

D. A. CARSON

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While many know D. A. Carson for his mind and his impressive scholarly writings, fewer people know the heart that produces those works. It is especially obvious in *How Long, O Lord? Reflections on Suffering and Evil* and *A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Priorities from Paul and His Prayers*, which give evidence of a deeply personal faith.

Though Carson is a very private person, his friends attest to his devotion to family and his true pastor's heart. The noted scholar Colin Hemer, a personal friend, died in Carson's arms. Carson's eulogy for Hemer was a moving testimony to his own deep care for the spiritual welfare of those close to him.¹ Similarly, after hearing of the death of his mentor, Barnabas Lindars, Carson was genuinely moved, reminiscing at the beginning of a class for quite a while about his studies and personal conversations with Lindars while at Cambridge. The intensity of his beliefs is evident in an autobiographical section of *How Long, O Lord?* where Carson writes, "I would rather die than end up unfaithful to my wife; I would rather die than deny by a profligate life what I have taught in my books; I would rather die than deny or disown the gospel."² To understand the true depth of D. A. Carson's faith, it is important to recount in some detail his godly heritage.

A Godly Heritage

The second of three children, Donald Arthur Carson was born on December 21, 1946, to Thomas Donald McMillan Carson and his wife Elizabeth Margaret (née Maybury). In *How Long, O Lord?* Carson describes the "just under the poverty line" type of family in which he grew up:

[T]he father and mother love each other. They serve the Lord in a low-paying job where they feel they can exercise real ministry. Their modest (and rented) home is characterized by gratitude; their children are disciplined for ingratitude and shown by example how the Lord provides for his own. There is time to read and think and discuss. There is moral and emotional support (and sometimes material support as well) from the local church, and even an adventurous challenge to see how much can be invested in the "bank of heaven" (Matt. 6:19–21). I grew up in such a home. I did not find out how "poor" we were until I left home to go to university (funded by scholarships and part-time work; my parents certainly could not afford to send me).³

Carson's father had been born in Carrickfergus, near Belfast, Northern Ireland, and had immigrated with his family to Ottawa, Canada, in 1913. There Tom Carson, D. A.'s father, grew up under the influence of Calvary Baptist Church. In 1933, at the height of the Great Depression, he entered Toronto Baptist Seminary. During his seminary years, Tom Carson developed an interest in evangelism and church planting in the province of Quebec. He graduated in 1937 and married in 1938. After a few years of service in an English-speaking congregation, Tom Carson

¹D. A. Carson, "Colin John Hemer: *In Memoriam*," *Forum for the Association of Christians in Higher Education*, Fall 1987, pp. 56–60.

²D. A. Carson, *How Long, O Lord? Reflections on Suffering and Evil* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 120.

³*Ibid.*, 56; see also D. A. Carson, "Growing Up a 'PK,'" *Evangel 2.4* (1984): 16–18.

moved to Drummondville in 1948, where he established a bilingual church, Faith Baptist Church. The fifteen years spent in ministry in Drummondville were years of persecution, hardships, and a scarcely visible harvest. From 1963 until his death in 1992, Tom Carson continued serving in various forms of local church ministry, primarily at the Montclair Church in Hull, where the Carsons had moved.

In his moving tribute on the occasion of his father's funeral, D. A. Carson expressed his gratitude for his father's perseverance, his life of prayer, his uncomplaining spirit, and his generosity. "When Dad died," Carson wrote, "there were no crowds outside the hospital, no notice in the papers, no announcements on the television, no mention in Parliament, no notice in the nation. In his hospital room there was only the quiet hiss of oxygen, vainly venting because Dad had stopped breathing and would never need it again. But on the other side, all the trumpets sounded. Dad won admittance to the only throne-room that matters, not because he was a good man or a great man, but because he was a forgiven man."⁴

