KEITH FOX

Editorial

This issue of S&CB contains three main articles. The first two describe the contributions to Science and Christian belief from two prominent thinkers in the twentieth and twenty first centuries: Arthur Eddington and John Polkinghorne. Both were physicists, both were knighted and were fellows of the Royal Society and studied in Cambridge (and both spent their early years in Weston-super-Mare). Eddington was a Quaker and an astrophysicist, while Polkinghorne, was a theoretical physicist and became an Anglican priest.

In their article, McKee and Reynolds remind us that Arthur Eddington played an important role in inter-war physics and helped to communicate science and it philosophical implications to popular audiences. He made one of the first demonstrations of Einstein's theory of relativity. His faith convinced him of the spiritual nature of reality and he searched for a theory of everything. Although this was unsuccessful, we can learn much from his approach to relating science and faith to larger audiences.

Ewan Thomas' article considers the wider context of John Polkinghorne's model of divine action, which is best known as the idea of 'active information' within chaotic systems. This article attempts to put this model in a wider context and considers Polkinghorne's understanding of process theology, kenotic theology, critical realism and the status of the laws of nature. Thomas argues that, for Polkinghorne, divine action is not limited to chaotic systems, but that its exploration brings us closer to understanding some of the characteristics that Polkinghorne argues for divine action.

The third paper, by William Horst, considers the existence of a literal, historical Adam and Eve, arguing from exegesis of the apostle Paul's writing in Romans 5. Horst's article is a theological exploration of this passage, rather than considering any specific scientific arguments. Horst points out that, while Adam's sin brought death, God's grace is greater and Christ's obedience more than cancels out the results of Adam's disobedience. We can therefore have confidence in justification through faith in Christ, leading to eternal life. Horst argues that the apostle Paul's argument in this passage is significantly weakened if we remove belief in a historical Adam and Eve. This topic will doubtless stimulate further reflections, comments and responses, and questions about the necessity of believing in a historical Adam and Eve.

On the topic of a literal Adam, the previous issue of Science & Christian Belief (36-2) contained an article by Denis Lamoureux, which critiqued Joshua Swamidass' book on the Genealogical Adam and Eve. Swamidass' speculation centres on the difference between genetic and genealogical ancestry, raising the theoretical possibility that all humans could be genealogically descended

from a literal Adam and Eve, who interbred with pre-existing humans, who had originated by standard evolutionary mechanisms. I offered Joshua Swamidass the opportunity to write a detailed response to this critique, which he accepted, and his rebuttal is included as a lengthy contribution in the debate section. This debate isn't really focussed on the possibility of Swamidass' genealogical speculation itself, but on whether it essentially represents a new form of concordism, seeking to align scripture and science and whether this is necessary. This will be a contentious issue for many readers, and I therefore invited short reflections from two people with opposing views on the subject. Seth Hart defends Swamidass' position, while Dennis Venema sees this as another ratcheting up of unnecessary attempts at concordism. As Swamidass had the first word in this dialogue, when he published his book, I allowed Lamoureux to give some concluding remarks. I consider this specific debate to be closed, but I would welcome short letters of correspondence from other readers.

In a letter Sam McKee writes in response to Philip Senter's article, in the previous issue, which concluded Behemoth cannot be consider as a dinosaur. McKee does not disagree, but suggests that the presence of dinosaurs in the Old Testament is so conclusively disproved on several grounds, that it is time to lay this debate to rest.

As usual this issue contains reviews of eighteen recently published science-religion books, which we hope will be helpful in guiding your personal reading. If you notice a new book that is worth reading then please contact Todd Kantchev, the book Reviews Editor, who will be pleased to consider a review.

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