Book Reviews

Ethics

BOOK OF LIFE: God, Cosmos, and Man: A New Understanding of Human Nature by Victor Shane. Summerland, CA: Para-Anchors International, 2003. 308 pages. Paperback; $26.95. ISBN: 1878832042.

This book's lofty aim is to explain the disorder and violence in the world by reconciling the biblical model of human nature with thermodynamic principles. The central theme of the book is that entropic disorder is synonymous with the devil, a theme that is subsequently woven throughout the following chapters on evolution, idolatry, economics, health, and sin. Shane, for whom no biography is available, writes from the perspective of an amateur scientist as is evident from several unusual scientific interpretations.

The central theme of the book stems from Shane's view of the world as being inherently evil. Shane identifies the devil as "an anthropomorphization of the statistical tendency to disorder in all flesh" (p. 35), and then redefines the devil as the Cosmic Constable, creating a confusing double metaphor that often appears to be mutually contradictory. For example, assuming that "the Constable was endowed with the gift of speech his decree would be heard bellowing throughout the cosmos: 'Order, Order, Order in the universe!'" (p. 132) which contradicts the "Cosmic Constable directing the course of universal change from low entropy states to high entropy states" (p. 37). Logical discrepancies are compounded by the writing style which rarely states arguments directly, but argues by analogy.

Shane argues that an inherent evil present in all matter is responsible for the universe's increase in entropy and the evil in people—an argument that Shane supports with a historical survey of humankind's ills (chap. 2). Questionable assumptions aside, the validity of the arguments are, in many cases, lost in the constant tirade against the ills of humankind, while in other cases the arguments are suspect or plainly fallacious. For example, Shane appears to argue that legal tender is the cause of national debt (p. 125) and that cancer is caused "… more than anything else, [by] the junk food that man puts into his mouth …" (p. 183). The author believes that if the world used pure, unrefined oils "instead of the usual cheap hydrogenated abominations, the incidence of worldwide cancer might be cut in half within a decade" (p. 187). Scientific support for such assertions is conspicuously lacking.

Shane's premise that the Fall influences atoms at the molecular level is intriguing. Less tenuous is his fundamental assertion of entropy being evil and his scientifically questionable arguments in support of his thesis. The combination of questionable assumptions, indirect arguments, and scientific inexperience leaves the reader searching for Shane's meaning amidst a dogmatic, poorly-constructed, and often contradictory text.

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Faith & Science

WHEN SCIENCE AND CHRISTIANITY MEET by David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers, eds. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003. xii, 357 pages, notes, guide, index. Hardcover; $29.00. ISBN: 0226482146.

God and Nature (1986), the editors' earlier work, offered an excellent summary of the field but was difficult reading for even the best undergraduates enrolled in the science and religion courses that proliferated in the 90s. *When Science & Christianity Meet* provides twelve case histories that illustrate a variety of encounters between Christianity and science at a level appropriate for a semester college course.

The eleven authors have worked under strong editorial hands resulting in accounts that fit together—even reveal a pattern—"… in address[ing] the varied relationships between two powerful cultural traditions attempting, sometimes, to occupy the same intellectual and social ground" (pp. 4–5).

David C. Lindberg provides an appropriate opening with "The Medieval Church Encounters the Classical Tradition: Saint Augustine, Roger Bacon, and the Handmaiden Metaphor." Augustine (354–430) was the key early church father who set the tone for medieval Christian attitudes to pagan science, while Bacon (ca. 1220–1292) challenged religious authority in justifying the place of natural science. Each saw science as the handmaiden of theology. For Lindberg, "Augustine was more worried about the threat to theology posed by classical natural philosophy than the threat to classical natural theology posed by Christian theology; whereas in Bacon's hierarchy of worries the order appears to have been reversed" (p. 30).

Lindberg's "Galileo, the Church, and the Cosmos" travels over familiar ground in retelling a classical story. Rather than reducing the episode to a clash between the Church and science over cosmology "… the outcome was a product not of dogmatism or intolerance beyond the norm but of a combination of more or less standard (for the seventeenth century) bureaucratic procedure, plausible (if ultimately flawed) political judgements and a familiar array of human foibles and failings" (p. 60).

William Ashcroft Jr.'s "Christianity and the Mechanistic Universe" and Thomas H. Broman's "Matter, Force, and the Christian Worldview in the Enlightenment" effectively cover the Scientific Revolution and the eighteenth century. "Noah's Flood, the Ark, and the Shaping of Early Modern Natural History" (Janet Browne) illustrates problems associated with "… the interplay between reliance on empirical data gathered in the field and the status of authoritative religious sources that addressed the same issues" (p. 137).

Chapters on pre-Adamic man, the encounter between Darwinian science and Christian tradition, and the place of miracles and prayer focus primarily in the well-worn territory of nineteenth-century Britain. While science often created problems for the Christian, the end result could be seen as mutually reinforcing. Occasionally, "heresy even-

tually became an apologetic weapon used to defend the Christian faith" (p. 181).

The twentieth century receives the attention of three chapters. Jon H. Robert's "Psychoanalysis and American Christianity, 1900–1945" opens new ground and should attract the interest of psychology majors to the course. "The Scopes Trial in History and Legend" offers Edward J. Larson's engaging take on what may have been the paradigmatic event of American science and religion in the last century: "… the Scopes trial grew to symbolize not simply anti-evolutionism, but religiously motivated intrusions into public policy generally … because they embody the characteristically American struggle between individual liberty and majority rule and cast it into the timeless debate over science and religion" (pp. 263–4).