Career To Date

D. A. Carson attended McGill University in Montreal from 1963 to 1967, graduating with a bachelor's degree in chemistry and mathematics. He then earned a master's in divinity from Central Baptist Seminary in Toronto. From 1970 to 1972 he pastored Richmond Baptist Church in Richmond, British Columbia, where he was ordained in 1972. The years 1972–75 were spent in doctoral studies at Cambridge University under Barnabas Lindars. Carson's doctoral dissertation bore the title "Predestination and Responsibility: Elements of Tension-Theology in the Fourth Gospel against Jewish Background."⁵

During his time in Cambridge, Carson, like another well-known author before him, was "surprised by Joy." To the amazement of Carson's friends, who thought him too devoted to serious scholarship to be sidetracked by romance, Carson's attraction to Joy Wheildon, a British schoolteacher, quickly grew, and on August 16, 1975, the two were married in Cambridge. For the next three years Carson served at Northwest Baptist Theological College in Vancouver, the first year as associate professor of New Testament, the following two years as the founding dean of the Seminary.

A significant turn of events occurred when Kenneth S. Kantzer, the dean of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, heard Carson present a paper at a theological conference and asked him to join the Trinity faculty. From 1978 until 1982 as an associate professor, from 1982 until 1991 as professor, and from 1991 as research professor of New Testament, Carson bloomed into one of the most respected evangelical scholars at the dawn of the twenty-first century. The breadth of his writing is apparent in the bibliography at the end of this article. In addition, Carson has held editorial posts with the *Trinity Journal* (editor, 1980–86) and the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (book review editor, 1979–86), and recently began work as the editor of *New Studies in Biblical Theology*, a multivolume update of the *Studies in Biblical Theology* series. Besides being the editor of the *Pillar Commentary* series and the founding

⁴D. A. Carson, "Thomas Donald McMillan Carson: A Tribute," *Banner of Truth* 356 (May 1993): 24.

⁵A revised and simplified form was published as D. A. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Biblical Themes in Tension* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981).

chairperson of the GRAMCORD Institute (a research and educational institution designed to develop computer-related tools for research into the Bible), he has served as cochair of the Biblical Greek and Linguistics section of the Society of Biblical Literature (1991–96).⁶

The Reception of Carson’s Biblical Scholarship

C. S. Lewis once remarked, “A man is ill-advised to write a book on any living author. There is bound to be at least one person and there are probably several who inevitably know more about the subject than ordinary research will discover. Far better to write about the unanswering dead.”⁷ Reasons why this present essay is preliminary and limited could be multiplied. Accordingly, the reader should not view with any degree of finality our attempt to assess D. A. Carson’s contribution to evangelical biblical scholarship.

Mark Noll, in his survey of evangelical scholarship, singles out Richard Longenecker and D. A. Carson as doing “the most seminal New Testament work by contemporary evangelicals.”⁸ This assessment becomes increasingly justified by the year. Carson’s productivity is made possible in part by Trinity’s generous sabbatical policies, which have allowed him to spend every third year at Tyndale House, a research center for biblical studies in Cambridge which Carson regards as his ultimate academic home. Apart from affording Carson time and opportunity to write, these sabbaticals also enable him to maintain a truly international scope for his teaching and scholarship. He blends well into the academic setting in Britain and is accepted and sought after in university circles there. This involvement, together with his worldwide travels, enables Carson to surmount the isolation from the rest of the world that plagues much of North American biblical scholarship.

Some have voiced concerns that Carson’s prodigious output (“he makes us all look like sluggards,” one of his colleagues at Trinity, himself a respected author, has remarked) may at times limit his scholarship. True, Carson has not yet produced the kind of technical monograph that proves singularly influential in a given field, though his *Syntactical Concordance to the Greek New Testament* is eagerly awaited by many. And one looks forward with anticipation to a major work on the relationship between the Testaments and perhaps even a treatment of Johannine theology.⁹

Others object to Carson’s confrontational, direct manner, both in writing and in person. It should be realized, however, that what may appear as glibness in Carson’s dealing with opposing views could actually be a reflection of his quickness in sizing up an opponent and his sharp penetration to the heart of an issue. But whether these criticisms are warranted or not, they reveal a certain ambiguity with which Carson has been received by his colleagues. Many scholars who do not share Carson’s conservative evangelical views on Scripture apparently believe they can safely

⁶The best papers of these consultations are published in three volumes, each coedited with Stanley E. Porter: *Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics* (1993); *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek* (1995); and *Linguistics and the New Testament* (forthcoming).

