



Evolution and Holiness: Sociobiology, Altruism and the Quest for Wesleyan Perfection (SIET)

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Can We Overcome Evolution to Achieve Perfection?

In the latest volume in IVP Academic's Strategic Initiatives in Evangelical Theology series, *Evolution and Holiness*, Matthew Hill examines evolutionary and environmental explanations for human altruism and shows how the theological concept of holiness might advance understanding of moral behavior.

In this groundbreaking work, Hill uses the lens of Wesleyan ethics to offer a fresh assessment of the intersection of evolution and theology. He shows that what is at stake in this conversation is not only the future of the church but also the fine-tuning of human evolution. Hill aims to answer questions such as:

- How does the theological concept of holiness connect to contemporary understandings of evolution?
- If genetic explanations of altruism fall short, what role should we give to environmental explanations and free will?
- How do genetic explanations relate to theological accounts of human goodness and holiness?

Hill writes: "Reading such questions through this perspective has brought me to the following practical conclusion: intentional community can provide the environmental conditions within which people may develop, beyond their genetic inclinations, holiness." In short, it shows that believing in a robust theory of theistic evolution is not antithetical to the holiness traditions, but in fact should be viewed together.

"At a time when scientific creationists and intelligent design theorists remain mired in nineteenth-century disputes about evolution, Matthew Nelson Hill's *Evolution and Holiness* moves the conversation about Darwin's controversial theory into the twenty-first century," writes Karl Giberson, scholar in residence at Stonehill College. "Lamenting that 'not many theologians have examined the evolutionary data for relevance to 'loving thy neighbor,'" Hill develops powerful and deeply meaningful connections between John Wesley's doctrine of Christian holiness and scientifically informed understandings of our evolved human nature. The result is a tour de force of creative theological exploration that deserves to be widely read."