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## Christianity and the Philosophy of Science

**Why Studying Philosophy of Science Matters:  
An Editorial Invitation and Introduction**

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## ***Why Studying Philosophy of Science Matters: An Editorial Invitation and Introduction***

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This special issue of the *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies* features articles exploring contentious but important topics within the philosophy of science. It represents views from across the spectrum of evangelicalism. In keeping with the mission of *JBTS*—to relay content that is original and yet accessible—this issue will contain not only a diverse range of viewpoints but also unique writing styles that are addressed to different audiences; accordingly, some articles are more philosophically heavy and scholarly and others more approachable and readable. In sum, the issue offers a set of distinct contributions from varied backgrounds and positions, which make this issue a useful overview for students and an impetus for serious scholarly reflection.

With an intent to address students and laymen and yet not exclude scholars, this editorial introduction will introduce the reader to three things. First, it will briefly explain the nature of philosophy of science. Second, it will address why philosophy of science is a subject worth studying, particularly for those in the biblical and theological fields. Third, it will provide an abbreviated introduction to the articles in this special issue.

### **Philosophy of Science: An Introduction**

While the subject of philosophy of science might sound intimidating or irrelevant, the questions that it asks confront Christians on a regular basis. How does the world function? Does it always behave according to regular principles or not? What is science? Does science provide objective knowledge about the world? How much of the contemporary “scientific consensus” is valid? What is the relationship of theology to science? Is the earth relatively young or old? How did God create the world? Is evolutionary creation or theistic evolution a viable option for the Christian? What is God’s relationship to science and our contemporary scientific theories? These questions might be condensed into a broader one: What is God’s relationship to the world?

In other words, philosophy of science is a subcategory of philosophy which studies the metaphysical foundations and methods of science, yet it also raises

questions about everyday life. One philosopher of science, Brendan Sweetman, provides an excellent summary of the main issues:

The philosophy of science . . . raises foundational questions with regard to such issues as the definition of science and its method of inquiry, the truth status of scientific theories, whether science gives us objective knowledge of the real world, the difference between science and nonscience, the limits of science, and its relationship to other forms of inquiry, such as philosophy, theology, religion, and ethics.<sup>1</sup>

Philosophy of science analyses and assesses foundational issues related to the study of science. It thus often asks questions and seek answers that scientists (usually untrained in philosophy of science) take for granted.

Consequently, the intersection of science and philosophy of science has often been a precarious one. Since several of the articles in this special issue explore this intersection on a more scholarly level,<sup>2</sup> I will limit myself to the popular level. For example, Bill Nye has recently disregarded the importance of the philosophy of science,<sup>3</sup> though he has apparently changed his mind on this matter.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Neil deGrasse Tyson has consistently disparaged the value of philosophy.<sup>5</sup> Even more troubling, the popular but prestigious Cambridge Astrophysicist, Stephen Hawking, has argued: “Philosophy is dead. Philosophy has not kept up with modern developments in science, particularly physics. Scientists have become the bearers of the torch of discovery in our quest for knowledge.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, Hawking (along with Nye and Tyson) claims that scientific knowledge is the only knowledge, an approach often called scientism. It is worth noting that these men are not philosophers—for, indeed,

1. Brendan Sweetman, “The Philosophy of Science,” in *Dictionary of Christianity and Science: The Definitive Reference for the Intersection of Christian Faith and Contemporary Science*, ed. Paul Copan, Tremper Longman III, Christopher L. Reese, and Michael G. Strauss (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 511. I would highly recommend this volume to the person interested in the intersection of the Christian faith and science. In fact, a couple of contributors of this special issue also contributed to this volume, including Bruce L. Gordon and J. B. Stump. Other helpful and accessible introductory texts for students are Alister E. McGrath, *Science & Religion: A New Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); and J. B. Stump, *Science and Christianity: An Introduction to the Issues* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016).

2. See especially R. Clinton Ohlers’s section on the “conflict thesis.” See also the contribution by Joshua M. Moritz.

3. Bill Nye, “Hey Bill Nye, ‘Does Science Have All the Answers or Should We Do Philosophy Too?’” in “Tuesdays with Bill,” on Youtube, last modified February 23, 2016, accessed May 17, 2017, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROe28Ma\\_tYM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROe28Ma_tYM).

4. See Olivia Goldhill, “Justified True Belief: Bill Nye, the Science Guy, says I convinced him that philosophy is not just a load of self-indulgent crap,” in *Quartz*, last modified April 15, 2017, accessed May 17, 2017, <https://qz.com/960303/bill-nye-on-philosophy-the-science-guy-says-he-has-changed-his-mind>.