⁷Quoted in Brian Sibley, *C. S. Lewis: Through the Shadowlands* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Revell, 1985), 11.

⁸Mark A. Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 136.

⁹Important forthcoming works include the two-volume *Paul and Variegated Nomism* and a dictionary on the use of the Old Testament in the New, for both of which Carson is serving as coeditor.

ignore his writings. Others, perhaps voicing the concerns just mentioned, do not give Carson's views the attention they deserve. Overall, it seems that Carson is only beginning to get the kind of exposure and attention due a man of his scholarly stature.

The reception of Carson's commentary on John's Gospel illustrates the varied responses to his work. Hailed in evangelical circles as an epitome of lucidity and thorough scholarship,¹⁰ the work has been less well received by scholars in the larger Christian community.¹¹ However, it should be expected that any effort to defend the fourth Gospel's historicity will be criticized in our day.¹² Moreover, it does not endear Carson to many of his colleagues that he gives short shrift to source and redaction theories,¹³ and that he maintains a healthy scepticism regarding the many contemporary literary techniques invading biblical scholarship.¹⁴ Thus Carson has criticized such seminal Johannine scholars as R. Alan Culpepper¹⁵ and J. Louis Martyn, disputing the validity of their "mirror" and "two-level" readings of the fourth Gospel.¹⁶ As a result, some in the academic world see Carson as hyperconservative and as part of the extreme right in evangelical scholarship. As one Oxford professor commented, "He is too clever to be a fundamentalist" but still "far too conservative" to be taken seriously by scholars in certain circles. Also very revealing is a correspondence with a senior British scholar on the nature of Scripture.¹⁷

Although Carson is viewed by most of his scholarly colleagues as very conservative, this label does not describe him accurately in every respect. He is often unconventional and very open to the breaking of new ground. For example, he has essentially embraced the "verbal aspect theory" that one of his students, Stanley Porter (Carson was his external examiner at Sheffield), forcefully advocated at a time when few colleagues had even heard of this theory on the function of the

¹⁰See, e.g., Moisés Silva, review of *The Gospel according to John*, by D. A. Carson, *Westminster Theological Journal* 54 (1992): 376–78.

¹¹See, e.g., David Ball, "Some recent literature on John: A review article," *Themelios* 19.1 (Oct. 1993): 13–18.

¹²See Ben Witherington, review of *Jesus as God*, by Murray Harris, *Themelios* 19.1 (Oct. 1993): 28–29.

¹³See D. A. Carson, "Current Source Criticism of the Fourth Gospel: Some Methodological Questions," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 97 (1978): 411–29; idem, "Historical Tradition and the Fourth Gospel: After Dodd, What?" in *Gospel Perspectives*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham, vol. 2 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1981), 83–145; and for more general treatments see idem, "Redaction Criticism: On the Legitimacy and Illegitimacy of a Literary Tool," in *Scripture and Truth*, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 119–46; and D. A. Carson et al., "Redaction criticism: is it worth the risk?" *Christianity Today* 29.15 (Oct. 18, 1985): 1–10.

¹⁴See Carson's survey articles on Johannine studies in *Themelios* 9.1 (Sept. 1983): 8–18; and 14.2 (Jan.-Feb. 1989): 57–64; or "Gundry on Matthew: A Critical Review," *Trinity Journal*, n.s., 3 (1982): 71–91.

¹⁵D. A. Carson, review of *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, by R. Alan Culpepper, *Trinity Journal*, n.s., 4 (1983): 119–21; idem, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 63–68.

¹⁶D. A. Carson, reviews of *Overcoming the World*, by David Rensberger, *Themelios* 17.1 (Oct.-Nov. 1991): 27–28; and idem, review of *Peter and the Beloved Disciple*, by Kevin Quast, *Themelios* 17.2 (Jan.-Feb. 1992): 21–22.

¹⁷See D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 158–63.

