

practical matters. The book is replete with applications of what initially seem to be unrelated philosophical areas to issues pertinent to faith and humility. For some examples, epistemic contextualism, fallibilism, action theory, counterfactuals, dispositions/masking/finking, Frege's puzzle/opacity of propositional content, Bayesian conditionalization, epistemic coherentism, the basing relation, analyticity, and the preface paradox are all brought to bear on issues related to faith and humility. It is my hope that this integration of other philosophical areas with work on faith and humility will lead to applied work by specialists in these other fields and to more widespread work on both faith and humility.

*God, Science, and Religious Diversity: A Defense of Theism*, by Robert T. Lehe. Cascade Books, 2018. 188 pages. \$25 (paperback).

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A currently popular belief is that the advances in scientific knowledge over the last few centuries have demonstrated that science is incompatible with religious belief—the latter counting, at best, as “faith” and not knowledge. A second currently popular belief is that the existence of a plurality of different religions, each containing adherents that are sincere and morally upright—and whose characteristic beliefs are matters of “faith” rather than knowledge—means that it is wrongheaded (to say the least) to have any intellectual commitment to the truth of a given set of religious beliefs if this commitment involves thinking that any of the beliefs found in other religions is false. Robert T. Lehe, in *God, Science, and Religious Diversity*, provides an academically rigorous and trenchant challenge to both of these popular beliefs. The intended audience seems to be manifold, including religious believers who feel uneasy about their own commitment to certain religious beliefs in light of their awareness of the advance of science and of the plurality of religious traditions. But the book is also for skeptics, who may be surprised by Lehe's well-articulated defense of the claim that “modern science is not only compatible with the existence of God, but . . . favors theism over metaphysical naturalism, the view that only the natural world exists and that all phenomena are governed entirely by the laws of physics” (1). While there are many other books that conjointly address the topics of science and religion, there aren't as many that address science and religious diversity as twin challenges to particular religious belief and whose responses to these challenges are woven together in a unified, coherent, and compelling way. *God, Science,*



*and Religious Diversity* does all of this masterfully. On the whole, the book is well-written, well-researched, and yet accessible to both philosophical and scientific non-specialists. It is also very fair-minded; indeed, I think Lehe even undersells his case in a few places.

Lehe argues for two main theses that are at once substantive, controversial, and both philosophically and scientifically interesting: (1) that “modern scientific cosmology is not only compatible with religious interpretations of reality but that it adds to the credibility of Christian theism”; and (2) that “consideration of how effectively different religious traditions harmonize their beliefs with modern science turns out to be helpful in the attempt to adjudicate conflicting truth claims between diverse religions” (2). Chapters 1 and 2 do some stage-setting (epistemological and otherwise) and articulate challenges to a theistic worldview that are thought to be posed by science and by religious diversity. A popular assumption is that as far as religion has concerned science, it has functioned only as a “God-of-the-gaps” device by which we can temporarily cling to a religious explanation of various phenomena until a “real” explanation, from science, becomes available. Lehe reminds the reader that “[i]t is well documented not only that most of the pioneers of the modern scientific revolution were Christians motivated by religious passion in their scientific work, but also that to a large extent it was their assumption that the cosmos was created by a wise and rational God that convinced them that the world was rationally intelligible and could be investigated by human reason” (22)—and that typically, no such “God-of-the-gaps” approach is adopted by “thoughtful” or “sophisticated” theists (33). Lehe also points out that “the assumption of scientism, that whatever cannot be justified by the application of the scientific method cannot be legitimately accepted as knowledge” is “an arbitrary assumption”—one that is “not only not justified, but is (as has been pointed out many times since the days of Plato) incoherent and self-refuting” (38–39).

Lehe argues in chapter 3 that even if methodological naturalism is accepted as the proper approach to doing science, such a methodology does not entail metaphysical naturalism—which, argues Lehe, has its own explanatory limitations. Referencing a list compiled by Michael Peterson that includes consciousness, self-consciousness, mind, rationality, truth, personhood, free will, responsibility, morality, agency, value, biological evolution, and even science itself, Lehe argues that these things are “improbable and surprising in a world of nothing but matter and energy” and that “[t]heism has more explanatory power than naturalism insofar as theism provides a metaphysical framework that makes it less surprising (than does naturalism) that we should find in the world these marvelous features that intractably resist naturalistic explanation and the existence of which seem vastly improbable from the perspective of naturalism” (60).