Ronald Numbers' "Science without God: Natural Laws and Christian Beliefs" brings perspective to more recent concerns over the place of God in nature—including the efforts of "partisans of ID … to rewrite the ground rules of science to allow the inclusion of supernatural explanations of phenomena" (p. 283).

Notes on each chapter and a guide to further reading offer valuable supplements to the text. The chapters are well integrated and the work is accessible for the general reader. *When Science & Christianity Meet* should be part of the library of any Christian who seeks to understand the influence of science on faith.

Reviewed by J. W. Haas, Jr., Emeritus Professor of Chemistry, Gordon College, Wenham, MA 01982.

TIME TRAVELING WITH SCIENCE AND THE SAINTS
by George A. Erickson. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2003. 180 pages. Hardcover; $25.00. ISBN: 1591020352.

This book proposes that Christianity has not been a friend of science but an enemy. Erickson describes it like this: "History reveals that religion in general and Christianity in particular has retarded social and scientific progress and been the source of immeasurable woe." In general, argues Erickson, Christianity has supported dictators instead of human rights, incited warfare instead of peace, and promoted religious bigotry instead of tolerance.

Erickson continues. During its first sixteen hundred years, the church suppressed views considered contrary to orthodoxy. It has been argued that while Christianity sometimes hindered scientific progress, on balance it has a more positive than negative influence. Not so, writes Erickson. The rise of Christianity impeded the advancement of science by overwhelming its opposition with nonscientific, irrational stances. Illustrations of this backward Christian influence is seen in the Crusades, the Inquisition, witch hunts, persecution of science and scientists, and religious excommunications.

Science was able to free itself, writes Erickson, from its Christian captives because of heroic empiricists such as Bruno, Copernicus, Galileo, Darwin, and Linnaeus. Since science has been liberated from dogma and dogmatists, it has moved civilization forward in medicine, education, culture, and technology.

Noteworthy is the dedication of the book to Giordano Bruno, a sixteenth-century scholar, whose dedication to science led to a conflict with church zealots and eventually to his death during the Inquisition. Writes Erickson: "Without the long struggle against powerful, antiscience Christians by men like Giordano Bruno, the freedom to speak our minds might not yet exist." The title of the book is supported by a seven-page time line which parallels the history of science and religion from 3000 BCE to the present.

This is a relatively short book with large, easily read type. It consists of seven chapters, index, and bibliography. Its author, George Erickson, is a member of the National Center for Science Education, a member of the Council for Secular Humanism, and the author of the adventure book, *True North: Exploring the Great Wilderness by Bush Plane.*

Erickson's view is not shared by many scholars. For instance, Del Ratzsch, a professor at Calvin College who specializes in philosophy of science logic, writes: "Since most scientists historically were religious believers, we have to attribute intellectual blindness, self-deception, or hypocrisy to those scientists who" think science and supernaturalism incompatible. The incompatibility "charge would indict the majority of scientists who ever lived as not fully grasping what they were doing. This seems implausible" (*Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Religion* [Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004], 74).

Whether Christianity has been an asset or a liability to the advancement of science will continue to be debated. A strong case can be made that the Reformation freed science to produce the marvels of modernity, although it must be acknowledged that some reformers viewed science as destructive. (Erickson argues that Christianity produced the Dark Ages.) However, history provides ample evidence of missteps by the church which too often put it on the wrong side of science. Erickson wrote this book "to counter the many pro-Christianity books that ignore its multitudinous sins" (p. 11).

If you want the history of science written from a dogmatic, humanistic viewpoint, this book may provide the stimulation you crave. While arguing with some of Erickson's facts may be difficult, debating their interpretation is another matter. Many people are willing to concede that Christianity has sometimes impeded science. Whether it has been more of a negative than positive influence is debatable.

Christian insight on the interface of science and Christianity can be obtained from books by ASA members: *Being A Christian In Science* by Walter R. Hearn; and chapters in *Science Held Hostage* by Howard J. Van Till. Hearn profiles people who "have contributed to science … while clearly identifying themselves as Christian believers" (p. 138). Van Till thinks science has no warrant for rejecting a theistic view on life, and he is not willing to concede that everything can be understood in terms of material behavior alone (p. 146).

Reviewed by Richard Ruble, John Brown University, Siloam Springs, AR 72761.

BRIDGING SCIENCE AND RELIGION by Ted Peters and Gaymon Bennett, eds. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003. 260 pages, index. Paperback; $17.00. ISBN: 0800636252.

This book was produced by the Center for Theology and Natural Sciences (CTNS) at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA, as an outreach of their Science and Religion Course Program. The co-editors of this volume are the Director (Ted Peters) and Communications Coordinator (Gaymond Bennett) for this program. Ted Peters is also professor of systematic theology at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary and the Graduate Theological Union. Their stated purpose for producing this book is to provide a basic resource for university courses in Science and Religion.

The book consists of thirteen chapters divided into three sections, endnotes for the chapters, each author's bibliography and recommended reading list, an index, an introduction by Bennett, and a forward by Robert John Russell (founder and director of CTNS and professor of theology and science in residence at the Graduate Theological Union).

