerson and Joel Chopp, did so much to make my stay and my work satisfying—they are an incredible asset.

My colleagues at Covenant Theological Seminary made it possible for me to be away for the entire academic year, 2016–17, and I thank them. I thank them as well for the opportunity to grow as a scholar and as a Christian over a quarter century of service. I mention especially the President, Mark Dalbey, and the Dean, Jay Sklar, as well as Brian Aucker, Jerram Barrs, Hans Bayer, Dan Doriani, Mike Goheen, Robbie Griggs, Mark Ryan, Michael Williams, and Bob Yarbrough (all of whom may recognize some of their fingerprints herein). And nothing much would happen here apart from the work of Jim Pakala and his library team, and Gerry Reimer, the faculty secretary. I think, too, of some of my former students, such as Max Rogland, Mark Stirling, Dru Johnson, Dane Ortlund, Gavin Ortlund, Matt Haynes, AJ Poelarends,

David Illman, Susan Thomas, Cheryl Eaton, and Amy Allan, whose own insights, questions, and pushback have meant much to me. Around the world, other colleagues and friends have contributed to my growth in many ways, among whom are Lydia Jaeger, Esther Meek, Phil Long, John Walton, Steve Moshier, Dan Treier, Tremper Longman III, J. I. Packer, Bruce Winter, Vern Poythress, Deb Haarsma, Jeff Schloss, Jim Stump, Kathryn Applegate, Steve Meyer, Paul Nelson, Mike Keas, Jay Richards, J. P. Moreland, John Lennox, Hugh Ross, Fuz Rana, and Ken Keathley.

I am also grateful to the good people at Zondervan for their interest in and help with this effort. I especially thank Katya Covrett, not only for encouragement, but also for patience (as this project led to delays in another one for Zondervan!), and Nancy Erickson for conscientious, cheerful, and helpful editorial work.

Above all, I thank God for my wife, Diane, and children, Joy and Joseph. They have been after me for years to write my "Forest and Trees Book." This isn't exactly what they had in mind, but that other book will never happen without this one. We have learned together about communication, about our place in God's Big Story, and about mutual love and support. May God give us many more years of learning from and with one another! To whom else could I dedicate this book?

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ANF	*Ante-Nicene Fathers*
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AUSS	*Andrews University Seminary Studies*
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BCOT	Baker Commentary on the Old Testament
BDAG	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BST	The Bible Speaks Today
BT	*The Bible Translator*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBSC	Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges
CGT	Cambridge Greek Testament
CSB	Christian Standard Bible
CTJ	Calvin Theological Journal
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
FOTL	Forms of the Old *Testament Literature*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*

JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JESOT	*Journal for the Evangelical Study of the Old Testament*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JOTT	*Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
K&D	Keil, Carl Friedrich, and Franz Delitzsch. *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*. Translated by James Martin et al. 25 vols. Edinburgh, 1857–1878. Repr., 10 vols., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
NCB	New Century Bible
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDOTTE	*New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren. 5. Vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NPNF[1]	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 1
NPNF[2]	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 2
OPTAT	*Occasional Papers in Translation and Textlinguistics*
OTG	Old Testament Guides
Praep. ev.	Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*; English translations from *Preparation for the Gospel*, Edwin H. Gifford, trans.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1903
QJS	*Quarterly Journal of Speech*
Rhet.	*Rhetoric*
SBET	*Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology*
SCB	*Science and Christian Belief*
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SwJT	*Southwestern Journal of Theology*
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TJ	*Trinity Journal*
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Anyone familiar with Judaism and Christianity recognizes that these religions place great value on the book of Genesis, especially on its first eleven chapters. Responses to these chapters range from outright skepticism (as in, "How can anyone intellectually responsible credit these ideas at all?"); to critical appreciation ("the texts are wrong about history and science if we take them literally, but they still teach us valuable moral lessons"); to strong affirmation ("these texts are to be taken literally, which then tells us what true science should look like"). And there are many more options available.

One's view of the biblical texts depends on one's interpretive approach—and generally the interpretive approach is assumed rather than warranted. It is even controversial whether any such warranting is itself warranted or simply "explaining away"!

In this work I aim to develop a reading strategy for Genesis 1–11 that draws its ideas from theories in linguistics, literary study, and rhetoric. These disciplines, which in the usual university curriculum are held separate, nevertheless share a set of common concerns and questions, such as:

- What kind of text is this?
- What authority relationship exists between the author and audience?
- What setting does the text assume by which it is to be received (public reading, song, private reading)?
- How does the author choose words and descriptions to influence the dispositional stance of his audience?
- What does this text intend to do to and for its recipients?
- How does the text's organization support (or hinder) its apparent intended effect?

As I draw on studies from these disciplines, I have a particular orientation: I find C. S. Lewis, a twentieth-century literary scholar and Christian writer, to be an example of someone who displayed an intuitive grasp of these concerns and whose reflections on the reading process, when engaged with these disciplines, can help us to *formulate a critically rigorous reading strategy for Genesis 1–11*.