Drawing on recent scientific discoveries in Big Bang cosmology, chapters 4 and 5 contain a timely treatment and thorough defense of the two premises of the *kalam* cosmological argument. Here, the reader will be led

on a tour through the landscape of contemporary cosmology (in a way that is accessible to the scientific non-specialist), after which Lehe concludes that “the best scientific evidence supports the claim that the universe began to exist” (85). Lehe does not claim that this evidence proves the existence of God, but rather that “it is hard to find a better candidate” for the cause of the universe’s beginning than the God of the Bible, and that arguments like the *kalam* cosmological argument can make use of the Big Bang theory and thereby “support the plausibility of theism” (5).

Chapter 6 offers a fascinating look at recent scientific discoveries that point to several very finely-tuned parameters of the universe that must be present in order for life to be possible. These parameters include Planck’s constant, the gravitational constant, and the cosmological constant—all of which are not determined by the fundamental physical laws but which “determine such basic parameters as the strength and range of the fundamental forces of nature, the mass of the fundamental particles, the mass density of the universe, the rate of expansion of the universe, and several others” (5). Lehe considers the main alternative explanation to the “design hypothesis,” namely the “many-universes (or multiverse) hypothesis,” and argues that such an alternative yields several problematic consequences.

By this point in the book, Lehe has made a very solid and compelling case for the claim that there is robust scientific support for theistic belief, and for the claim that there are significant explanatory limitations to metaphysical naturalism (which may be surprising to some readers, since even the question about whether there are such limitations to naturalism is not always well advertised)—and that these things make theism rationally preferable to naturalism. In the final three chapters, he turns his attention to the challenge to theistic belief posed by religious diversity. Lehe argues that, contrary to popular belief, “the fact of religious diversity does not undermine the possibility of rational assessment of religious truth claims and the adjudication of competing claims of diverse religions” (6). Chapter 7 offers a presentation and critique of John Hick’s version of religious pluralism, while chapter 8 does the same with respect to Peter Byrne’s version. Lehe argues that Hick’s version suffers from its commitment to an underlying Kantian epistemological framework whereby Hick distinguishes reality as it is in itself (the “Real”) from reality as it appears to adherents of the different religious traditions. Hick’s theory suffers, argues Lehe, because it “entails either non-realism or polytheism,” since it implies that “either the various religious entities that different religions refer to have no relation to the Real-in-itself, in which case the theory collapses into non-realism, or, on the contrary, the names of diverse religious entities are grounded in reality, in which case there are many different, real entities—many gods” (133).

Byrne’s theory, argues Lehe, is committed to three theses, as follows. First, there is a realist thesis: “All major religious traditions are equal in respect of making common reference to a single transcendent, sacred reality”; second, a pluralist/soteriological thesis: “All major religious traditions

are likewise equal in respect of offering some means or other to human salvation"; and third, an agnostic thesis: "All traditions are to be seen as containing revisable, limited accounts of the nature of the sacred; none is certain enough in its particular dogmatic formulations to provide the norm for interpreting the others" (138). Lehe argues that the first is in tension with (the first part of) the third. If, as the third thesis states, religions are revisable, then this calls into question the claim made in the first thesis that all major religious traditions are (or will remain) equal in making cognitive contact with the single transcendent and sacred reality. By way of Byrne's second thesis, Lehe argues that "Byrne's agnosticism about the details of the doctrines of particular religions [as in the third thesis] should cause reluctance to make any claims about the truth of what really constitutes salvation" (152)—and yet pluralists such as Byrne describe the soteriology of the major religions in terms of moral transformation and then claim that each of these religions is equally successful with respect to that transformation. But it seems that this is to define soteriology on the philosophical pluralist's own terms rather than on the terms of the individual religious traditions themselves. Lehe concludes that the "agnostic strain of Byrne's pluralism is too severe. If it is possible that religions are revisable then it is false that we are totally lacking means of assessing religious claims" (155).