The other contributors to the volume are (in order of appearance): Kirk Wegter-McNelly (doctoral candidate in theology at the Graduate Theological Unions and editing coordinator of the CTNS), Nancey Murphy (professor of Christian philosophy at Fuller Theological Seminary), Martinez J. Hewlett (professor in the Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology at the University of Arizona), Philip Clayton (professor of philosophy at California State University at Sonoma and principle investigator for Science and the Spiritual Quest at CTNS), Peter M. J. Hess (associate program director of the Science and Religion Course Program of the CTNS and adjunct faculty member at the University of San Francisco), Muzaffar Iqbal (founder and president of the Center for Islam and Science in Islamabad, Pakistan), Richard K. Payne (dean and associate professor of Japanese Buddhism at the Institute of Buddhist Studies of the Graduate Theological Union), Eduardo Cruz (professor of religious studies at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, Brazil), Varadaraja V. Raman (professor of physics at the Rochester Institute of Technology), George L. Murphy (pastoral associate at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Akron and adjunct faculty member of Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, OH), and Laurie Zoloth (professor of social ethics and Jewish philosophy and director of the Program in Jewish Studies at San Francisco State University).

In the first section, "Methodology: How Bridges Are Built," the fundamental philosophy of the book is described. In these authors' views, the bridge metaphor is the most useful of the many possible modes for the interactions between science and religion: science and religion can be joined in a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary *dialogue* that is mutually beneficial, with insights from one field crossing over the bridge to be incorporated in the other field.

In the second part, "Constructing Scientific Spans," the results from some of the modern sciences (cosmology, evolution, genetics, and neuroscience) are summarized without much discussion of the theological implications. The notable exception is chapter three, "Natural Law and Divine Action," in which Russell and Wegter-McNelly discuss various theological responses to cosmology and evolution, including views of human nature, redemption, and eschatology.

In the last section, "Constructing Religious Spans," representatives from many religious traditions (historical Christianity, Islamic, Buddhist, Catholic, Hindu, Lutheran, and Jewish) briefly describe some of the results of their faith's response to modern science. This section is the most educational one, especially for those unfamiliar with religious traditions other than Protestant Christianity.

This book is a unique resource, combining philosophical, historical, and religiously pluralistic views of the interactions between science and religion. The bridge metaphor for dialogue between science and religion was used consistently throughout the book. The strongest part of the book is the bibliographies that each author provides. The main weakness of the text is the varying quality of each chapter. In addition, the emphasis on dialogue biased the text against traditional Christian theology.

The book is written for the nonscientist. I would hesitate in using this book for an undergraduate course in science and religion, since some chapters are too introductory, while others used advanced terms without defining them. This may be an appropriate text for an introductory graduate course along with more substantive texts, such as one of the suggested readings in each author's bibliography.

Reviewed by Keenan E. Dungey, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, University of Illinois at Springfield, Springfield, IL 62703.

FINDING GOD IN THE QUESTIONS by Timothy Johnson. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004. 216 pages. Paperback; $16.00. ISBN: 0830832149.

Johnson, medical editor for ABC News, completed seminary before attending medical school. His first encounter at seminary led to anxiety caused by loss of faith. Slowly he came to understand what he believed and to live with what he couldn't understand. With his sixty-fifth birthday approaching, Johnson decided to examine what he believed and why. This book records his journey and conclusions. It records Johnson's struggles to come to terms with such conundrums as life and death, theism and atheism, wealth and poverty, pleasure and pain.

The book's three sections deal with three questions: (1) does God exist; (2) what is God like; and (3) what are the implications of being a theist. To the first question, Johnson answers in the affirmative and thinks that "our world is the result of design" (p. 37). He thinks the human race has evolved over millions of years into complex organisms. As to the second question, Johnson writes: "I deeply revere the Bible" (p. 82). Johnson explains what God is like in the two chapters on Jesus' character and teachings. In answering the third question, Johnson discusses how faith in God's control and goodness should shape life.

Among Johnson's conclusions are: (1) the universe did not happen by chance (p. 41); (2) humans are "autono-

mous creatures" (p. 59); (3) there is evidence of "divine footprints" in the cosmos (p. 60); (4) the Bible is not primarily intended to give a detailed guide for living (p. 82); and (5) Jesus' way is the most healthy and whole way of life (p. 192).

Albert Schweitzer, who gave up a life of ease to become a doctor in Africa, has had a strong influence on Johnson who will devote time to serve the needy after his ABC contract expires. He has made a good start by stipulating that proceeds from the sale of this book will be donated to charitable organizations serving the poor and disadvantaged.

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SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY: The Volatile Connection by David Knight. New York: Routledge, 2004. vii + 231 pages, notes, index. Paperback; $24.95. ISBN: 0415257697.

PSCF readers are familiar with British (and some American) scientists who have left lab for clerical collar and an interest in faith/science questions. Less well known are the British chemists who have moved to history of science and the interaction of science and Christianity, for example, Colin Russell (*Cross-Currents*) and John Brooke (*Science and Religion Some Historical Perspectives*). Russell, Brooke, and now Knight have each written broadly on science and religion history. Russell has written from an evangelical perspective, Brook from a more detached but sympathetic Christian view. Knight has written from within the Church, asking religious questions and lamenting the inability of evangelicals to address the important questions.

Knight, emeritus professor at Durham University, former president of the British Society for the History of Science, and lay-preacher at Durham's St. Oswald's Church, offers a history of (primarily) British interaction with science and faith focusing on ways that scientists (professional and amateur) have dealt with religious institutions, the Bible, and theology. "[*Science and Spirituality*] … details the cultural and intellectual politics that ignited the descriptive 'cause' of science, eventually bringing about its ideological separation from its former ally, the Church" (p. ii). At the same time, he seeks to challenge the myth that a "volatile connection" will necessarily lead to conflict and argues that despite a changing landscape, spiritual and moral values remain important in science.