My way in, however, begins with some history. Much of the twentieth- and twenty-first-century discussion is playing out intellectual developments that came to fruition in nineteenth-century Europe. In particular, ideas came from continental Europe into Britain and North America, and we are still working them through.[1]

1.A THE HISTORICAL BACKCLOTH: BENJAMIN JOWETT AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITERALISM

The year is 1860, and a London publishing house has issued a landmark volume with the innocuous title *Essays and Reviews*.[2] Taken together, these essays have made a case for the ready use of "critical" approaches to the Bible and Christian theology in the Church of England and beyond.[3] The historian Josef Altholz, sympathetic to the essayists' program, describes the volume's contents:

> The volume itself was modest in its pretensions and varied in the character and quality of its seven essays. The first, by Frederick Temple, was a warmed-over sermon urging the free study of the Bible. Rowland Williams wrote a provocative essay on Bunsen, denying the predictive character of Old Testament prophecies. Baden Powell flatly denied the possibility of miracles. H. B. Wilson gave the widest possible latitude to subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles and questioned the eternity of damnation. C. W. Goodwin (the only layman among the Essayists) wrote a critique of the attempted "harmonies" between Genesis and geology. Mark Pattison wrote a learned and cold historical study of the evidential theologians of the eighteenth century (perhaps the only

1. Roger Beckwith, "*Essays and Reviews* (1860): The Advance of Liberalism," *Churchman* 108:1 (1994), draws on H. G. Reventlow, *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World* (London: SCM, 1984), to argue that the continental ideas derive from the English deists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—though of course the basic outlook is much older, as exemplified by the Epicurean poet Lucretius (first century BC).

2. Frederick Temple, Rowland Williams, Baden Powell, Henry Bristow Wilson, C. W. Goodwin, Mark Pattison, and Benjamin Jowett, *Essays and Reviews* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1860).

3. To be sure, these critical approaches have a history in continental Europe that stretches much further back. My focus here is on the English-speaking world.

> essay of lasting value). The volume was capped by Benjamin Jowett's tremendous though wayward essay "On the Interpretation of Scripture," in which he urged that the Bible be read "like any other book" and made an impassioned plea for freedom of scholarship. Little of all this was original, though it was new to most Englishmen.[4]

As Altholz notes, the responses also varied in their quality.[5] Here, though, I plan not to assess the arguments in *Essays and Reviews* so much as to recognize how some of the authors clearly state the hermeneutical issues—issues that remain with us to this day, whether we are discussing Genesis 1–11 or some other facet of biblical study. (In the same way, I will not analyze the traditionalist responses, except as they present hermeneutical questions.)

The two entries in *Essays and Reviews* that help to focus our attention come from Charles W. Goodwin (1817–78), "On the Mosaic Cosmogony" (pp. 207–53) and Benjamin Jowett (1817–93), "On the Interpretation of Scripture" (pp. 330–433).

Goodwin insisted,

> The Hebrew records, the basis of religious faith, *manifestly countenanced the opinion of the earth's immobility* and certain other views of the universe very incompatible with those propounded by Copernicus.[6]

Of course, this depends on the reading of Bible texts such as Psalm 93:1, "Yes, the world is established; *it shall never be moved*" (see also Pss 96:10; 104:5), which touches the hermeneutical questions that I intend to address. Goodwin makes his own stance clear when he says soon afterward:

> It can scarcely be said that this chapter [Gen 1] is not intended in part to teach and convey at least some physical truth, and *taking its words in their plain sense* it *manifestly* gives a view of the universe adverse to that of modern science.[7]

---

4. Josef Altholz, "The Mind of Victorian Orthodoxy: Anglican Responses to 'Essays and Reviews,' 1860–1864," *Church History* 51:2 (1982): 186–97, quote on p. 186.

5. In Altholz's judgment, the two most prestigious responses were also essay collections: William Thomson, ed., *Aids to Faith: A Series of Theological Essays by Several Writers, Being a Reply to "Essays and Reviews"* (New York: Appleton, 1862); and E. M. Goulburn, H. J. Rose, C. A. Heurtley, W. J. Irons, G. Rorison, A. W. Haddan, and Christopher Wordsworth, *Replies to "Essays and Reviews"* (New York: Appleton, 1862). Bishop Samuel Wilberforce reviewed the work (anonymously) in *The Quarterly Review* 109 (1861): 248–301 and sponsored the *Replies*.