Greek verb. Carson's forthcoming commentary on the Johannine Epistles promises to be the first consistent effort to integrate verbal aspect theory into a full-fledged commentary. As the general editor of a series entitled *Studies in Biblical Greek*, Carson has also had the opportunity to be involved in the publication of seminal studies by Porter and K. L. McKay.¹⁸

D. A. Carson may one day be remembered as one of the last great Renaissance men in evangelical biblical scholarship. In an age of increasing specialization and fragmentation, Carson, to the admiring disbelief of many of his colleagues, persistently refuses to limit his interests. His publications cover a vast range of subjects: New Testament Greek, Bible translation, hermeneutics, contextualization, the use of the Old Testament in the New, preaching, various aspects of New Testament and biblical theology, major commentaries on Matthew and John, and even poetry. Carson's fielding of questions subsequent to a presentation at the 1993 annual meeting of the Institute of Biblical Research showed glimpses of his competence in an array of fields. As a reviewer of one of his books put it, "Professor Carson possesses qualities which are not often found in combination. He is a New Testament scholar who sees the Bible as a whole; a biblical scholar with a concern for both the theological and the practical implications of the Bible's teaching; a blunt writer with a pastoral heart; and (perhaps rarest of all) an academic with a clear, vigorous, occasionally even slangy style."¹⁹

In the light of these qualities, it is understandable that some compare Carson favorably with other evangelical scholars such as F. F. Bruce and I. Howard Marshall. While Bruce, unlike Carson, had a background in classical Greek, Carson may exceed Bruce in his exegetical and theological grasp. Significantly, Carson is not just a New Testament exegete but a biblical theologian who synthesizes materials that other scholars leave unrelated. Moreover, he is abreast of the latest developments in computer technology and linguistics. At the same time, some see Carson as taking over the mantle from John Stott as an evangelical leader and spokesman respected worldwide. That Carson can be compared with evangelical figures as diverse and influential as Bruce, Marshall, and Stott, is in itself a tribute to his versatility and increasing stature.

Characteristics of Carson's Scholarship

An International Ministry

Carson grew up in the Baptist tradition. To this day, while in England he associates with and worships in a Baptist church. However, during his doctoral studies and his regular sabbaticals at Tyndale house he has functioned in an interdenominational context. He moves freely in Anglican circles in Britain and in Australia, and his counsel is sought on a wide range of biblical and pastoral issues by church leaders from various confessional backgrounds. Ultimately, Carson's ministry is not channeled through denominations but through individuals and institutions that invite him to minister in their respective contexts.

In this connection we note that Carson served for a number of years with the Faith and Church Study Unit of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship, an involvement

¹⁸Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989); K. L. McKay, *A New Syntax of the Verb in New Testament Greek* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994).

¹⁹Paul Ellingworth, review of *How Long, O Lord?* by D. A. Carson, *Evangelical Quarterly* 64 (1992): 361.

that is indicative of his concern for the universal church and of his commitment to cooperation among evangelicals worldwide. His contacts in Britain and the fact that his command of French enables him to function as a liaison to French-speaking Africa place Carson in a strategic position to facilitate such collaboration. He himself has lectured all over the world. Operating in a global context, with a commitment to first-rate evangelical scholarship, Carson has been engaged for a considerable amount of time in nurturing those who in turn train other Christian leaders. Indeed, Carson places a high priority on mentoring gifted students. Craig Blomberg, Stanley Porter, and many others can attest to his formative influence on their own scholarly careers.