The book's subtitle is one of many examples of his use of language and metaphors familiar to chemists. Chemists get more attention than in most works of this sort; Berthollet, Beddoes, Children, Davy, Priestley, Parkes and others are featured along with the usual collection of physicists, natural historians, biologists, churchmen and gentlemen scientists. Knight offers a different, sometimes intimate and "racy" take on familiar characters such as T. H. Huxley, Robert Chambers, William Buckland, and Humphry Davy reminiscent of Desmond and Moore's *Darwin.* The author writes from within the church, avoiding the dry outsider academic stance of most writers on the same themes. He knows church history, the biblical stories, basic theology of Scripture, the changing ways Scripture has been understood, and the odd bit of clerical gossip.

> We are familiar with Unitarian Priestley's denunciation of established churches, and the separation of church and state urged by his Deistic friends Franklin and Jefferson; but even so, it was possible to support establishment even if one were a cool and sensible skeptic—a worldly wiseman rather than a keen churchman. Indeed enthusiasm aroused alarm in the late eighteenth century, just as in our day many people dread fundamentalism and cults, and feel uneasy about "alpha" courses, "Toronto blessings," happy-clappies and charismatics (p. 75).

Knight approaches his subject in thirteen chapters with headings suggestive of science/religious themes or metaphors: Something greater than ourselves, Christian materialism, Watchmaking, Wisdom and benevolence, Genesis and geology, High-church science, God working his purpose out? Lay Sermons, Knowledge and faith, Handling chance, Clergy and clerisy, Mastering nature, Meaning and Purpose, cover the period from the French revolution to the present with a predominately British focus.

Perennial subjects such as naturalism, altruism, anthropic principles, design writ large and small, evolution, prayer, and spirituality all fall under his lens.

Knight's closing comment in this thoughtful work is instructive, perhaps even familiar:

> There is plenty to reflect on, now as in the past. For one thing, in a faith refined or distilled by science, how is it that centuries of development of the Christian tradition by thinking people has led to an intellectually timid, politically conservative and sex-obsessed evangelicalism emerging as the predominant expression of Christianity … of course we are fallible: but we can look forward in hope as well as humility. For, like Isaac Newton, though we are still playing on the seashore, yet the great ocean of truth lies waiting, undiscovered, before us—an ocean of spiritual truth as well as scientific truth (p. 196).

Science and Spirituality is a keeper.

Reviewed by J. W. Haas, Jr., Emeritus Professor of Chemistry, Gordon College, Wenham, MA 01982.

ORIGINS & COSMOLOGY

DOUBTS ABOUT DARWIN: A History of Intelligent Design by Thomas Woodward. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003. 303 pages, index. Hardcover; $19.99. ISBN: 0801064430.

Philosophical naturalism is widely presupposed throughout science and takes the universe to be self contained. The last twenty years has seen the rise of the modern Intelligent Design (ID) movement claiming that nature points beyond itself. In *Doubts about Darwin*, Woodward, an ASA member, traces this story from its inception in 1986 to the present. This history revolves around four well-known

publications that have caused no small stir in academic circles and are increasingly in the media.

1. In 1986, molecular biologist and self-confessed agnostic, Michael Denton published *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis,* which claimed that neither of the two fundamental axioms of Darwin's macro-evolutionary theory—the concept of the continuity of nature, and the belief that all adaptive design of life has resulted from a blind random process—has been validated by one single empirical discovery or scientific advance since 1859. Denton's skepticism was triggered by discoveries of molecular machines manifesting such transcendent brilliance of design that it violates common sense to suppose they are reducible to a simple, continuous, random process.

2. In 1991, lawyer Phillip Johnson published *Darwin on Trial*, claiming that Darwinian macro-evolution is ultimately grounded on the philosophical assumption of naturalism and not on empirical evidence. In addition, when Darwinism is brought into question, it is routinely protected by empty labels, semantic manipulations, and faulty logic. Johnson sees Darwinism functioning as the central cosmological myth of modern culture—a quasi-religious system that is known to be true a priori, rather than as a scientific hypothesis that must submit to rigorous testing.

3. In 1996, Michael Behe published *Darwin's Black Box* arguing that molecular machines, such as those involved in a bacterial flagellum, are irreducibly complex and, like a mouse trap, will not operate if any one part is missing. A mousetrap has only five working parts; a flagellum has forty, most of which could not have been co-opted as they have no other function in the cell. Darwinian theory was proposed before anything was known about molecular structure and, for Behe, everything points to the fact that the theory will never be able to account for the "systems of horrendous irreducible complexity" that inhabit the cell.

4. In 1999, mathematician William Dembski published *Intelligent Design,* important for its explanatory filter—a three-tier system of conceptual sieves that formalizes the detection of design as currently applied to forensics, SETI, and archaeology. To be a candidate for design, an event must be a low probability event and conform to a specification—an independently given pattern. Dembski's filter places ID within the context of acceptable science, merely proposing to apply to biology what astronomers are already applying to radio signals.

Doubts about Darwin is a highly readable, and at times fascinating, account of ID and must itself be considered a major contribution to the movement. It is not simply a history of ID. The background story of the key characters, texts and interactions is highlighted, creating its own rhetoric of persuasion. The rhetoric employed by both sides in the debate is detailed. Many stories are recorded of ID proponents seeking to argue on empirical grounds only to face "severe and malignant distortion" by opponents. Many Darwinists are not prepared to concede that philosophical naturalism is open to question and wish to rule out the possibility a priori. On the other hand, instances are recorded of cordial and fruitful debate.