6. Goodwin, "On the Mosaic Cosmogony," 207. Emphasis added here and throughout the chapter.

7. Ibid., 208–9.

Goodwin's syntax is unfortunately convoluted, but his meaning comes through after some reflection. He wants to take the words in their plain sense, and he reads the biblical authors (and especially Genesis) as advocating a physical picture of the world. He is especially clear about this when he objects to any effort to harmonize Genesis with then-current scientific theories: in such efforts "*the plain meaning of the Hebrew text* is unscrupulously tampered with."[8]

Jowett follows a similar course when he describes the task of his ideal interpreter of a biblical passage:

> The office of the interpreter is not to add another [meaning], but *to recover the original one*; the meaning, that is, of the words as they first struck on the ears or flashed before the eyes of those who heard and read them.[9]

On its surface, this sounds entirely uncontroversial. Did not the medievals claim to found their reading on the "simple" or "literal" sense? However, Jowett distances himself from these traditions when he goes on to require:

> The simple words of that book he tries to preserve absolutely pure from the refinements or distinctions of later times.[10]

Jowett's sentiment rejects the use of the theological wrestlings of the early church; but further, it also separates each biblical book from an organic relationship with the rest of the canon. Like Goodwin, Jowett stresses what he calls "the *natural meaning* of particular expressions."[11] Further, "The true use of interpretation is to *get rid of interpretation*, and leave us alone in the company of the author."[12]

Both of these authors have insisted on the primacy of what may be called the "plain" sense of the words. In particular, such plain readings of Genesis find its creation story at odds with the (more credible) story offered by nineteenth-century science, although Goodwin and Jowett reassure us that we might be able to preserve the spiritual value of the Bible nonetheless.

Those holding to traditional forms of Christian belief took one of two tacks in response: either to reject the scientific theorizing altogether (often with replacement theories, which eventually became "Creation Science"), or else to

8. Ibid., 211.
9. Jowett, "On the Interpretation of Scripture," 338. Emphasis added here and throughout the chapter.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., 352.
12. Ibid., 384.

accept parts of the theorizing and to show the Bible's compatibility with those parts—some form of "concordism." This second tack seems to have been by far the more common approach among the educated in the nineteenth century.[13] In order to support the compatibility argument, traditionalists appealed to what is called "phenomenal language," the idea that the biblical writers spoke in terms of what things look like (e.g., the sun *looks like* it rises). They also aimed to show correspondence between the biblical description and contemporary science—an aim that is problematic, both because it seems inconsistent with the appeal to phenomenal language and because the science (say, the geological ages, or the Nebular Hypothesis) is now considered out of date!

The notion of phenomenal language has recently come into some disrepute, even among traditionalists. It is considered an evasion of the plain meaning of the biblical texts. For example, consider the following from a valuable work on geology released by an evangelical publishing house:

> The ancient world universally believed that the dome-like vault of the sky is a glassy, crystalline solid. . . . Some commentators attempt to *avoid the force of the statement* by claiming that Scripture is using *phenomenal language*, the language of appearance. But that's our problem. The Israelites would not have seen it that way. The sky didn't just look solid to them; they believed it to be a solid.[14]

It is true that appealing to phenomenal language or poetic description in the course of finding a harmonization between the biblical and scientific accounts has the feel of an arbitrary measure, a kind of apologetic get-out-of-jail-free card. That is, it looks like the principle is to harmonize what one can and then to excuse the rest by invoking some kind of figurative language. Indeed, many treatments in the modern Creation Science movement have the same feel when they propose an alternative "scientific" account for various geological and cosmological features (say, a global flood) and explain other difficulties by supposing that God created some parts of the universe with an appearance of age.

13. See, for example, Alexander McCaul (who wrote the response in Thomson, *Aids to Faith*) and Gilbert Rorison (who wrote for *Replies to "Essays and Reviews"*); Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981 [1871]). i:570–74. None of these leading responses called into question the validity of the standard geology of their day or advocated what we might call a "young earth" reading of Genesis. Michael Roberts, "Geology and Genesis unearthed," *Churchman* 112:3 (1998): 225–55, shows that standard geology was widely accepted by the orthodox Anglicans of this era.

14. Davis A. Young and Ralph F. Stearley, *The Bible, Rocks and Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 206–7.

Some traditionalists, seeing these problems and finding theories of Creation Science unattractive, have resorted to a uniform designation of complementarity between the biblical and scientific accounts—that is, they say that these accounts do not compete with each other, since they do not address the same questions. Such people do not want to go along with Jowett in his theological minimalism, but they do seem to find the Goodwin-esque reading of Genesis to be compelling. Others have redoubled their efforts in Creation Science, seeking to eliminate the seemingly arbitrary employment of inadequate arguments under the conviction that the truth of the Bible requires that we shape our scientific theories accordingly. Still others resort to a kind of fideism or anti-realism when it comes to science in general.

What is one to do in the face of such discussion? The basic question concerns what it means to be a good reader of any material, and especially the material in Genesis. Perhaps Jowett has won the field; how can any reasonable person contend against the following principle?

> A knowledge of the original language is a necessary qualification of the Interpreter of Scripture. . . . To this, however, another qualification should be added, which is, *the logical power to perceive the meaning of words in reference to their context*.[15]

Jowett revealed, however, that beneath his words lies a determined literalism in reading any biblical passage when he lists the numerous "discrepancies" that he finds in Scripture and denounces the "apologetic" cast of those who would resolve them. A case in point is Jesus' "swear not at all" (Matt 5:34, AV), which Jowett finds contradicted by the oath-taking practices of "Christian countries." Any question about "with-respect-to-what" the Dominical dictum was meant to apply is ruled out before even being considered: the precept is "so plain, so universal, so exclusive."[16]

This last comment from Jowett shows that the discussion is wider than science-faith issues (though I am giving that primacy here). Some Christian groups have argued that taking Jesus seriously means embracing pacifism, refusing oaths (even in court), and so on. Do those groups who have justified the use of force and oaths in properly constituted social settings (the majority of Christians) *not* take Jesus seriously—or is it simply that they read his instructions differently?

