

Book Reviews

complexity,” and does not do justice to missionary practices well into the twentieth century.

Part II contains five chapters examining the role of the media and public response to science/religion discussions and events: chap. 5, “Creating a New Space for Debate: The Monthlies, Science, and Religion,” by Bernard Lightman; chap. 6, “Darwin’s Publisher: John Murray III at the Intersection of Science and Religion,” by Sylvia Nickerson; chap. 7, “The ‘Harmony Thesis’ in the Turkish Media, 1950–1970,” by M. Alper Yalçinkaya; chap. 8, “A Humanist Blockbuster: Jacob Bronowski and the Ascent of Man,” by Alexander Hall; and chap. 9, “Teaching Warfare: Conflict and Complexity in Contemporary University Textbooks,” by Thomas H. Aechtner.

In summary, these chapters illustrate how insights from the study of print culture, communications studies, and visual studies have broadened our more “familiar grooves” of explanation and deepened our understanding of science and religion.

Part III is to my mind the most stimulating section, one in which some of the leading historians of science and religion present (their) historiographies and theories. It contains four chapters: chap. 10, “Revisiting the Battlefields of Science and Religion: The Warfare Thesis Today,” by Ronald Numbers; chap. 11, “From Copernicus to Darwin to You: History and the Meaning(s) of Evolution,” by Ian Hesketh; chap. 12, “Scale, Territory, and Complexity: Historical Geographies of Science and Religion,” by Diarmid A. Finnegan; and chap. 13, “Conflict, Complexity, and Secularization in the History of Science and Religion,” by Peter Harrison.⁴

Focusing on two of the chapters: In a relatively short chapter (a “brisk survey” of eight pages), Numbers explores the factors that contribute to the continued support of the warfare thesis and the “growth of the opposing neo-harmonist point of view” (p. 183). Contemporaries such as Carl Sagan, Francis Crick, Stephen Hawking, William Provine, the New Atheists, and Christian and Muslim fundamentalists such as Ken Ham and Adnan Oktar are considered. Numbers chides scholars who legitimately question the warfare thesis but often do not address popular audiences.

Peter Harrison argues that we need to make complexity intelligible. Although historians are often averse to meta-narratives, he considers them to be both “unavoidable and indispensable.” Harrison defends the utility of a master-narrative, at least something that rises above mid-scale patterns (such as those suggested by Ronald Numbers). He appeals to Charles Taylor’s view of secularization as one way to begin to address the relation between science and religion. Taylor, for instance, distinguishes between science as cause of religious disbelief and science as a retrospective justification for

it. Secularization involves a change in the conditions of belief which Taylor contributes to transformations within Western Christianity.⁵

In “Afterword: The Instantiations of Historical Complexity,” John Hedley Brooke reflects on each of the contributed chapters. He provides a concise judgement about complexity:

Understood neither as a thesis competing with other theses nor as a prescription to seek out complexity for its own sake, but as a heuristic guiding principle for a critical research methodology, it ceases to be trivial and has proven fertile. (pp. 239–40)

Brooke once again restates his earlier view on complexity: it is a “corrective to essentialist and reductionist narratives of conflict,” and complexity’s primary function is to critique conflict narratives as well as facile harmonizing ones.

For anyone interested in exploring the latest in the historiography of science and religion, read this stimulating and informative book. You will be challenged. Whether the contributors do justice to the central role and character of religion one will have to judge. I for one have my doubts. If we consider our lives as lived to be religion, then religion is not irrelevant to, or in conflict with, or an influential factor on, but rather the very ground for scientific practice.

Notes

¹See my review in *PSCF* 71, no. 3 (2019): 183–84.

²See my essay review, “Telling the Story of Science and Religion: A Nuanced Account,” *British Journal for the History of Science* 29, no. 3 (1996): 357–59.

³See Part 2, “Complexity and the History of Science and Religion,” in *Recent Themes in the History of Science and Religion*, ed. Donald A. Yerxa (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2009).

⁴Peter Harrison’s book *The Territories of Science and Religion* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015) has been described by Ronald L. Numbers as “the most significant contribution to the history of science and religion since the appearance of John Hedley Brooke’s landmark study, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives*.” [See Matthew Walhout’s review in *PSCF* 67, no. 4 (2015): 281–84.]

⁵For a more extensive discussion of “science causes secularization,” see Peter Harrison’s article “Science and Secularization,” *Intellectual History Review* 27, no. 1 (2017): 47–70.

Reviewed by Arie Leegwater, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, Calvin University, Grand Rapids, MI 49546.



ORIGINAL SIN AND THE FALL: Five Views by J. B. Stump and Chad Meister, eds. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020. 200 pages. Paperback; \$24.00. ISBN: 9780830852871.