In chapter 9 and in the book's Conclusion, Lehe more explicitly pulls together the two main topics of his book, namely science and religious diversity, and argues that a religion's degree of harmonization with scientific knowledge can be compared with that of other religions, and that this can serve as a legitimate and helpful way to adjudicate (to some extent) between competing religious claims. As an example of how this can go, Lehe compares Buddhism and Christian theism. Lehe notes that "Buddhists have found support for their doctrine of dependent origination in quantum physics and cosmology" and that "[c]yclical cosmologies seem harmonious with Buddhist metaphysics"—but he argues that the "universe having a beginning is difficult to reconcile with the Buddhist affirmation of an eternal, cyclical universe" and that "the fine-tuning of the cosmos seems to favor theism over Buddhism" (178).

In the remainder of this review, I'll move from the project of summary to one of making a few critical observations about the book. First, it is perspicacious of Lehe to note the (perhaps inevitable) psychological dimension of forming beliefs about the universe's origin, whether God exists, etc. (see 64–66, 99–100). Lehe references Thomas Nagel's now-famous statement that he *hopes* there is no God because he doesn't *want* the universe to be like that. Then, referring to a more recent work by Nagel, Lehe says, "Atheist and naturalist philosopher Thomas Nagel thinks that a purely materialistic form of naturalism of the sort that is currently fashionable has no chance of explaining the origin of life, consciousness, cognition, and the existence of objectively real values" (64). If Nagel is right, then if the sort of inflexible, dogmatic commitment to materialism as that preferred by Harvard geneticist Richard Lewontin (quoted by Lehe, 66) is

maintained by “mainstream” science, then “mainstream” science won’t ever arrive at accurate explanations of such important features of our universe. Our worldview preferences and our desires do seem to have a significant influence on what beliefs we often form and hold, independently of the epistemic relation between those beliefs and relevant evidence (and this is a state of affairs from which theists, too, are by no means immune). But by taking appropriate note of this psychological dimension of our cognitive life, following Lehe, a person may be more cognizant of the importance of keeping an open mind and being sensitive to evidence in the formation and maintenance of her beliefs; and this increased cognizance could itself be helpful in effecting these important epistemic desiderata.

Second, readers should note some features of the terminology Lehe adopts at the beginning of chapter 7. Lehe draws a finer distinction than is often drawn in the literature with respect to religious diversity. Typically, the three views of “exclusivism,” “inclusivism,” and “pluralism” are distinguished, which Lehe also does; but then Lehe adds into the mix the notion of a “moderate exclusivist,” which he introduces when considering the soteriological implications of exclusivism. Initially at least, Lehe seems to want to define the three main views alethically—i.e., with respect to what they say about whether more than one religion can be true—and then to consider their soteriological applications. Later in that section, however, it is not always clear whether the views are to be primarily distinguished alethically, soteriologically, or both. Lehe defines “moderate exclusivism” as a version of exclusivism which holds that adherents of religions other than the essentially true one can achieve salvation. In a Christian context, Lehe notes that “[o]ne way of drawing the line between exclusivism and inclusivism is to hold that the latter acknowledges the possibility of salvation for non-Christians while the former does not” (123). For some readers, this will be the most familiar way to draw the line; and they may then perceive a strange shift of terminological ground: Lehe’s “moderate exclusivism” is “inclusivism” on their more familiar construal, and “inclusivism” as Lehe uses the term is closer to “pluralism” on their more familiar construal. But Lehe believes that this way of drawing the line between exclusivism and inclusivism won’t work very well, since “the matter is complicated by the fact that some Christian exclusivists allow the possibility of salvation for non-Christians” (123). And it is these folks, then, whom Lehe calls “moderate exclusivists.”

It seems that what Lehe is after here, at least in part, is a way to sort out the difference between what we can set forth as the following soteriological propositions:

- (1) A person can be saved via adherence to a religion different from the essentially true one.
- (2) A person can be saved by tacitly adhering to the essentially true religion’s doctrines and practices while thinking she is only adhering to her own (different) religion’s doctrines and practices.

Lehe's notion of "moderate exclusivism" captures the idea in (2), while his notion of "inclusivism" captures the idea in (1). A general challenge facing any philosophical discussion of religious diversity is that the key terms of "exclusivism," "inclusivism," and "pluralism" tend to straddle both alethic and soteriological domains, and this can complicate the dialectic somewhat. But again, readers should simply note that Lehe is using terms that may differ from how they have seen them used elsewhere. For example, there may be some readers who have thought of themselves as "inclusivists" who may be surprised to see that they are labeled "moderate exclusivists" according to Lehe's terminology.