15. Jowett, "On the Interpretation of Scripture," 390–91.
16. Ibid., 364.

1.B JAMES BARR, JOWETT'S HEIR

Jowett and Goodwin have a modern heir to their hermeneutic, James Barr (1924–2006). Barr made his initial splash in biblical studies with his books *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (1961) and *Biblical Words for Time* (1962), trenchant critiques of poor lexicographic methodology in what was then called the Biblical Theology Movement. Together with *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (1968), his books provoked many students to study modern linguistic methods for defining words in Hebrew and Greek.[17] A decade later Barr targeted what he called "fundamentalism," with *Fundamentalism* (1978) and *Beyond Fundamentalism* (1984). He then moved on to argue against the ideas of Brevard Childs (1923–2007) and his school of canonical criticism (which both accepts historical criticism of the biblical books and views the completed canon as the proper context of interpretation).

In 1989 Barr published a pair of articles addressing the issue of "literality"[18] in which he continued to argue that fundamentalists, for all their vaunted devotion to Scripture in its original intention, are very selective in their literalism: "Theological statements of scripture about God, if all taken literally, lead to mutual contradictions, which are usually overcome by abandoning the literal level of interpretation."[19] Further, "Literality should properly require that, just as nothing that is there in words should be ignored, so nothing that is not there in words should be allowed."[20]

Barr denied that the Jowett approach was minimalistic and theologically sterile (see my additional comments in chs. 2 and 8).[21] However, the way Barr carries the Jowett torch and the theological minimalism that it

17. In these books Barr himself never expounded a comprehensive method for lexicography, but those influenced by him did. Among these I can include Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), and my own PhD thesis, "Homonymous Verbs in Biblical Hebrew: An Investigation of the Role of Comparative Philology" (University of Liverpool, 1988).

18. James Barr, "Literality," *Faith and Philosophy* 6:4 (1989): 412–28. Barr's work is aimed at fundamentalists more than at anyone else. See also "The Literal, the Allegorical, and Modern Biblical Scholarship," *JSOT* 44 (1989): 3–17, which is aimed especially at Childs, who had argued that modern biblical scholarship follows too much in the tradition of literalism that Jowett exemplifies and thus is theologically impoverished. For this, see Brevard Childs, "The *sensus literalis* of Scripture: An Ancient and Modern Problem," in H. Donner et al., eds., *Beiträge zur Alttestamentlichen Theologie* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 80–93.

19. Barr, "Literality," 417.

20. Ibid., 422.

21. See James Barr, "Jowett and the Reading of the Bible 'Like Any Other Book'," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 4 (1985): 1–44. Paul Noble, "The *sensus literalis*: Jowett, Childs, and Barr," *JTS* 44:1 (1993): 1–23, gives a penetrating critique of Barr's arguments.

produces can be seen in Barr's published lectures on the story of the fall in Genesis 1–3.[22] Barr distances the Genesis narrative from Paul's interpretation in the New Testament. He states, "it is not without importance that the term 'sin' is not used anywhere in the [Genesis] story . . . nor do we find any of the terms usually understood as 'evil,' 'rebellion,' 'transgression,' or 'guilt.'"[23] Barr's sentiment exemplifies his determination to only see what is in the text. His discussion of "surely die" (Gen 2:17) focuses entirely on physical death.[24]

Barr occupied a respected place in biblical studies, and thus he is not the only one who reads this way. Indeed, Jowett's hermeneutic has, in many ways, won the day in how biblical scholars read the Bible.[25] In fact, several scholars who would identify themselves as traditionalist (or even evangelical) follow Barr in their manner of reading and, each in his own way, also in Barr's skeptical conclusions about the Bible.[26] These evangelical scholars, I think, agree with a theme that runs through Barr's work, namely, that anything other than a straightforward literalism is a less-than-fully-honest way of reading the ancient text. Most curiously, many young-earth creationists find Barr's advocacy of literalism (in his book *Fundamentalism*) quite appealing, and they cite it with approval—Barr gives them the chance to claim that they are the honest traditionalists (as over against those who are untroubled about the age of the earth).[27] Now, these young-earth creationists follow Barr selectively. They do not, for example, agree with his take on Genesis 3 or on the valid basis of source criticism in literality and a number of other topics.[28] (Judging whether this strategy is critically sound or not lies outside my current concern.)

22. James Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1992). I have given a short review of the book in *Presbyterion* 37:1 (Spring 2011), 59–62.

23. Barr, *Garden of Eden*, 6.

24. Ibid., 8–14.

25. For just one example out of many—but especially relevant to this study—take John Day's, *From Creation to Babel: Studies in Genesis 1–11* (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2014), with which I interact in chapter 7.