5. Neil deGrasse Tyson, “Neil deGrasse Tyson Returns Again,” in Episode 489, on Nerdist Podcast, last modified March 7, 2014, accessed May 17, 2017 (the comments about philosophy begin at 20:20), <http://nerdist.com/nerdist-podcast-neil-degrasse-tyson-returns-again>.

6. Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow, *The Grand Design* (New York: Bantam, 2010), 1-2.

if they were philosophers they would have recognized that the claim they are making is a philosophical one and not a scientific one. Stephen Hawking's claims in particular have been strongly critiqued.<sup>7</sup> More important for our purposes is the impression in the background of this discussion: while science is acknowledged to give answers, even most of the answers of life, philosophy (and philosophy of science) is often neglected in the meantime, at least on the popular level.

## **Why Philosophy of Science Matters: A Theological Introduction**

These discussions lead us to the following questions: Why is philosophy of science a subject worth considering? Why does philosophy of science matter for the rest of us? If you are a philosopher, this question needs no answer. But if you are a lay individual or a professional in the biblical and theological fields, it might. While more could be said, I will give five reasons why we should study the philosophy of science. These reasons will serve as an introduction to this special issue: the philosophy of science helps to explicate our committed but subconscious assumptions, to imagine our story, to uncover knowledge of God, to gaze upon God in a beautiful and sanctifying encounter, and to avoid becoming reductionistic in our thinking of the God-world relation.<sup>8</sup> These five reasons will also conveniently serve as a foretaste of the articles in this special issue.

### **1. The Philosophy of Science Helps to Explicate our Committed but Subconscious Assumptions**

Philosophy is “just thinking hard” about something, as the recent Templeton prize winner, Alvin Plantinga aptly quipped.<sup>9</sup> While there are more precise ways to define philosophy, at its heart philosophy seeks to think well about existence, knowledge, and morality, among other things. Philosophy of science, therefore, is “hard thinking” about the meaning, nature, and extent of science. It thus undergirds much of our thinking about the created world. We all necessarily ask (whether explicitly or not), questions like: What is reality? From where did it come? How do I know? Is this world real or illusory? Can my senses uncover it? Of course, scientism (e.g., Stephen Hawking) might assume answers to all of these questions—“certainly,” one might quip, “reality is tangible physicality, so the world is real, and my senses help me

7. As two examples, see John Polkinghorne, *Science and Religion in Quest of Truth* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011); and Wolfgang Smith, *Science & Myth: With a Response to Stephen Hawking's The Grand Design* (Tacoma, WA: Angelico, 2012).

8. For another approachable analysis, see Andrew Loke, “The Benefits of Studying Philosophy for Science Education,” *Journal of the National University of Singapore Teaching Academy*, 4/1: 27-35.

9. Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974; repr., 2001), 1.

uncover it.” Scientism, however, is thereby naive, assuming a certain philosophy of science, even a certain metaphysics, without knowing it. Contained in this special issue, John A. Bloom and Joshua M. Moritz’s respective contributions explicate this idea in detail well. The philosopher of science insists that it is better to ponder and explicate one’s assumptions and thereby arrive at better conclusions than it is simply to assume and remain unaware of said assumptions.<sup>10</sup> Hence the importance of the subject. A subject that uncovers our basic assumptions about the world is a subject worth studying.

## **2. The Philosophy of Science Helps Us to Imagine Our Story**

The study of Scripture is the most central means of uncovering our story. We are a particular people that believe that Jesus is Lord, the fulfillment of the Old Testament covenants, and thus a person who is both fully God and fully human. Our story is also framed by the way we answer particular questions in the philosophy of science. Different answers can change the way we imagine the past. Consider, for example, the historical perspective of young-earth creationism: the earth’s history is quite young, perhaps 6,000 to 10,000 years. Therefore, dinosaurs and humans were contemporaries, the fossil record is a result of the flood, perhaps God created the world with the appearance of age, etc.<sup>11</sup> Now, contrast this view with old-earth creationism, which follows the contemporary consensus on geological age; or, with evolutionary creationism, which further suggests that, while God stands sovereign over creation, he uses evolution as his tool. Each view is propelled by different particularized readings of Genesis 1-2, and also by different assumptions regarding the nature of scriptural meaning, scientific evidence and consensus, the extent of human knowledge, and so on.<sup>12</sup> In the end, each view assumes a different view of God’s action in relationship with the world (i.e., the doctrine of providence). Depending upon how a person understands the nature and explanatory power of certain scientific models, such as evolution, the person might have a different understanding of what our history looks like. The point should be evident that the philosophy of science has important consequences for how we imagine the story from where we came. Certainly, Christians believe God created and sustains the world, but what (if any) means did/does he use in such creation, sustaining, and governance? To list a few,

10. For examples of this done well, see John A. Bloom, *The Natural Sciences: A Student’s Guide* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015); Bruce L. Gordon and William A. Dembski, eds., *The Nature of Nature: Examining the Role of Naturalism in Science* (Wilmington, DE: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2011); and Stump, *Science and Christianity*.