Woodward himself promotes ID by telling the movement's dramatic story which begins with the profoundly misguided pronouncements of scientists who claimed overwhelming evidence in favor of macro-evolution. Increasingly, the evidence has been shown to be woefully lacking in factual support, and within molecular biology points compellingly to some sort of creative intelligence. In *The Icons of Evolution* (2000), Jonathan Wells charges textbook publishers not only of misinformation in promoting Darwinism, but of toleration and even propagation of known fraud (Woodward, p. 190).

Unfortunately, this telling and retelling of the stories from different perspectives results in the book's greatest weakness: unnecessary repetition. However, those wishing to become conversant with ID could do no better than to start with Woodward's well-researched and well-written history of the movement.

Reviewed by Bryan Ezard, Translation Consultant, Summer Institute of Linguistics, Australia.

ORIGINS OF LIFE by Fazale Rana and Hugh Ross. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2004. 296 pages plus notes and index. Hardcover; $19.99. ISBN: 1576833445.

This is Rana's first book and Ross' fifth. The book proposes a biblical theory for the origin of life which the authors contend is testable. They call their theory the RTB model. The book has seventeen chapters covering such topics as the testability of various theories, the timing of life's arrival on earth, the primordial soup, the handedness of life's chemicals, panspermia, and life's complexity.

They outline a set of predictions made by the RTB model for life's origin. These include that life arose early and abruptly on earth, persisted through hostile conditions, involves complexity in its minimal form, displays the marks of chemical design, was initially qualitatively different from life that came later, and suggests a purpose. Some of these "predictions" will cause some raised eyebrows. The strength of the book is the breadth of topics covered. The authors have addressed all of the relevant issues involved in the origin of life: the formation of the cell wall, the origin of the chiralic molecules, thermophilic bacteria, the RNA world, and panspermia. They are of the opinion that most origin of life researchers believe that panspermia is the answer.

The book starts by noting that many Christians think that by pointing out errors in the origin of life theories, they have proven their case. But then the authors proceed to do little except criticize evolutionary views. And given the problems with their "predictions" even when they claim observational support, that data also supports the evolutionary position.

The biggest issue in the book is its poor scholarship. References often do not prove what is claimed. The authors' claim (p. 216) that removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere by continental erosion must keep pace with the sun's increasing luminosity. They cite an article which is dealing with the temperature of sinking slabs and says nothing about erosion, the sun, or the atmosphere. They also miss-cite an article claiming that it proves that Yockey's analysis of the number of proteins which will perform the function of cytochrome c (10^{93})

is complete. The article does not support what they claim. It does not mention Yockey.

The authors claim (p. 139) that it would be impossible to find a functional protein of 100 amino acid length by random search, yet the citation given for proof merely says that it could not be found in one step. It would only take 10^{24} random sequences to find such a functional protein. This is much less than the 10^{100+} probabilities which fill the book. The authors fail to inform their readers of this. They claim (p. 220) the atmosphere did not become oxygenated until half a billion years ago. Two citations claim oxygenation occurred 2–1.5 billion years ago, and one discusses the deep oceans not the atmosphere.

Twice the authors claim (pp. 82, 213) that "different" nuclear reactions turned on and off during the collapse of the solar nebula. Hugh Ross ought to know better. The only nuclear reaction which turns on is the fusion of hydrogen to helium. They claim (p. 220) that there are seventy phyla of animals. No source will give more than thirty-two (many say fewer) modern complex animals and no more than twenty extinct animal phyla. These factual problems may be due to the fact that only supporters of RTB were called upon to review the manuscript.

This review is from an uncorrected proof. It is hoped that these flaws will be fixed in the final product. As it stands, the book has serious flaws. Its strength is that it discusses aspects of life's origin about which the reader may be unaware.

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PHILOSOPHY & THEOLOGY

PRAGMATISM AND RELIGION: Classical Sources and Original Essays by Stuart Rosenbaum, ed. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003. 325 pages. Hardcover; $49.95. ISBN: 0252028384. Paperback; $24.95. ISBN: 0252071220.

Rosenbaum, philosophy professor at Baylor University, has brought together a distinctive collection of readings that feature such luminaries as William James and John Dewey as well as contemporary theorists such as Richard Rorty and Nancy Frankenberry. The writers address one central theme: does espousing a pragmatic understanding of epistemology automatically commit one to a disregard of western religious traditions.

Including essays by Jonathan Edwards ("Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God") and James (selections from *The Varieties of Religious Experience*) might seem to imply that pragmatism and religion could comfortably co-exist. A closer reading of selections by Dewey (*A Common Faith*) and Rorty (*Pragmatism as Romantic Polytheism*) contradict that presumption. Key issues here are a pervasive distrust of foundationalism (supernaturalism?) as a basis for knowledge coupled with profound confidence in idealistic behavior rather than creeds or beliefs.

As might be expected, pragmatism does not let the matter rest here. Underneath the distrust in foundationalism is a parallel conviction that knowledge comes from rational discourse and experience. Cultural values becomes synonymous with the "gods," and "religion" (if such an enterprise continues to exist) becomes conscious behavior that supports society's ideals. The reader might begin this volume presuming that pragmatism and religion would be compatible because both emphasized action in behalf of ideals (faith that leads to works). It turns out that the pivotal assumption of the western religious tradition that a Creator God has been revealed to the world is swept away by a contrary theory.

It is no accident that two of the three religious writers in this volume (the rest are philosophers) are from seminaries known for their "liberal" approach to theology. They do not consider the Bible's authority superior to human experience, reason, or tradition. Probably, if the truth be known, they consider many of the assertions of traditional Christianity to be metaphorical at best and they elevate contemporary experiential reason to be the prime basis for truth. Although a number of the writers deny this, this approach to truth seems destined to be trapped in the relativism of pure post-modernism.

