

The use of land, its resources and fruitfulness, the place of wilderness in our lives are all helpfully described, and the author does not shy away from modern controversies that emerge with technologies such as genetically-modified crops and their role in more developed and less developed nations. His analysis comes down on the side of such advances within the context of sustainable development provided they do not conflict with care of the environment and the needs of disadvantaged communities.

The narrative moves from one disputed area to another as it reaches a climax that reflects the author's particular experience, namely the nuclear debate. The arguments in favour of nuclear energy are described (though fusion hardly) and are seen to support sustainable development. The world has an insatiable appetite for energy as more and more people legitimately adopt a lifestyle once the preserve of more developed nations. The discussion concerns not only the secure supply of energy (and the safe disposal of nuclear waste) but the management of waste in all its forms, much of which we currently discharge into the environments of the Second and Third World where it creates employment, materials for re-use, and hazards.

The finale of the book seeks to analyse, albeit briefly, the discord that can arise from those with a deep-seated distrust of technological 'fixes', those who think the non-governmental environmental movement has exaggerated its case through self-serving interests, and those who believe God is sovereign and all will be well. The author is to be applauded because he refrains from naïve 'one-liners' aimed to answer complex issues. His account should stimulate more members of the Christian community, people of other faiths, and those of no faith to wrestle with some of these very modern issues that will not go away.

It is encouraging that increasing numbers of Christians and churches show signs of putting their toe into the turbu-

lent waters of debate surrounding sustainable development. The subject is wide-ranging and this book provides helpful insights and pointers for further study. It is less strong on governmental work and socio-political arguments that seek to raise awareness about the challenges we all face and the policies and regulations that will be required to turn stewardship beyond words and into action.

Brian Heap is executive editor of Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society Series B, and formerly Master of St Edmund's College, Cambridge, and Vice-President of the Royal Society.

Ronald L. Numbers (editor)
Galileo Goes to Jail and Other Myths about Science and Religion

Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009. 302 pp. hb. £20.95. ISBN 978-0-674-03327-6

Not many books on science and religion offer such an enjoyable experience to the reader as this collection of twenty-five essays, each written by a historian of science. Each short and incisively argued essay challenges a prevalent 'myth' – in the sense of a false claim – concerning the interrelationship between science and religion. Thus one chapter seeks to demolish the view that Thomas Henry Huxley defeated Bishop Wilberforce at the 1860 meeting of the British Association, while another contests the claim that Christianity gave rise to modern science, and a third shows that Descartes did not hold the mind-body distinction often attributed to him.

What is refreshing about these essays is not only that their authors use history critically in order to challenge the reader's assumptions, but in offering correctives they often illuminate less prominent but important aspects of history. For example, in arguing that Galileo was neither sent to jail nor suffered torture at the hands of the Inquisition, Maurice

Finocchiaro argues that the official documents that appear to specify these punishments should not be taken at face value. Instead, he draws on contemporary correspondence to show that Galileo was not tortured and that, instead of being imprisoned, he was placed under house arrest in 1638.

In refuting the myths that have accumulated round the subject of science and religion, several of the authors address the reasons why such myths were first devised and why they subsequently gained popularity. They demonstrate that these myths were self-servingly deployed by groups with strong commitments to specific scientific or religious positions. For example, in seeking to undermine the theory of evolution, its opponents have repeatedly argued that it is based on a circular argument; creationists claim that evolution is used to interpret the fossils in the stratigraphical column, an interpretation which is then utilised as evidence for evolution. However, Nicolaas Rupke argues that the stratigraphic sequence pre-dates Darwin's theory by two or three decades and therefore does not depend on evolution. Likewise, Richard Dawkins has been a major proponent of the myth that science has been principally responsible for secularisation. In response to this charge John Hedley Brooke makes the strong case for science playing only a minor role in secularisation, arguing that other factors have been far more influential, including both radical politics and people's disillusionment with religion itself.

The myths addressed in this book differ considerably one from another in type and importance. Some are major misconceptions that have profoundly affected people's perceptions of both science and religion. Thus the view that science is the main cause of secularisation and the assertion that medieval Islam was inhospitable to science must both be forcefully challenged if we are to avoid misunderstanding the very contours of science-religion interrelations. By contrast, the

myth that Einstein believed in a personal God seems relatively unimportant. Moreover, as I had not previously encountered this particular assertion, it may be a 'straw myth'. Perhaps rather surprisingly, the frequently repeated claim that science and religion are themselves in necessary conflict – the so-called 'conflict thesis' – is not directly addressed in this volume.

The volume as a whole shows just how insidious are the myths that have been deployed to justify and popularise the views of creationists and the proponents of Intelligent Design on the one hand, and anti-religious secularists on the other. However, I have some residual fears that the authors of one or two of the chapters were in danger of replacing hackneyed myths with their own more sophisticated mythology. Despite that concern, Ron Numbers and his team of contributors are to be thanked for a stimulating book that deserves to be widely read.

Geoffrey Cantor is Professor Emeritus of the History of Science at the University of Leeds and is currently writing a religious interpretation of the Great Exhibition of 1851.

Alister E. McGrath

A Fine-Tuned Universe: The Quest for God in Science and Theology

Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009. xv+262 pp. hb. £26.99. ISBN-13 978-0-664-23310-5

This volume, the published version of McGrath's 2009 Gifford Lectures, comprises two parts. In the first, McGrath outlines his by now familiar vision for a renewed, Trinitarian natural theology, and in the second he focuses on examples of fine-tuning in the universe and their interpretation.

McGrath's approach to natural theology here, as in his earlier books, is to locate it firmly within dogmatic, orthodox Trinitarian theology. This provides, he