

## Editorial

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### On Taking Both Science and the Bible Seriously

Some years ago the philosopher Michael Ruse wrote a book entitled *Taking Darwin Seriously* (Blackwell, 1986). One problem with the book was that it did not take Darwin himself seriously enough. Darwin was cautious about extrapolating evolutionary theory into realms distant from its biological context. Throwing caution to the winds, Ruse made the mistake of trying to justify ethical statements by appeals to a biological theory, even going so far as to claim that 'What we should do, as moral beings, is aid the process of evolution. It is our moral task to see that evolution does indeed continue' (p.72). Ruse's attempt in *Taking Darwin Seriously* to subsume ethics into evolutionary theory, and to bypass the naturalistic fallacy by appeals to instinctive behaviour, never really worked either as philosophy or as biology. Unfortunately such attempts to utilise scientific theories to defend a particular personal ideology have a tendency to bring the scientific theory itself into disrepute.

At the other extreme, however, Christians can sometimes fail to take science seriously enough. This has particularly been the case when human evolution is the topic in question. Professor Allan Day's article in this issue of the journal tries to redress the balance by taking both the Biblical text and the scientific data seriously. His article contributes to an important debate because it has implications for our understanding of the Genesis narratives, for the nature of humankind in fellowship with God prior to the Fall, and for the doctrine of the atonement. Tackling related questions, but from a different angle, Professor David Booth's article investigating the interactions between the Biblical and contemporary psychological understandings of human nature is no less stringent in giving careful weight to both the Bible and to current scientific insights. Professor Booth suggests that the fragmented picture of human nature bequeathed to us by various religious traditions is as far from Biblical teaching as it is from contemporary psychology.

Post-modernism is not particularly noted for taking either science or the Bible seriously, although tolerant of both providing that no claim is made for universal validity. Dr. John Taylor's article on *Christianity, Science and the Post-Modern Agenda* is therefore a useful reminder that whilst Thomas Kuhn has some helpful insights for the scientific community, there is no need to buy into the whole package of either scientific or religious relativism which post-modernism espouses. At the end of the day, both the Bible and science are making truth-claims about reality. Unless that were the case, there would be no need to take *either* seriously. The rise of post-modernism has been useful, at least, in highlighting the important shared assumptions which unite the scientific and Christian enterprises.