As statements of contemporary philosophical descriptions of the nature of truth and the basis for knowledge, these selections are probably seminal and accurate. It is probably true that the average citizen lives life in a pragmatic fashion in which culture both prescribes the avenues for success and proscribes behaviors to be avoided. Further, values and ideals are very "culture specific" in that citizens automatically concur with achievements that are applauded and decry actions in other cultures that are different. The theories espoused by the writers in this book could, therefore, best be depicted as descriptions of how human beings live and think. However, one wonders if they truly address the religious question: "are there foundational truths and ideals that transcend culture and beckon adherents to action in behalf of ultimate goals?" In the final analysis, the ideas espoused by these writers seem to have descriptive, but not substantive, value. I predict these theories are doomed to perennial relativism founded in a naive view of progress.

The question remains, of course, whether one should expect more from philosophy. As a reviewer, I am inclined to think not. In epistemological reasoning and linguistic analysis about all that philosophy can do is to describe. It cannot make ultimate judgments about what is real. Philosophy is limited by the nature of its subject matter, i.e., human beings. When left to their own designs, human beings can only think in the way philosophy provides. But to take the additional step of reducing the content of thought to nothing other than rational discourse is to engage in a pessimism that I, for one, feel is unfounded. Of course, I have to admit that I accord a place in human cognition to both personal experience of transcendent reality as well as to the supra-natural revelation of truth resulting from the independent action of a divinity who has being outside of human history.

This is a provocative volume particularly for those who continue to affirm the tenets of traditional western religion (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, e.g.). It is not an easy read. As a collection worthy of consideration for use in graduate classes in philosophy, it may turn out to be a classic. Were it to be considered for classes in religion, however, I would recommend it be put alongside some philosophy of reli-

gion text that included a defense of foundationalism and other traditional approaches. In my mind, while the intent of the volume might have been to investigate the relationship between pragmatism and religion, the project ends with a resounding INcompatibility—at least when the assertions of contemporary monotheism are considered.

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RELIGION AND CHRISTIAN FAITH

C. S. LEWIS' CASE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAITH by Richard Purtill. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2004. 192 pages. Paperback; $13.95. ISBN: 0898709474.

This book title accurately indicates Purtill's aim "to present in a clear and understandable form, the main lines of C. S. Lewis' defense of and arguments for Christian belief and practice" (p. 9). It is intended for everyone, from neophyte to expert, interested in Lewis and Christianity. Purtill admits he's a biased writer who finds little to fault in Lewis or the Christian faith.

Purtill has written nineteen books, one of which is about the philosophy and fantasy of C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien. He is emeritus professor of Philosophy at Western Washington University in Bellingham. Purtill published the original edition of this book in 1981. Now he has produced this 2004 revision.

Purtill is well-acquainted with Lewis' writings and a Lewis admirer. He writes that he tried to resist quoting extensively from Lewis, but I think he failed. There is a Lewis quote on almost every page, sometimes more than one. What we have in this book are rather extensive Lewis' quotes with insightful commentary by Purtill. By quoting Lewis, Purtill provides us with many of Lewis' trenchant expressions. For instance, in a discussion of suffering, Lewis wrote to an Anglican nun that "what God wants of us is a cheerful insecurity" (p. 54). Lewis was tagged by *Time* as the twentieth century's "most-read apologist for God."

It is easy to understand why. Lewis puts eternal truths in contemporary, relevant, understandable language. For example, this is Lewis' assessment of science and religion:

> When I accept Theology I may find difficulties, at this point or that, in harmonising it with some particular truths which are imbedded in the mythical cosmology derived from science. But I can get in, or allow for, science as a whole....If, on the other hand, I swallow the scientific cosmology as a whole, then not only can I not fit it in Christianity, but I cannot even fit in science … I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen not only because I see it but because by it I see everything else (pp. 125–6).

While Lewis is considered a Christian apologist, he also had a good deal to say about Christian living. He disagreed with the view that certain things are right because God commanded them. To the contrary, God commanded certain things because they are right, that is, instructions intended to enrich life. Lewis didn't spend all his efforts defending Christianity: "A man can't always be defending the truth; there must be time to feed on it" (p. 128).

Purtill summarizes Lewis' thoughts in ten chapters including topics like faith and reason, miracles, prayer, and death. He also includes a helpful index, and lengthy lists of books by Lewis, about Lewis, and by Purtill. Even for those folk well-acquainted with Lewis' writings, Purtill's summary of Lewis' life and thoughts may stimulate and bless.

Reviewed by Richard Ruble, John Brown University, Siloam Springs, AR 72761.

ON THE RELIABILITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT by K. A. Kitchen. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003; 662 pages. Hardcover; $45.00. ISBN: 0802849601.

Kenneth Kitchen, a long-time Egyptologist, is professor emeritus of the University of Liverpool. This book is both a detailed historical reference for Old Testament studies and a rebuttal of the Wellhausen evolutionary theory of late (post-exilic) dating of Deuteronomy and Old Testament documents generally. Unlike Old Testament *apologia* strong on rhetoric and weak on historical content, the depth of detail and scope of coverage in this book places Kitchen as one who speaks with authority on the subject-matter, "and not as the scribes."

The book starts with more recent Old Testament history and works backward, a millennium at a time, with emphasis upon the late first and second millennium. As an Egyptologist, Kitchen deals at some length with the Israelite exodus from Egypt, including political and social setting, location of Goshen, probable route, location of Mt. Sinai, and dating.

