

trine must be based on experiential realities. Following Lonergan she replaces 'original sin' by 'root sin.' Our root sin is 'unauthenticity,' alienation from our authentic being. To achieve authenticity of being requires reorientation in three areas – intellectual, moral and religious.

I am surprised at the paucity of detailed consideration of the biblical text in the presentations, a point made by Green. Madueme seems to be an exception here since he refers to a good number of texts, but all he does is assume the standard Reformed interpretation of them. When he does say that others understand some of them differently, he implies that this is because they have given in to the modern worldview, ignoring the possibility that the traditional interpretation he adopts may have been shaped by the worldview of the Reformation era. There is no actual engagement with the exegetical arguments used by those scholars who challenge his interpretation.

The issue of the place scientific knowledge should play in biblical interpretation and theology is touched on several times. Madueme says that Christian doctrine must be based on Scripture not fallible scientific theories. In saying this he ignores the fallibility of human interpretation of Scripture, which sometimes may be revealed to us by science. Crisp suggests that science can be put on one side since he argues that the historicity of Adam is not crucial to the doctrine of the Fall and original sin. Wiley takes an evolutionary understanding of human origins as a given and sees it as invalidating the traditional doctrine. Louth's position is unclear. Green gives a clear and helpful discussion of the place scientific knowledge should have in formulating Christian doctrine. He finds an evolutionary understanding of human origins compatible with his Wesleyan view of the Fall and original sin.

This book is well worth reading be-

cause it informs, challenges and sharpens the reader's thinking about this area of Christian doctrine.

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**Scott D. G. Ventureyra**

***On The Origin of Consciousness: An Exploration through the Lens of the Christian Conception of God and Creation***

Eugene, OR: 2018. 324 pp. pb. £27.00.  
Wipf & Stock ISBN 978-1-5326-5517-3

'Have you ever thought about how self-consciousness (self-awareness) originated in the universe?'

This book is an extensively researched dive into one of the most complex challenges at the interface of science, philosophy and theology – the so-called 'hard problem of consciousness'. What is consciousness? Where does it come from? How has it originated? The reader is challenged with these questions and Ventureyra seeks to show how the Christian conception of God and creation (in varied forms but with significant common features) can provide a unique answer to this question.

He has two aims in writing this book, which he describes as modest: 'first, that Christian theology indeed has something to say to the sciences when it comes to the origin of consciousness' and that the origin of consciousness 'plausibly affirms the Christian conception of God and creation' (282). I am not sure I would describe these claims as 'modest', but what he has written certainly helps to affirm both.

First, he works through different ways of understanding how the disciplines of science, theology and philosophy can

relate to each other, and uses a model of 'creative mutual interaction' between theology and the natural sciences. This approach was developed by the physicist John Russell, who has been very active in the discussion between science and theology. He then delves into different Christian models for how the doctrine of creation and the science of evolution relate to each other. He details a range of understandings and ultimately opts for a 'directed evolution' approach to theistic evolution, seeing God's action in singular events whilst affirming universal common descent. Many will find his discussion on the different views of Christianity and evolution insightful and of much broader application than the problem of consciousness. He then devotes a chapter to investigating the 'scientific theology' of the influential twentieth century philosopher, theologian and anthropologist Teilhard de Chardin. Whilst Ventureyra ultimately disagrees with much of Teilhard owing to Teilhard's unorthodox understanding of the divine, Ventureyra finds much that is useful in his approach of integrating a Christian view of the world with the science of evolution.

Ventureyra is a Catholic, although his approach is sufficiently broad to appeal to many orthodox Christians. He comfortably works with the thought of a wide range of Christian theologians/philosophers such as John Polkinghorne, Eleanor Stump, William Lane Craig, and the book is endorsed by a similarly wide range of Christian writers. After discussing Teilhard, he lays out basic arguments for the classical conception of God, discussing the cosmological argument, fine tuning, and God's simplicity. God's simplicity (the idea that God is not made of parts) is particularly relevant because it 'provides an undergirding for all of reality' (38) and is an example of a theological understanding that can inform different ways of understanding consciousness: 'If we indeed possess a transcendent nature similar to

God, namely that our consciousness and soul are not reducible to the material than an understanding of consciousness which conforms to the doctrine of divine simplicity would be a better fit' (276). In a brief chapter on systematic theology, he discusses how from the image-likeness of God in humanity and our capacity for us to know God through Jesus we 'can recognise an intimate connection between the origin of self-consciousness as manifested through our innate moral awareness' (197).