A third item for comment has to do with Lehe's set-up regarding the notion of a "worldview." He describes worldviews as "philosophical frameworks that organize one's beliefs about ultimate questions of existence, meaning, and value"; they are "a network of beliefs in response to these questions." And he goes on to say that "basic beliefs" that are foundational to one's worldview are "usually assumed without being supported by other beliefs, but they may provide part of the basis for the justification of other beliefs that make up one's worldview" and that "[i]nsofar as basic beliefs are assumed without thoroughgoing rational justification, worldviews are to some extent matters of faith" (9). Some readers who are familiar with the ("foundationalist") epistemological notion of a "properly basic belief" (a belief that is non-inferentially justified) may wonder if this is what Lehe has in mind here. It seems that the answer must be "no." Although Lehe speaks of basic beliefs, this appears to be a general reference to the beliefs (including religious beliefs, for many people) that form the core of one's worldview and that may be assumed as a philosophical starting point, largely as articles of faith, but may themselves not be rational (at least not initially). So Lehe isn't offering "reformed epistemology," the view that religious beliefs may be rational by being "properly basic." And his project isn't really religious evidentialism, either; statements like "religion is largely a matter of faith" (19) give the impression that his position is closer to fideism. But it isn't easy to pin Lehe down here, since he also grants that "[o]ne might have philosophical arguments to support belief," "[o]ne might believe on the basis of religious experience," and "[b]elief in God might, for some persons, be properly basic, as Alvin Plantinga has argued" (35). Lehe's position seems to be that a person is entitled to basic assumptions about the world as she forms a worldview, but that "there are rational criteria by which the plausibility of worldviews may be assessed" (17)—one being coherence and another being explanatory power. And he argues that a theistic worldview scores well in both, particularly so with respect to the second criterion, and is on the whole more plausible than naturalism.

Overall, then, *God, Science, and Religious Diversity* is a rigorously-argued, well-researched and up-to-date treatment of what are widely perceived to be two challenges to religious belief (particularly Christian religious belief), one posed by science and the other by religious diversity. The

book fulfills the advertisement in its subtitle (“A Defense of Theism”) very admirably. To conclude on a somewhat personal note, my first exposure to Lehe’s work was by coming across an article of his on the problem of divine hiddenness, “A Response to the Argument from the Reasonableness of Nonbelief” (*Faith and Philosophy* 21 [2004]: 159–174). I found—and continue to find—that outstanding article to be the best theistic response to this problem in print. I was therefore eager to read *God, Science, and Religious Diversity* upon learning of its recent publication, and the book did not disappoint.

*The Devil’s Redemption: A New History and Interpretation of Christian Universalism*, Volumes 1 and 2, by Michael J. McClymond. Baker Academic, 2018. Pp. xxiv + 1325. \$90.00 (hardcover).

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Reviewing Michael McClymond’s 1300-page assault on historic approaches to universal salvation—also known as Universal Reconciliation or Universalism—finds much to acclaim and much to critique. We begin with a summary and commendations.

First, this two-volume tome (with twelve chapters and twelve appendices) is a vigorous achievement fueled by McClymond’s conviction that proposing universal reconciliation with God distracts from God’s future Judgment. For McClymond, Universalism sprouts from a knotty branch of Christianity, or is an invasive species driven by gnostic, esoteric, symbolic, allegorical, speculative, mystical, Kabbalistic, Cabalistic (differentiating Christian modifications of Jewish Kabbalah), and even occult agendas. He analyzes ancient Near Eastern, North African, and European Universalists whom he identifies with two central streams. He casts the first as descendants of ancient Gnosticism and the second as heirs of modern esotericism, hypothesizing parallel rivers in Judaism, Islam, Mormonism, and Zoroastrianism.

McClymond’s program is precise. *The Devil’s Redemption* is not dispassionate social history, ethnography, or a comprehensive record of popular or public opinion. Nor does McClymond document the full range of historic or famous Universalists not formally trained as philosophers or theologians such as Helen Keller, Florence Nightingale, Clara Barton, or Madeleine L’Engle (though he nods to a few of these in one footnote, n1129). Biblical exegesis is not a substantial feature with the exception of two appendices: “Words and Concepts for Time and Eternity” and “Barth