In a chatty and engaging yet scholarly style, using charts and drawings, Kitchen constructs a chronology of political Israel at its zenith, when there is the most extra-biblical data. He is willing to explore some of the more speculative issues, such as evidence for David, the Queen of Sheba and Ophir, a table of nations from Noah's sons, and the location of the Garden of Eden, so far as there is data. Among the prophets, he covers the format of Isaiah—is it two books or one—with some new insights. He discusses the problem of the use of numbers in the Bible, such as the ages of pre-flood patriarchs. Every Old Testament issue that seems to come up in church Bible classes he addresses.

Later in the book, he rebuts "minimalism" at length, concluding that "… Wellhausen worked in a near vacuum and could speculate freely" (p. 487) and that the vast data now available negates this nineteenth-century view of biblical history. One evidence is that the textual language, form of covenant, tabernacle design, etc., are unique to specific, earlier times.

Kitchen critiques less severely another recent Eerdmans' author, American archaeologist William G. Dever, whose recent book, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It?* (2001), proceeds to show that the lack of archaeological evidence in Canaan for any

major population invasion in Joshua's time casts doubt upon the usual interpretation of the account. Dever settles for small bands of Israelites, over time, diffusing into Canaan and settling amidst the Canaanites, who contribute to the early population of Israel. Kitchen counters by noting that Joshua's raiders always returned to their base at Gilgal and land allotments were determined for *future* occupation; the Bible gives no settlement narrative, but archaeology suggests one.

A masterpiece, this book is recommended both as a Bible study resource and for its coverage of the history and state of Old Testament studies in our time. Pastors and scholars will especially benefit from it, though it is readable by anyone interested in the historical reliability of the Bible.

Reviewed by Dennis L. Feucht, Cayo, Belize.

Social Science

SECULAR STEEPLES: Popular Culture and the Religious Imagination by Conrad Ostwalt. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003. Paperback; $22.00. 261 pages. ISBN: 1563383616.

Secularization has long been a major concern among students of religion. Many scholars have contended that as secularization increased, religion would decrease. Ostwalt presents a convincing argument that counters this in two ways: (1) secularization cannot, and does not, destroy religion—religion persists; and (2) secularization occasions a shift in the locus of authority for expressing religiosity. This shift away from the importance of religious institutions results, according to Ostwalt, in both secularizing the sacred and sacralizing the secular.

After an intuitive survey of the forces that provoked a change from the medieval sacred culture to modern secular post-modernism, Ostwalt develops his thesis about religion in three areas: place, text, and image. These three pertain to the ways in which religion has reshaped itself in places (mega-churches in contrast to traditional parish churches), texts (religion in literature in contrast to revealed Scripture), and image (religion in film in contrast to ritual and liturgical drama). In each of these areas, Ostwalt demonstrates how religion has adopted secular forms to better express its truths (secularizing the sacred) at the same time that religious themes have found their way implicitly into overtly secular formats (sacralizing the secular).

Adopting a contemporary functional definition of religion as "the search for meaning," Ostwalt avoids the traditional substantive approach to religion typified among many Christian theologians and adherents. His is a more sociological, descriptive approach that allows for examining dispassionately religious changes across the years of the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries. He is not a cynic about the place of religion in contemporary life. Quite the opposite. But he is convinced that the persistence of religious issues in contemporary life find their expression in ever evolving manners and differing ways.

Readers will find in Ostwalt's volume an erudite and lively survey of current theorists coupled with an original model for understanding how the forces of secularism interact with the timeless search for meaning in modern humans. His volume will serve as a worthy introduction to sociological, literary, and multimedia thinking about the role of religion in modern life. Perhaps the prime insights of the volume lie in Ostwalt's extensive critiques of extant literature and film.

While this approach may seem novel and overly descriptive to physical scientists, the perceptive way in which Ostwalt affirms but analyzes contemporary culture will be informative and helpful. The approach is somewhat confessional in undertone but realistic in its awareness that the influence of traditional institutional religion is changing in both content and form.

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BIBLICAL STORIES FOR PSYCHOTHERAPY AND COUNSELING by Matthew B. Schwartz and Kalman J. Kaplan. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press, 2004. 220 pages. Paperback; $24.95. ISBN: 0789022133.

This book relates the stories of such Old Testament characters as Adam, David, Samson, Elisha, Joshua, and Jonah. From these stories, lessons are derived on such topics as anger, suicide, misfortune, family problems, and drunkenness. For example, from David and Jonathan are developed lessons on "friendship and love"; from Naomi and Ruth come "reciprocity between generations"; from Elijah comes "recovering from weariness"; and from Jeroboam comes "undone by ambition."

Issues of human experience are examined through biblical stories. Examples include: finding meaning in life when tragedy strikes (David faced this after his son died); meeting challenges when natural ability is limited (Moses and Aaron leading Israel); coping with sin (Adam and Eve after eating forbidden fruit); coping with temptation (Joseph's attempted seduction by Potiphar's wife); and coping when life falls apart (Job's testing).

Altogether the book contains fifty-eight biblical stories covering a variety of practical problems, all of which can be used in advising, counseling, and therapy. They also provide good leads and useful material for teaching or preaching. The authors write "the unique contribution of our book is to present biblical stories that can be used by therapists, clergy, and patients/clients alike, and also people who simply want to help themselves psychologically in a manner that addresses their spiritual concerns" (p. 2). Laypersons may be more likely to find this book useful since one study showed 90% of them believe in a personal transcendent God compared with only 40% of clinical psychologists.

