

# THEOLOGY AND SCIENCE

Creation

## COSMOLOGY

- Cosmology in thought
- Relation between cosmology and faith
- Relation between faith and reason
- Are cosmological questions relevant?

## HOW DOES THEOLOGY RESPOND TO SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY?

- Option 1: Ignore science and theologize within the traditional cosmology
  - Proposal
    - Theological language is about the journey of salvation; it has little relevance in regard to the structure of the world
    - The meaning of theological truths is embedded in traditional cosmology, to translate this into new cosmological terms is risky
    - Science is only tentative in any case
  - Limitations
    - Theology sounds like it has nothing to say to the modern world
    - Theology speaks naively
    - Religion is only a private matter and one can believe anything, so long as it is personally satisfying
- Option 2: Denounce scientific cosmologies as contributing to atheism
  - Proposal
    - Contemporary science operates by presupposing that God does not intervene in the world
    - This presumption is equivalent to the presumption that there is no God
    - One should not expect that science done in this way will result in a God-centered cosmology
    - The Scriptures are our only true guide to the nature of the world
  - Limitations
    - Theology stands against the contemporary world view
    - Theology promotes sectarianism
    - Reason is seen as the enemy of the faith
- Option 3: Faith statements should be conformed to the findings of science
  - Proposal
    - Science results from the proper functioning of God-given human reason
    - It is the duty of theology to make sense of the truths of science
    - Only by re-visioning faith within the current cosmology can theology be grounded in the truth
    - Only by speaking the language of the contemporary world-view can theology be credible
  - Limitations
    - The truth status of scientific theories is always changing
    - Conforming faith statements to science may result in the loss of essential elements of the faith
    - Relevance should not be sought at the price of truth
    - There is a risk of modernism

- Option 4: The questions of faith, grounded in the Tradition, should be put in careful, long-term dialogue with the findings of science.
  - Scientific cosmology and faith should be kept in a healthy tension.
  - Truths of faith that cannot be easily fit into the new cosmology should not be rejected off-hand or transformed without careful research
  - New cosmologies should be examined for possibly insights that they offer into the questions of faith

## MEETING THE MATERIALIST CRITIQUE: PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- The selfish gene
  - Human aspirations are the same as those found in more simple life forms
  - Human ideas of universality, ethics, and transcendence are only sophisticated ways that help our more complex brains ensure the survival of our genes
  - Biological altruism
  - Biological usefulness of morality
  - Biological usefulness of faith
- John Haught
  - Layers of explanation
  - Scientific explanations are addressing a different aspect than theological explanations
  - Theology addresses meaning, science addresses “grammar”
- Selfish gene?
  - Even atheist evolutionists defend universal ethical principles
  - Morality serves more than the survival of specific families of genes
  - Belief goes beyond mere coping or survival
  - See John F. Haught, *Making Sense of Evolution*, chapter 9

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

John Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000).

John Polkinghorne, *Science and Theology: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998).

Jürgen Moltmann, *God and Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

Mark William Worthing, *God, Creation, and Contemporary Physics* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).