Ventureyra is thorough. As one might expect from a book arising out of a PhD, he extensively discusses many alternative views and critiques where relevant. The book is heavily weighted towards discussion of the presuppositions and approaches, and only in the last few chapters is the application to the problem of consciousness more fully developed. Whilst this means that he leaves lots of open-ended discussion points in the last few chapters (and provides several possible avenues for future research), the detailed discussion between God, evolution and the relationship between the disciplines of science, philosophy and theology has a much broader relevance on how theology can guide scientific research and understanding in a fruitful way.

As a lay reader with little background in philosophy of mind, I found much of the material unfamiliar and often quite challenging. For example, his explanation and comparison of the three different Christian understandings of consciousness that he highlights ('Substance Dualism' (245), a 'Tripartite Transcendent Model' (253) and 'Emergent Monism' (260)) could have been aided by a concise explanation of the terms and differences in concepts. Nevertheless, these different ways of approaching the problem undergird his first aim in writing, which is to show how Christian theology can provide

important insights into the problem of consciousness.

To address the second claim that consciousness plausibly affirms the Christian view of God and creation, he discusses the weaknesses of naturalistic approaches to consciousness. In response to the claims of Dennett, Churchland and Blackmore who argue that consciousness is an illusion, Ventureyra quotes Searle who sees this as self-refuting, and expresses that it is 'striking to see how one uses consciousness and conscious activity to deny consciousness or that it is merely an illusion' (119).

In his conclusion he says 'most academics in consciousness studies have given up on strictly materialistic explanations', and resort to panpsychism which he sees as 'one of the final subterfuges of naturalism in the hopes of explaining consciousness' (271). Whilst panpsychism (the view that consciousness is a fundamental feature of reality) is attractive in some ways this has a serious drawback in the combination problem – how can consciousness accumulate in miniscule forms in sub-atomic particles to combine to form more elaborate forms and explain self-awareness? This develops the avenue for seeing the existence of consciousness as part of an argument for the existence of God, which has been advanced here from the work of J. P. Moreland (and received fresh attention with the work of Sharon Dirckx, 'Am I Just My Brain?').

Overall, Ventureyra clearly argues that Christian theology has a role to play in science, and in the case of the problem of consciousness Christian theology provides significant explanatory value. It is a challenging read, but many will find it encouraging.

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**David Alcalde**

***Cosmology Without God?: The Problematic Theology Inherent in Modern Cosmology***

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Cascade Books ISBN 978-1532636844

In his monograph, *Cosmology Without God?* Fr David Alcalde explores the problematic theology that inheres in much of modern cosmology. He trained as both an astrophysicist and a theologian and the breath of his scholarly expertise shines through in the thesis. The text is divided into three chapters and, in the first chapter, Alcalde makes the convincing case that science cannot be divorced from metaphysical and theological presuppositions. Indeed, he illustrates how the declaration of scientific neutrality has rendered a mechanistic and extrinsic conception of God. On this view, God is reduced to a mere agent, set apart from the cosmos, in conflict and intervening in the natural order, and responsible for organising various boundary conditions. Alcalde argues that his impoverished conception of God, held by prominent theist and atheist thinkers alike is, to a large extent, the symptom a myopic ontology.

Alcalde develops his thesis in great depth in the following chapters where he draws on the rich theology of Thomas Aquinas on the topic of creation and causation. There is little doubt that the advancement of science, measured in terms of its technological accomplishments, has much to do with the abandonment of scholasticism; but this has come at the expense of a rich metaphysical vocabulary. Alcalde brilliantly illustrates how, on the Thomist and Augustinian view, the act of creation is not a mere temporal event; time itself is born in the creative act. Instead it is a kind of hierarchy from the necessary to the contingent. He succeeds in defining an extrinsic-ism that pervades the modern scientific endeavour, in its demarcation and even denial of