26. For example, Kenton Sparks, *Sacred Word, Broken Word: Biblical Authority and the Dark Side of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012); Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say about Human Origins* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2012); Denis Lamoureux, *Evolution: Scripture and Nature Say Yes!* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016).

27. See, for example, the essays in Terry Mortenson and Thane Ury, eds., *Coming to Grips with Genesis* (Green Forest, AR: Master, 2008), especially pp. 161, 204.

28. As I note in my book, *Science and Faith: Friends or Foes?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003), 364–66, many also appeal to a letter purported to be from Barr to David Watson, a creationist author. (Although some have expressed doubts, I assume the letter to be authentic, and the copy I have comes from Answers in Genesis by way of Steve Jones of Australia.) In that book I offer an analysis of the letter and its use.

1.C WHY DO I THINK C. S. LEWIS CAN HELP?

Everyone engaged in these exchanges about Genesis and science has views of how language and literature work; these views generally lie below the surface, below the level of articulation and defense. The classical disciplines of literary and rhetorical criticism and the modern disciplines of linguistic pragmatics and sociolinguistics (language in use, as I will describe in the next chapter) should come into play here.

But again, how? And can we do this rigorously? I propose to explore the contributions of a creative literary scholar, who had a classical education, to see if some help is available, namely, C. S. Lewis (1898–1963). Lewis has provided us with a raft-load of linguistic and literary ideas that can be developed into tools for careful reading—though he never collected those ideas into a systematic exposition. Highly regarded among religious traditionalists for his apologetics and fantasy stories, Lewis actually trained in philosophy, classics, and English literature (and taught them at Oxford University and later at Cambridge). Though successful primarily as a popular writer, he continues to attract scholarly attention in philosophy, theology, and literature, as recent PhD theses show.[29]

Lewis's ideas in many ways reflect the raw observations that lie at the base of several linguistic disciplines, such as lexical semantics, speech-act theory, and sociolinguistics.[30] These disciplines can be abstruse and sometimes counterintuitive, as well as contradictory between themselves, but Lewis offers a model of someone who intuitively (albeit informally) steers a wise path through the difficulties. Further, insights from these disciplines can help to refine Lewis's informal comments to give us a critically defensible approach to reading.[31] Also, these linguistic disciplines overlap with other disciplines that

29. E.g., Steven Lovell, "Philosophical Themes from C. S. Lewis" (Sheffield University, 2003); Michael Ward, "The Son and the Other Stars: Christology and Cosmology in the Imagination of C. S. Lewis" (St Andrews University, 2005); Hsiu-Chin Chou, "The Problem of Faith and the Self: The Interplay between Literary Art, Apologetics and Hermeneutics in C. S. Lewis' Religious Narratives" (Glasgow University, 2008); Jason Lepojärvi, "God Is Love but Love Is Not God: Studies on C. S. Lewis's Theology of Love" (Helsinki University, 2015); Daniel Rafer, "Mythic Structures in the Works of C. S. Lewis" (De Montfort University, 2002).

30. The main sources are Lewis's *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1942); *God in the Dock*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970); *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967); *Reflections on the Psalms* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1958); *Studies in Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967); and *The Discarded Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), but offhand remarks appear scattered throughout Lewis' writings.

31. For example, my PhD thesis, "Homonymous Verbs in Biblical Hebrew," applies modern semantics to a vexing issue in Hebrew lexicography. I found that Lewis's *Studies in Words* provides an excellent example of good lexical method applied to reading old texts without worrying about theoretical apparatus.

are often separate, namely, rhetorical criticism and literary criticism. Lewis freely employs them all because human behavior does so—illustrating that what God has joined together in normal human behavior people should not separate for the sake of disciplinary turf. Several scholars in these disciplines have recognized the desirability of bringing their individual disciplinary programs into fruitful interaction, and I plan to have Lewis help me do just that.[32]

This intuitive approach of Lewis will serve us as a virtue, not as a drawback. The various disciplines of linguistics each have competing schools of thought when it comes to theoretical integration of their empirical studies. This is as it should be in any scientific enterprise. At the same time, since these disciplines deal with human behavior, each of us has some ready access to the empirical data—and, with due critical acumen, is entitled to receive, reject, or adapt the practical parts of the theories without yoking ourselves to *every* point made in the theory. Hence, I call my approach "critically intuitive." Walker Percy (1916–1990) put it well: "Language is too important to be left to linguisticians."[33] In the same book Percy recounts "the extraordinary sort of thing language is," to which, in his view, academic linguists had not done proper justice.[34] However, "the extraordinary character of language does not depend for its unveiling upon a piece of research but is there under our noses for all to see."[35] A very Lewisian sentiment.

I will make the case in the next chapter for the use of linguistic pragmatics, which focuses on language as a means of social interaction. This means that I disagree with linguists who hold strictly to the tradition of the premier linguist of the twentieth century, Noam Chomsky (b. 1928), who described language in this way:

> The language faculty is often equated with "communication"—a trait that is shared by all animal species and possibly also by plants. In our view, for the purposes of scientific understanding, language should be understood as a particular computational cognitive system, implemented neurally, that cannot be equated with an excessively expansive notion of "language as communication."[36]

32. See, for example, Alois Heuboeck, "Some Aspects of Coherence, Genre and Rhetorical Structure—and Their Integration into a Generic Model of Text," *University of Reading Language Studies Working Papers* 1 (2009): 35–45; Christopher Eisenhart and Barbara Johnstone, "Discourse Analysis and Rhetorical Studies," in Johnstone and Eisenhart, eds., *Rhetoric in Detail: Discourse Analysis of Rhetorical Talk and Text* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2008), 3–21.