Sigmund Freud, a Jew who founded psychoanalysis, used Greek rather than Hebrew stories as a basis for psychoanalysis. The intriguing question dealt with in the epilogue is why? The authors' conclusion is that the Hebrew stories trumped free-will whereas Freud believed in determinism. They write that since God created nature,

Letters

he is able to change it, but determinism holds "that nature creates the gods and, in fact, governs them. Freud correctly understood that …" (p. 197). R. F. Paloutzian in his foreword alludes to the distinction between Greek (Athens) and Hebrew (Jerusalem) stories which illustrates why Freud chose Greek legends: "A contrast is drawn between the assumptions about human nature that come from classical Greece and those originating in biblical Israel. This is illustrated by … a Greek tragic view of life … versus a Hebraic view that views humans as created with the ability to act and effect change" (p. xi).

Schwartz, who specializes in Graeco-Roman and Jewish thought, teaches ancient history and literature. Kaplan, who specializes in interpersonal and international relations, teaches psychology. Both work at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, and both have written books previously. *Biblical Stories* has received pre-publication high praise from scholars who call it "brilliant," "compelling," "illuminating," and "much-needed."

This book's eleven chapters also include an introduction, epilogue, bibliography, and index; it is also available in hardcover. Haworth Press publishes all its books on paper approved by the American National Standard for Information Sciences-Permanence of Paper for Printed Material. This is worth mentioning because this standard assures that the paper is pH neutral, acid free, and intended to wear well over time. Not every publisher imbeds this assurance in their books.

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Letters

Is Aardsma's Flood Theory Both Scientific and Biblical?

Paul Seely recommends reconciling science with the biblical account of Noah's flood by conceding that Genesis 1–11 is scientifically and historically inaccurate. He suggests that God used fictional stories about mythical events to tutor us, "accommodating his theological lessons to the mentality and preconceptions of his young children, aware that in time they would learn better of both history and science."[1] In other words, "God accommodated his theological revelation in Genesis 1–11 to the now antiquated science/history of the times."[2] Seely contrasts his position with what he calls concordism, misrepresenting the message of the Bible to fit scientific facts, and creation science, misrepresenting facts to fit the Bible. He evidently lost all hope of finding any alternative that upholds the total historicity of Genesis while totally respecting both witnesses. Aardsma's approach may meet this higher standard.

Aardsma has found secular and scientific evidence that tends to confirm his flood theory, and no such evidence, not even the ice core evidence Seely presented, rules it out as a viable candidate.[3] Naturally, more extensive evaluation could expose flaws requiring theory adjustments or even replacement.

Seely charged creation science with "rejecting the overwhelming consensus of the best-trained scientists in the relevant sciences and substituting in its place private interpretations of the scientific data."[4] If Aardsma's ideas are dismissed, may it not be because they contradict the overwhelming consensus of experts that Genesis 1–11 is only myths of purely human origin. One does not find truth by taking a vote. Science freezes if a consensus always overwhelms new ideas while they are still unfamiliar. Think of Galileo. No consensus is fixed. Minds can be changed. What really qualifies as disrespect for the witness of science is stubbornly or dogmatically accepting a favorite interpretation of data while rejecting a better, more reasonable one.

What about respect for the witness of the Bible? Seely said, "The ocean, which is not fresh water, cannot be employed as a means of flooding the globe (or half the globe à la Godfrey/Aardsma) without doing the same thing that concordists are doing: replacing the history in Genesis 1-11 with a private interpretation."[5] Seely cited no other alleged conflict with the Bible in Aardsma's theory, but this is evidently all he needed to categorize it as concordist and, by his definition, unbiblical. Aardsma certainly is not "replacing the history … with a private interpretation."

To support his questionable claim, Seely relied on Dick Fischer's interpretation of *fountains of the great deep* (Gen. 7:11). Fischer admitted that *deep* "can mean the sea," presumably, even a saltwater sea,[6] but concluded that it must refer to fresh water here, just because related terms in other languages suggest this.[7] Even if Fischer's doubtful interpretation is correct, Seely's critique may not hold water. His assuming that Genesis mentions every major floodwater source is like assuming that the ark was confined to calm seas, since we read nothing about waves.

Seely also criticized creation science for "find[ing] evidence in Scripture for items which Old Testament scholars do not find there, like multiple volcanoes exploding at the time of the flood." If speculation or theories about volcanoes misrepresent the Bible message, then similar criticism also applies to Aardsma's theories. Creationists, however, do not claim that Genesis explicitly states that volcanoes erupted. Neither does Aardsma find any statement that the southern oceans shifted to the north. These are theories considered consistent with what the Bible does say.[8]

We may agree with Seely that "the accuracy of the historical books in Scripture is contingent upon the quality of the [human] sources employed,"[9] but while he considers chapters 1–11 to be "of rather poor historical worth," we can in good faith accept Noah and New Testament apostles as equally credible eyewitnesses to real history.[10] If these "historical" chapters are actually fiction, given to teach "theological lessons," has our Tutor ever explained their mystical meaning? If Seely's accommodationism is rejected, may it not be because it contradicts some overwhelming consensus but rather because we share a reasonable faith in the historicity of even Genesis 1–11.

Notes

[1]Paul H. Seely, "Beyond the Hills of Concordism and Creation Science," *PSCF* 55, no. 2 (2003): 138–9.

[2]Paul H. Seely, "Concordism's Illusion That It Is Upholding the Historicity of Genesis 1–11," *PSCF* 56, no. 1 (2004): 75. His objection in