While Carson chaired the Faith and Church Study Unit, the group strove to make the ideal of a worldwide scope for the World Evangelical Fellowship a reality. Nigerians, Japanese, Indians, Indonesians, continental Europeans, and delegates from other parts of the world struggled to produce global solutions for important issues facing the church worldwide. In the past, those with adequate resources would have done all the writing. Under Carson's leadership, however, scholars from the Two-Thirds World, despite the lack of materials in their native contexts, were encouraged to participate fully in discussions and writing. Carson ensured that every contributor was given bibliographical assistance and suggestions for improvement. Thus helpful insights on important subjects found their way to Japan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and many other places. Eventually Carson would edit the submitted contributions for publication. In this way he promoted significantly both the coming of age of scholarship in the Two-Thirds World and global evangelical partnership.²⁰

A High View of Scripture

As already indicated, it is difficult to assign D. A. Carson a distinct place in the field of evangelical theology. He himself has great admiration and respect for the fathers of the evangelical movement in the United States, Kenneth Kantzer and Carl Henry. Indeed, he had the privilege of interviewing these two men for the video series *Know Your Roots* in 1991. His own scholarly career has been characterized by a significant degree of independence from other scholars' views, a bedrock commitment to the authority of Scripture,²¹ and use of all the resources available to the modern scholar to interpret it.

Carson considers a high view of the Scripture's integrity a nonnegotiable for his own work.²² Thus in a speech given at a luncheon at Tyndale House he once remarked that anyone who arrives at a conclusion at odds with the traditional evangelical positions about the authority of the Bible should have the integrity to stop claiming to be an evangelical.²³ At the same time, Carson is not a

²⁰Peter O'Brien, interview by author, Sept. 1994. The volumes produced during Carson's term with the Faith and Church Study Unit include *Biblical Interpretation and the Church*, *The Church in the Bible and the World*, *Teach Us to Pray, Right with God*, and *Worship*.

²¹See D. A. Carson, "Three Books on the Bible: A Critical Review," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 26 (1983): 337–67; idem, "Recent Developments in the Doctrine of Scripture," in *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 1–48.

²²D. A. Carson, "The Role of Exegesis in Systematic Theology," in *Doing Theology in Today's World*, ed. John D. Woodbridge and Thomas E. McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 54–56.

²³Interview with Peter Comont, a former pastor at Eden Baptist Church in Cambridge.

fundamentalist in the sense of interpreting Scripture fideistically and literalistically. He uses intelligent, detailed biblical study as the basis for theological construction and application. This general procedure was already visible in his dissertation on God's sovereignty and human responsibility. It has been refined over the years and was further elaborated upon in his lecture on biblical theology at the 1993 meeting of the Institute for Biblical Research.²⁴

While Carson is committed to biblical theology, he does not therefore eschew systematic theology.²⁵ Moreover, he is highly concerned about the contextualization of the Christian faith in the pluralistic Western world of today as well as in cross-cultural contexts.²⁶

Commitment and Ministry to the Church

For all his erudition, D. A. Carson insists that scholarship and personal faith must not be kept separate. Rather, a deep personal evangelical faith should undergird a person's effort to search the Scriptures as diligently and penetratingly as possible. Especially commendable is Carson's strong commitment to serve the needs of the evangelical church today. Indeed, Carson is a symbol for many that competent biblical scholarship and evangelical orthodoxy can go together. Pastors and other committed Christians can turn to his commentaries and biblical studies for help when interpreting difficult passages or confronting controversial issues. It is significant that several of his books are based on sermons or letters to a church or parachurch context (e.g., *The Sermon on the Mount* and *Showing the Spirit*). Carson's deep concern for the spiritual state of the church today can be seen in his *Call to Spiritual Reformation*, which begins with an impassioned plea for and practical tips on prayer.²⁷ He has also spoken out on the need for biblical expository preaching and regular time with God.²⁸

Unafraid to speak out on controversial issues, Carson considers it his responsibility to contribute discerningly and constructively to current debates within the church. In *Showing the*

²⁴D. A. Carson, "Current Issues in Biblical Theology: A New Testament Perspective," *Bulletin of Biblical Research* 5 (1995): 17–41.

²⁵See D. A. Carson, "Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: The Possibility of Systematic Theology," in *Scripture and Truth*, ed. Carson and Woodbridge, 65–95; idem, "Role of Exegesis," 39–76.

²⁶See especially D. A. Carson, "Christian Witness in an Age of Pluralism," in *God & Culture*, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 31–66; idem, "Church and Mission: Reflections on Contextualization and the Third Horizon," in *The Church in the Bible and the World*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 213–57; idem, "A Sketch of the Factors Determining Current Hermeneutical Debate in Cross-cultural Contexts," in *Biblical Interpretation and the Church*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 11–29; idem, *Gagging of God*; and idem, ed., *Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns* (forthcoming).