33. Walker Percy, *The Message in the Bottle* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000), 10.

34. Ibid., 151.

35. Ibid.

36. Johan J. Bolhuis, Ian Tattersall, Noam Chomsky, Robert C. Berwick, "How Could Language

This tradition has tended to confuse a methodological measure that serves scientific understanding with a practical (perhaps ontological) judgment about the thing under study. Chomskian theories about syntax and its relation to the human mind shed light on many subjects, such as human uniqueness and the problems posed to a purely Darwinian account of the origin of the language capacity, and thus we are all in his debt; but all humans know what they use language for and thus are entitled to assess some of Chomsky's assertions.[37]

Aristotle (384–322 BC), who was as insistent as any Chomskian on the unique role of human language, made these (intuitive) observations (Aristotle, *Politics*, I.1.9ff [1253a], LCL):

> And why man is a political animal in a greater measure than any bee or any gregarious animal is clear. For nature, as we declare, does nothing without purpose; and *man alone of the animals possesses speech*. The mere voice, it is true, can indicate pain and pleasure, and therefore is possessed by the other animals as well (for their nature has been developed so far as to have sensations of what is painful and pleasant and to indicate those sensations to one another), but *speech is designed to indicate the advantageous and the harmful, and therefore also the right and the wrong*; for it is the special property of man in distinction from the other animals that he alone has perception of good and bad and right and wrong and the other moral qualities, and it is partnership in these things that makes a household and a city-state.

In the chapters that follow I will develop a Lewisian, critically intuitive approach to hermeneutics. Although I aim specifically at reading Genesis 1–11, I consider this approach to have benefits more widely in biblical exegesis (though I will not try to develop that here). I will begin in chapter 2 with

Have Evolved?" *PLOS Biology* 12:8 (August 2014): e1001934, 1. This represents the position that I was taught in an upper-level linguistics class by a Chomskian, Sol Saporta (1925–2008), at the University of Washington in 1983. See also Marc D. Häuser, Noam Chomsky, W. Tecumseh Fitch, "The Faculty of Language: What Is It, Who Has It, and How Did It Evolve?" *Science* 298 (22 November 2002): 1569–79, which allows a possible (albeit evolutionary) connection between language as computation and language as communication.

37. I am hardly idiosyncratic in demurring from Chomsky on this point. Rajend Mesthrie puts it more forcefully than I might: "Chomskyan linguistics seems better aligned with the fields of robotics and artificial intelligence: the business of computer scientists, robot designers, automatic translation experts, and so on . . . When the automatons wish to turn human, they will need to learn about individual and communal language identities, relations of status, gender, and age between humans, and the rules of social interaction." See Mesthrie, "Introduction: The Sociolinguistic Enterprise," in Mesthrie, ed., *The Cambridge Handbook of Sociolinguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1–14, quote on pp. 1–2.

some simple observations from Lewis that point us to questions whose best answers lie in the areas of linguistic studies commonly called pragmatics. I will also argue that these areas can be brought into fruitful engagement with what are often treated as separate departments of study: rhetorical and literary criticism.

In chapter 3 I will build on one of Lewis's unpublished essays dealing with the ways a language can be used for different kinds of communicative purposes. In chapter 4 I will discuss how communication takes place against a backdrop of a shared experience of the world. From here I can describe the relationship between rhetoric and truth.

Chapters 5–6 will then treat various aspects of reading Genesis 1–11: the different kinds of context (ch. 5) and the function (ch. 6) of these chapters. From there we should be able to see what these passages aimed to do and to distinguish that from what they did not aim to do. We should also be able to judge just what kind of cosmic picture is inherent in the texts and what role that picture has in their communication. I will put these ideas to work in chapter 7, where I will offer a rhetorical-theological reading of Genesis 1–11. Because I argue, from a sociolinguistic perspective, that we should greatly respect what audiences from organically connected cultures have seen in these chapters, I examine what readers from such audiences have said on selected topics (ch. 8). Many Bible passages have been taken as describing an outdated picture of the world and of God's action in it; I will examine some of these passages in chapters 9–10 in light of the tools I develop in the preceding chapters. My concluding chapter deals with responsible appropriation for the ancient context and the modern believer.