The doctrine of original sin has been controversial since its earliest articulation by Augustine of Hippo in the fourth century, and it remains a provocative

source of debate for Christian theologians in our time. Controversy surrounding the doctrine has only intensified as a scientific and evolutionary framework has come to characterize modern thinking. *Original Sin and the Fall: Five Views* provides a forum in which representatives from different Christian traditions are able not only to articulate their own perspectives on original sin and the Fall, but also to respond to the views presented by others in the volume.

Hans Madueme articulates one approach to the doctrine of original sin and the Fall from within the Reformed tradition, an “Augustinian-Reformed” perspective. While he states in the beginning of the essay that he developed his approach “with an eye to recent scientific challenges,” he does not engage in a sustained way with information from scientific discourses (p. 12). Instead, he points out some of the shortcomings he perceives in theological accounts of original sin that attempt a synthesis with evolutionary accounts of the world, and he argues that theology should not be too quick to conform to deliverances from the sciences since “scientific consensus is a moving target” (p. 33). Madueme asserts the priority of biblical exegesis and theological evidence, which he views as affirming a historical, cosmic Fall, imputing moral corruption and guilt. Madueme is compelling in this essay in his identification of the many potential pitfalls inherent to the task of reconciling a theological approach to original sin with the current scientific consensus. However, the essay leaves one desiring more work from Madueme to reconcile his rejection of contemporary science with his belief in the unity of scientific and theological truths, since, as he affirms, all truth comes from God.

Continuing in the Reformed vein, Oliver Crisp presents a “moderate” approach to original sin and the Fall that he describes in terms of “dogmatic minimalism” (p. 37). This means that Crisp affirms “as ‘thin’ an account [of original sin] as is doctrinally possible” (p. 37) while still being consonant with his broader theological commitments. For Crisp, being afflicted by original sin means that every human (except for Christ) has a “morally vitiated condition,” and yet does not bear the burden of inherited guilt. Crisp argues that the notion of inherited guilt is “monumentally unjust,” and that humans should be held culpable only for actions that “they themselves perform or to which they are party” (p. 47). Crisp argues that one benefit of his approach is that one can hold it in tandem with a variety of different beliefs about human origins and the historicity of the Genesis account. The rejection of inherited guilt is perhaps the least persuasive aspect of Crisp’s essay. Though he affirms that all of humanity is metaphysically united, he rejects the notion that this requires a belief in shared guilt. To defend this point, he uses the example of a child born into a family of slaves and argues that the child born into this plight “is not responsible for being born a slave” (p. 41). However, it is odd that Crisp

used this example instead of the example of the child born into a family of enslavers. Does not the child born into an enslaving family, who benefits from the system of slavery, bear some culpability for it, even if only passively?

Joel Green’s contribution draws from his expertise in biblical studies and is written from a Wesleyan perspective. He argues that Wesley viewed the doctrine of original sin as “essential to the theological grammar of Scripture and life” (p. 56). While Wesley emphasized the impairment of human nature, he did not embrace the notion of total depravity, arguing instead that God’s work of healing has begun within the human race. Green shifts next to reflect on the significance of Adam and Eve’s sin from the perspective of Second Temple Jewish texts. He argues that evidence of belief in original sin cannot be found in these texts, and suggests that this is significant in terms of understanding the mindset of New Testament writers who may have been influenced by them. Green then turns to the New Testament. He argues that in Romans 5, Paul is not interested in developing a doctrine of original sin. Instead, Paul seeks to establish the equal status of Jews and Gentiles before God (p. 70). Finally, Green assesses Genesis 1–3, arguing that these chapters also do not provide a foundation for the doctrine of original sin, although they do reveal a belief in the pervasiveness and heritability of sin, “not in the sense of passing sin down biologically but in the sense of pattern and influence” (p. 73). In his conclusion, Green argues that Wesley refused to choose between Scripture and the “book of nature,” that is, the natural sciences. He uses this as inspiration to briefly suggest a way of maintaining belief in the Fall while also acknowledging the evolutionary history of *Homo sapiens*. Green’s essay is helpful in that its reflection on original sin is explicitly in dialogue with insights from evolutionary biology, making this a needed contribution, given the popular perception that evolution has disproven the doctrine.

Andrew Louth provides a nuanced account of an Eastern Orthodox approach to thinking about inherited sin. He first clarifies that part of the dissonance between Western and Eastern thinking about inherited sin can be explained in terms of problems of translation. He notes, “The term original sin (*peccatum originale*) belongs to a particular Western context; nor is it easy to translate into Greek” (p. 79). A central insight of Louth’s essay is his thesis that Western theology begins from the point of view of the Fall and becomes narrowly focused on the notion of redemption. In contrast, he argues, Eastern theology begins from creation and culminates in deification. Eastern Christians view sin through a cosmic lens, and fallen humanity not in terms of inherited guilt but in terms of suffering the effects of the inheritance of death. To illustrate his arguments about the differences between Western and Eastern approaches to sin, Louth juxtaposes the writings of Athanasius and Anselm.