²⁷See also D. A. Carson, ed., *Teach Us to Pray* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990); and D. A. Carson, "A Church that Does All the Right Things, But . . ." *Christianity Today* 23.18 (June 29, 1979): 28–31.

²⁸D. A. Carson, "Accept No Substitutes: Six Reasons Not to Abandon Expository Preaching," *Leadership* 17 (1996): 87–88; idem, "Preaching That Understands the World," in *When God's Voice Is Heard*, ed. Christopher Green and David Jackman (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1995) 145–59; idem, *For the Love of God*, 2 vols. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1998 and forthcoming); and idem, "The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God," a four-part series starting in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 156 (1999): 3–12.

Spirit and in an essay on “The Purpose of Signs and Wonders in the New Testament,”²⁹ Carson addresses the contemporary charismatic movement; in “Reflections on Christian Assurance”³⁰ he deals with the “Lordship salvation” debate; in *How Long, O Lord?* he provides a courageous discussion of AIDS;³¹ and in *The King James Version Debate* and *The Inclusive Language Debate* he seeks to adjudicate between two sides of important issues.³² However, by maintaining a biblical focus, Carson continues to rise above mere polemics.

Perhaps one of Carson’s greatest strengths is his ability to appreciate the merits of opposing views and to incorporate the best of both into a balanced mediating position. For example, on the issue of charismata, Carson is not a cessationist, arguing that 1 Corinthians 13 appears to preclude such a position. On the issue of divine sovereignty and human responsibility, Carson holds to “compatibilism”; on the issue of Christian assurance, Carson seeks to balance carefully the believer’s security with the biblical injunctions for perseverance in the Christian faith.

Focus on the Gospel

What is not always understood but is nonetheless crucial for a true appraisal is that Carson, for all his scholarly writings, is first of all a minister of the gospel, not an academician. He is a gospel-centered man, not a theoretician. It appears that academia has not mastered him—he has mastered academia. Why then is Carson so deeply involved in scholarship? Doubtless he recognizes his God-given gifts and desires to be faithful to his calling. Also, Carson believes that people are built up by faithful exposition of the Scriptures and the defense of gospel. Well aware that too often liberals have held sway in the defining moments of discussion, he recognizes that the task of the evangelical is not exhausted by the assertion of truth but that it is also imperative to refute error.

But how would D. A. Carson himself like to be remembered? When his mother died and he struggled as to whether he should fulfill a commitment to speak at a large missionary conference, he was led to reflect on his priorities: “Sometimes when I look at my own children, I wonder if, should the Lord give us another thirty years, they will remember their father as a man of prayer, or think of him as someone distant who was away from home rather a lot and who wrote a number of obscure books.”³³ It is appropriate to conclude with Carson’s poem “The Finitude of Man,” which puts the entire human quest to understand God in its proper perspective:

I understand that matter can be changed
 To energy; that maths can integrate
 The complex quantum jumps that must relate
 The fusion of the stars to history’s page.
 I understand that God in every age

²⁹D. A. Carson, “The Purpose of Signs and Wonders in the New Testament,” in *Power Religion*, ed. Michael S. Horton (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 89–118.

³⁰D. A. Carson, “Reflections on Christian Assurance,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 54 (1992): 1–29.

³¹But see the critique by Ellingworth, review of *How Long, O Lord?* 362–63.

³²D. A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979); idem, *The Inclusive Language Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999).

³³D. A. Carson, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 26.

Is Lord of all; that matter can't dictate;
 That stars and quarks and all things intricate
 Perform his word—including fool and sage.
 But knowing God is not to know like God;
 And science is a quest in infancy.
 Still more: transcendence took on flesh and blood:
 I do not understand how this can be.
 The more my mind is stretched to understand,
 The more it learns the finitude of man.³⁴

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³⁴First published in *Christianity Today* 24, no. 17 (1980): 31.

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