

Gary B. Ferngren, ed., *The History of Science and Religion in the Western Tradition*, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, no. 1833 (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), xxi + 586 pp., \$95.00.

The history of science has long been concerned with the interactions between its subject and religion. This has particularly been the case for those of us who are interested in evolutionary thinking, a subject that has received perennial attention from historians and theologians alike. Models for dealing with the two subjects have varied between the confrontational approaches of John William Draper and Andrew Dickson White in the late 1800s, through the irenic (and muddled) approach of Stephen Jay Gould's "non-overlapping magisteria," and finally onto the syncretic viewpoint of many theologians and thinkers supported by the Templeton Foundation. This diversity of views is more than evident in the work under review.

Ferngren and his co-editors have brought together seventy-six contributors in a work devoted to providing "a comprehensive survey of the historical relationship of the Western religious traditions to science from time of the Greeks . . . to the late twentieth century" (p. xiii). The work is divided into ten parts covering a broad spectrum of areas: "The Relationship of Science and Religion," "Biographical Studies," "Intellectual Foundations and Philosophical Backgrounds," "Specific Religious Traditions and Chronological Periods," "Astronomy and Cosmology," "The Physical Sciences," "The Earth Sciences," "The Biological Sciences," "Medicine and Psychology," and "The Occult Sciences." Within each part, the authors provide summary essays on topics as diverse as the Cabala, flat-earthism, and evolutionary ethics. Each essay ends with a bibliography of primary and secondary sources for further exploration.

The authors of many of the entries are well known to readers of this journal, including as they do, James Moore (Darwin), John Hedley Brooke (natural theology), Peter Bowler (evolution), Nicolaas Rupke (German nature philosophy), and Edward Larson (eugenics). Ferngren is to be commended in assembling such a stellar cast of contributors, and the quality of entries reflects the caliber of their authors. Interestingly, a number of prominent anti-Darwinians are also represented, most notably William Dembski who summarizes the Design argument (without mentioning objections to its present reincarnation as "Intelligent Design Theory" or IDT). The inclusion of Stephen Meyer writing on the demarcation of science and religion is somewhat perplexing. As a pro-IDT member of the Seattle-based Discovery Institute, Meyer is notable for his attempts to inject Christianity into scientific discourse (and American public schoolrooms), and his essay is a masterpiece of evasatory rhetoric.

In fact, contributions by the likes of Dembski and Meyer highlight why this volume is important. The issue of conflict – either real or apparent – between science and religion is one which has been prominent in twentieth century American life, and early indications are that this century will see a continuation in the “debate.” Historians, philosophers, and practicing biologists alike owe it to themselves to become acquainted with the historical and philosophical roots of this interaction, and the volume under review provides a useful entry-point. The work’s only major flaws are in the brevity of many of the entries – which sometime struggle to get past three pages – and frankly the cost, which would make the work prohibitive for classroom use. Historians of biology are likely to find little new in the essays devoted to the biological and medical sciences, and the true value of this work to such readers is likely to lie in the background it provides to overarching philosophical and theological issues. This minor point aside, the work remains a good place to start for those wishing to get nuanced historical backgrounds to a debate that is not likely to be resolved in the near future.

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