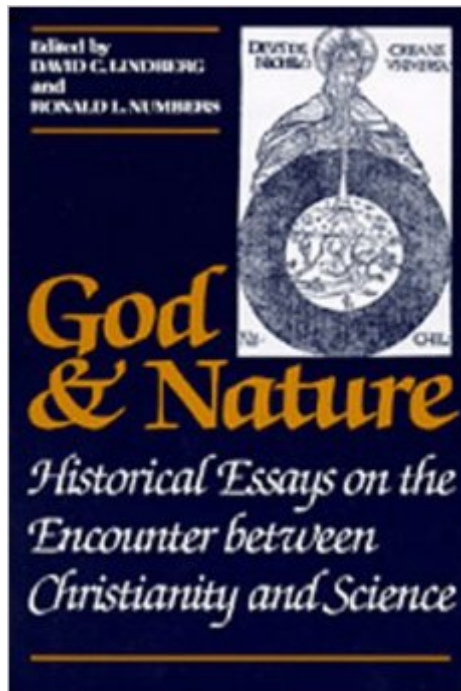


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God And Nature: Historical Essays On The Encounter Between Christianity And Science



Synopsis

Since the publication in 1896 of Andrew Dickson White's classic *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, no comprehensive history of the subject has appeared in the English language. Although many twentieth-century historians have written on the relationship between Christianity and science, and in the process have called into question many of White's conclusions, the image of warfare lingers in the public mind. To provide an up-to-date alternative, based on the best available scholarship and written in nontechnical language, the editors of this volume have assembled an international group of distinguished historians. In eighteen essays prepared especially for this book, these authors cover the period from the early Christian church to the twentieth century, offering fresh appraisals of such encounters as the trial of Galileo, the formulation of the Newtonian worldview, the coming of Darwinism, and the ongoing controversies over scientific creationism. They explore not only the impact of religion on science, but also the influence of science and religion. This landmark volume promises not only to silence the persistent rumors of war between Christianity and science, but also serve as the point of departure for new explorations of their relationship. Scholars and general readers alike will find it provocative and readable.

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Customer Reviews

The professional historians in this volume have written this book, aimed at a general audience, for the purpose of sharing some important advancements that have taken place in the last 60-70 years,

but of which the general public is more or less unaware. The area where these advancements have occurred is the historical relationship between science and religion. There is still a widespread cultural prejudice that religion is fundamentally, and therefore was historically, opposed to science. This basic thesis, the "warfare" thesis, was put forth popularly in two influential books by Draper, in 1874, and by White, in 1896. The Draper book, asserting a thesis that would have been absurd to the fathers of the scientific revolution, immediately became wildly popular, going through at least fifty printings and ten translations, so it was a thesis that the public was eager to hear. The White book did not sell as well as the Draper book, but in the end was much more influential. Since at least the 1920s, however, serious scholars began to recognize the problems with the Draper/White thesis, and the result has been almost a century of fascinating scholarly investigations into the true historical relationship between science and religion. This book is a collection of essays by leaders in the field examining the interactions between science and religion in terms of important historical eras (early church, Middle Ages, 19th century, etc.); important ideas (Christianity and the mechanistic universe, geology and earth history, Darwinism, etc.); and important groups and individuals (Copernicans, Catholicism, Reformers, Puritans, 19th and 20th century Protestant theologians, etc.). The essays are well documented, accessible to the layman, non-polemical, and seem to cover all of the most important areas. There is an extensive list of further reading at the back, with comments on each book by the editors. The book is well written and edited, I enjoyed it, and I think anyone concerned with the actual historical record will find it very interesting.

This is a very readable and very informative set of essays by scholars covering the entire history of the interaction between Christianity and science. Some details may have changed in the last 25 years, but a close reading will be rewarding.

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