This outline shows that I am not writing a general study on the overall theme of creation in the Hebrew Bible. The standard study on the subject, by Jon Levenson, contains many exegetical judgments, and to evaluate every one of them would take a longer book than he wrote.[38] I prefer to say more than he does on certain texts and will do so with more self-awareness of reading strategy and the rhetoric employed by the biblical writers. I will leave interaction with what he says on other texts to the many commentaries on those texts. Besides, Levenson has offered his reasons for *not* regarding the social use of certain texts as a guide for exegesis in search of an original meaning that predates the canonical—his pursuit asks different questions than mine.[39]

38. Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

39. Jon D. Levenson, "The Bible: Unexamined Commitments of Criticism," *First Things* 30 (Feb 1993): 24–33.

It should also be clear that I am not suggesting that the linguistic-rhetorical-literary approach I am developing here displaces conventional tools of exegesis, such as lexicography, syntax, and history. Many of these other tools are themselves intuitive and well grounded in ordinary practice. Rather, I see my approach as allowing these conventional tools to function properly, and that is what I intend as I get into actual exposition.

Jowett and company, like many literalists today, assume that "what I see" is the same as "what is there." Contemporary philosophy of science has shown how indefensible this notion is in general, but it is especially hasty when reading an ancient text from a foreign culture. A recurring issue and a basic insight from this is to deny that "what I see" is necessarily the same as "what is there." Lewis warned his students against how easily they could fall into this trap:

> We turn to the helps only when the hard passages are manifestly hard. But there are treacherous passages which will not send us to the notes. They look easy and aren't.[40]

Although Lewis wrote these words for students, seasoned scholars run the risk of committing the same mistake. Hence, "This author clearly says X" should more fully be "I read this author to say X, and here is why you should too." Responsible readers, then, will aim to justify their readings. Hence, if I do not see what another person sees, that may mean I am blind (whether by lack of skill or by ideology); or it may mean I make different literary and linguistic judgments; or it may mean I am pursuing different questions. We must take these case by case. At the same time, these differing compartments are not airtight: a methodology might lead us to attend to some details more than to others, provide tools for making judgments, and set the kinds of questions that are worth asking. I certainly think that the linguistic-rhetorical-literary methodology that I develop here works in all three departments.

1.D MY OWN BACKGROUND AND STANCE

A word about my own background and personal orientation is in order here. While some people can come to many studies with utter neutrality about what they will do with their findings, this rarely happens when these studies

40. Lewis, *Discarded Image*, vii. See also *Studies in Words*, 1ff.

deal with basic ideas of what it means to be human—so it is only right to be straightforward about such things. My initial education, undergraduate and graduate, was in science and engineering at MIT (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts). After a few years' work in engineering, I attended a seminary and then earned my PhD in Hebrew and Comparative Semitic Linguistics at the University of Liverpool in England.

In the early stages of my academic work I focused on lexical semantics in Hebrew as well as in Greek; then I became fascinated with verbs and syntax. This led me to text grammar, which then led to larger questions about how acts of communication work. There is an irony lurking here: I owe a great deal to the work of James Barr, whose work in lexical semantics introduced me to what linguistic rigor should look like. However, linguistic rigor includes these other dimensions of study as well, dimensions to which, as I judge, Barr did not give their proper due. It was Barr who let that genie out of the bottle.

Two figures stand out among many in my intellectual development: Alvin Drake of MIT (1935–2005) taught me probability and employed me as a graduate teaching assistant, and Alan Millard of Liverpool University (b. 1937) supervised my PhD. Both of these mentors insisted on careful critical thinking, not only in their academic fields but also in the whole of life. I hope they will not feel their efforts were wasted in my case.

Further, like C. S. Lewis I am a religious traditionalist. I much prefer that label to fundamentalist, a term that once had a definite meaning, namely, as someone who agrees with *The Fundamentals*, a series of ninety Protestant traditionalist essays published from 1910 to 1915. Lewis's 1958 denial of being a fundamentalist shows how the term had changed in less than fifty years:

> I have been suspected of being what is called a fundamentalist. That is because I never regard any narrative as unhistorical simply on the ground that it includes the miraculous. Some people find the miraculous so hard to believe that they cannot imagine any reason for my acceptance of it other than *a prior belief that every sentence of the Old Testament has historical or scientific truth*.[41]

By that definition I am not a fundamentalist either—nor, as matter of fact, are most traditionalists. Lewis was clear, here and elsewhere, that his issue of whether to read passages as historical truth was a literary judgment

41. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, 109. Compare also his 1959 address to a group of ministry candidates, "Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism," in Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, 152–66: "We are not fundamentalists" (163), implying that "we" accept some kinds of criticism, especially textual.

about the particular texts. In principle, traditionalists agree with this procedure, even when they might make different literary judgments.