Book Reviews

He then examines the works of Sergii Bulgakov and Dumitru Stăniloae and argues that they continue the trend of viewing sin in the context of creation and deification. The final section of Louth's essay addresses the sinlessness of Mary via Bulgakov's approach to the issue. This aspect of his essay is particularly welcome since only one other essay (Oliver Crisp's) in the volume mentions Mary in relation to the doctrine of original sin. While Louth's argument that the West focuses narrowly on the Fall-redemption arc could perhaps be challenged, his essay nevertheless illuminates important differences in emphasis between Eastern and Western Christian thinking about sin and makes a crucial contribution to the conversation.

Tatha Wiley, in the so-called reconceived view, draws from the theology of Bernard Lonergan, S.J., to develop an exorcising approach to the doctrine of original sin. Wiley takes seriously the ways in which the traditional articulation of the doctrine has lost credibility in the contemporary age. She suggests that this is a result of its dissonance with modern biblical scholarship and evolutionary biology, and its history of being used to deny the goodness of humanity and sexuality. Wiley emphasizes the time-bound nature of all human understanding, and the fact that theological doctrines will inevitably reflect the historical frameworks in which they are articulated. In the current age, Wiley argues, this requires us to take seriously the scientific context in which we live, as well as our "authentic values" (p. 106). In her recasting of the doctrine, Wiley suggests via Lonergan that the "root sin" of humanity is "sustained unauthenticity" (p. 124). Wiley's contribution is compelling in its boldness. Rather than suggesting a few minor tweaks to the doctrine, she presents a rigorous rethinking of it. Wiley's essay is also valuable in that it addresses the gendered effects of the doctrine's history, and is the only essay in the volume to do so.

Original Sin and the Fall: Five Views is a thought-provoking treatment of one of the most debated aspects of Christian theology. On the whole, the book will likely be useful for professional theologians, students of theology at the graduate and undergraduate levels, pastoral ministers, and interested lay people. The "Responses" portion of the book was especially engaging, as the authors were quite candid in terms of assessing the lines of divergence in the group. The book provides thoughtful approaches to a difficult theological puzzle in which clear positions are established, not only from diverse points of view without apology, but also with genuine efforts to understand and accurately represent the positions of the others. Given the brevity of the volume, there were inevitably many unanswered questions evoked. Those familiar with theological discussions surrounding original sin will likely wish for more-thorough engagement with the challenges raised by evolutionary biology, as well as more reflection on recent shifts in thinking about evolution expressed in

the extended evolutionary synthesis. These developments are friendlier to theological intuitions about inherited sin.

Reviewed by Megan Loumagne Ulishney, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Theology and Religious Studies, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK NG7 2RD.

EMBRACING EVOLUTION: How Understanding Science Can Strengthen Your Christian Life by Matthew Nelson Hill. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020. 152 pages. Paperback; \$20.00. ISBN: 9780830852833.

This is a short and very readable book whose main purpose is to connect the average churchgoing Christian with a modern and theologically sympathetic understanding of evolution. The general perspective taken by the book is that human understanding of anything (science, art, theology, politics, and so forth) is significantly contextual. The author takes care in the first chapter to explain his perspective on science/faith issues in general, and organizes the book into three parts.

The first part is that of understanding our "biblical lens," namely, exploring the ways in which we are shaped to read scripture, and how this, in turn, influences our beliefs. Do we read the Bible for formation or for information? The two are not mutually incompatible, but neither are they equivalent, and how we balance the two is pertinent to our theological understanding of evolution. This section of the book addresses what are perhaps the two main questions emerging from the early chapters of Genesis: our understanding of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, and the place of predation and death in God's creation. The latter troubles the author much more than the former, and the response presented is not wholly satisfying, even to the author himself. Overall, this section is a good presentation of hermeneutics that focuses on Genesis without bogging down the reader with too much theological weight.

The second part of the book addresses how we understand our "scientific lens." A full chapter is devoted to the basic theory of evolution (its "nuts and bolts") and a subsequent chapter to what is meant by scientific truth and its integration (or not) with faith. The author does a good job of distilling the philosophy of science for the intelligent lay reader without "dumbing it down"—not an easy task. Sometimes, however, the treatment is lacking, particularly concerning the *imago Dei* in light of evolution. Are we (as appears to be the inference on page 69) special simply because we were evolutionarily lucky to have large brains?

The remainder of the book—its third part—is devoted to how we might integrate an evolutionary understanding of biology with Christian faith. Many books have been written on this subject, and it is difficult for anyone these days to say what has not already been said. The theme running through this section of the book is