A third "Al," the philosopher Alvin Plantinga (b. 1932), has incisively analyzed the current usage of the term fundamentalist:

> We must first look into the use of this term "fundamentalist." On the most common contemporary academic use of the term, it is a term of abuse or disapprobation, rather like "son of a bitch," more exactly "sonovabitch," or perhaps still more exactly (at least according to those authorities who look to the Old West as normative on matters of pronunciation) "sumbitch." When the term is used in this way, no definition of it is ordinarily given. (If you called someone a sumbitch, would you feel obliged first to define the term?) Still, there is a bit more to the meaning of "fundamentalist" (in this widely current use): it isn't simply a term of abuse. In addition to its emotive force, it does have some cognitive content, and ordinarily denotes relatively conservative theological views. That makes it more like "stupid sumbitch" (or maybe "fascist sumbitch"?) than "sumbitch" simpliciter. It isn't exactly like that term either, however, because its cognitive content can expand and contract on demand; its content seems to depend on who is using it. In the mouths of certain liberal theologians, for example, it tends to denote any who accept traditional Christianity, including Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and Barth; in the mouths of devout secularists like Richard Dawkins or Daniel Dennett, it tends to denote anyone who believes there is such a person as God. The explanation is that the term has a certain indexical element: its cognitive content is given by the phrase "considerably to the right, theologically speaking, of me and my enlightened friends." The full meaning of the term, therefore (in this use), can be given by something like "stupid sumbitch whose theological opinions are considerably to the right of mine."[42]

Let me explain how I conceive this work in relation to an apologetic program—as anyone who invokes C. S. Lewis must surely address. The discipline of apologetics is oriented toward defending an intellectual position. In normal usage of the word, that intellectual position is religious traditionalism (here, either Jewish or Christian). I am not aiming at apologetics as such; instead I aim to find an interpretive program for biblical material, especially that of

42. Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 245.

Genesis 1–11. As Mark Brett noted, "Clearly, one can grasp an author's point without being persuaded by it."[43]

I thus have a twofold goal. The first is to provide guidance to those who want to consider how these Bible passages relate to the findings of the sciences. The second is to establish patterns of good theological reading, patterns applicable for other texts. Those who focus on one of these more than the other should understand that to me the two are intertwined, each playing a role in what it means to be a responsible audience.

At the same time, two things are true. First, the interpretive program has a bearing on apologetics, since it clarifies what it is that someone seeks to defend or to criticize. I have already in this chapter shown how I judge that both defenders and critics have failed interpretively.

The second truth is that the apologetic enterprise has a bearing on our interpretation. Many of the critical approaches, for example, suffer from a want of imagination: they *assume* a way of reading and do not entertain whether one *must* read that way.[44] At the same time, an apologetic motivation in interpretation can lead a person to defend a weak position—again because of a failure in imagination, which becomes a failure to consider other possibilities. Hence, I will argue for the *critical* use of a *disciplined imagination*.

Apologetics, honestly and rigorously engaged, serves faithful believers by enabling them to commend their beliefs to the world outside their faith community. It also serves them in their own appropriation of the Scriptures. As Austin Farrer (Lewis's Oxford colleague and friend, and a clergyman who ministered to Lewis in his final illness) put it,

> For though argument does not create conviction, the lack of it destroys belief. What seems to be proved may not be embraced; but what no one shows the ability to defend is quickly abandoned. Rational argument does not create belief, but it maintains a climate in which belief may flourish.[45]

Although I make comments along the way about the ways I find certain kinds of source criticism unhelpful, I do not intend to comment on that subject

43. Mark G. Brett, "Motives and Intentions in Genesis 1," *JTS* 42:1 (1991): 1–16, quote on p. 12 n25.

44. A ready example comes from Kenton Sparks, "Genesis 1–11 as Ancient Historiography," in *Genesis: History Fiction, or Neither? Three Views on the Bible's Earliest Chapters*, ed. Charles Halton (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 110–39. There is no consideration of whether one may offer a different reading of Genesis, and his is treated as if it were self-evident.

45. Austin Farrer, "The Christian Apologist," in *Light on C. S. Lewis*, ed. Joceyln Gibb (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1965), 23–43, quote on p. 26.

in general.[46] At the same time, as Barr has rightly observed, "*biblical source criticism*, the operation which in the Pentateuch detected sources like, J, E, D and P, the very critical method that fundamentalists so detest, *is also the result of 'taking the Bible literally*.'"[47] Perhaps if the literalism that Barr presupposes can be properly subjected to review, the advocates of source criticism might have to be more modest.

About my use of secondary sources: Since I am using Lewis as a gateway to a greater awareness of rhetoric, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics, I count it my chief responsibility to draw on resources from these disciplines. But since I am contending for a way of reading biblical passages and am also arguing that this way of reading has not received full attention in recent biblical scholarship, I offer what I take to be reasonable amounts of documentation on that score. I do not claim completeness, nor do I claim to have written a critical commentary on the passages I address. I hope, however, that my readers will judge that I have given reasons for the positions I take.

Since I am arguing that the rhetorical and linguistic insights are best seen as intuitions and everyday experiences under critical examination, I also draw on Christian writers (especially John Stott) who exhibit some of these intuitions at work—even when their performance is uneven. The reason I do this goes beyond my general enjoyment of opinions well thought out and well stated: I want my readers to appreciate that there is nothing ad hoc or esoteric about the kinds of insights I am putting to work.

Also for this purpose, I will occasionally commend my methodology by showing its potential fruitfulness for a wider range of theological and exegetical topics than those associated with the science-and-faith discussion.

46. When various kinds of criticism are essentially applied naturalism, they run afoul of the trenchant critique that C. S. Lewis offered in his "Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 152–66.

47. Barr, *Fundamentalism*, 46.