11. For a defense of the young-earth position, which suggests that it best fulfills an Augustinian type of theodicy, see Kurt P. Wise’s article in this issue. For a broader defense, see Kurt P. Wise, *Faith, Form, and Time: What the Bible Teaches and Science Confirms about Creation and the Age of the Universe* (Nashville, TN: B & H, 2002).

12. For a summary here, see Josh A. Reeves’s article in this issue.

the views of young-earth, old-earth, and evolutionary creation each give a different description of the earth's history.<sup>13</sup>

### 3. The Philosophy of Science Uncovers Knowledge of God

On a personal level, it is fascinating to note that sometimes the same Christians who are so (rightly) invested and diligent in their studies of Scripture are the same Christians that ignore or underplay the value of science and the need for a philosophy of it. If Christians are right that God created the universe and everything in it, then it reflects who God is—his holiness, goodness, order, beauty, and harmony. The thirteenth-century Franciscan theologian, Bonaventure, nicely summarizes this latter perspective: “the entire world machine was brought into existence . . . by one First Principle [who] has arranged all things in measure, number, and weight.”<sup>14</sup> The theological foundation of the world, therefore, implicates that the study of the world uncovers some level of knowledge of God. This is why Bonaventure, and much of the Christian tradition before and after him, speaks of the two books of God's knowledge: Creation and Scripture.<sup>15</sup> The Triune God spoke (Word) the universe into existence, filling and animating all things through his Spirit; in a similar manner, the Triune God spoke (Word) Scripture into existence, and animated every word through his Spirit. The same Father through the same Son through the same Spirit created both. John Calvin, following within this trajectory, thus continues,

If we regard the Spirit of God as the sole foundation of truth, we shall neither reject the truth itself, nor despise it wherever it shall appear, unless we wish to dishonor the Spirit of God . . . Shall we say that the philosophers were blind in their fine observation and artful description of nature? . . . No, we cannot read

13. For an introduction to these issues, see J. B. Stump, ed., *Four Views on Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design* (Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan, forthcoming November 2017).

14. Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, trans. Dominic V. Monti, in *Works of Bonaventure*, vol. 9 (Saint Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2005), 59 (2:1.1). Bonaventure is not original here, but rather he is reflecting the profession of faith of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215). The rest of his discussion (pgs. 60-98) extrapolates the meaning of his quoted statement.

15. *Ibid.*, 72 (2:5.2); 96 (2:12.1). Take, for example, Augustine: “In your great wisdom you, who are our God, speak to us of these things in your Book, the firmament made by you” (Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. F. J. Sheed (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1992), 326 (13.18); see also Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, in *Ancient Christian Writers*, vol. 41, trans. John Hammond Taylor (New York: Paulist, 1982), 64-66 (1.19). “Two book” theology is especially popular within the Reformed tradition. While apparent in Calvin (1:14.20), it is best reflected in the Belgic Confession: “We know [God] by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to see clearly the invisible things of God, even his everlasting power and divinity, as the apostle Paul says (Rom. 1:20). All which things are sufficient to convince men and leave them without excuse. Second, He makes Himself more clearly and fully known to us by His holy and divine Word, that is to say, as far as is necessary for us to know in this life, to His glory and our salvation” (“The Belgic Confession. A.D. 1561. Revised 1619,” in *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*, ed. Philip Schaff, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1977), 3:384 (article 2).

the writings of the ancients on these subjects without great admiration . . . *But if the Lord has willed that we be helped in physics, dialectic, mathematics, and other like disciplines, by the work and ministry of the ungodly, let us use this assistance. For if we neglect God's gift freely offered in these arts, we ought to suffer just punishment for our sloths.*<sup>16</sup>

Calvin notes that, since the Spirit is the author of truth in his creation, he requires the due diligence of Christians to study and appreciate the beauty and harmony of it. It would be silly (and slothful!) to ignore the philosophy of science.

Calvin here reflects the claims of the Apostle Paul: in our Lord “all things in heaven and on earth were created . . . through him and for him” and “in him all things hold together” (Col. 1:16-17, NRSV). If Christ is the creator and sustainer of all things, then science by definition would be the study of his creating and sustaining.<sup>17</sup> The universe, therefore, is like words on a page for the observer to read. As David reflects,

The heavens are telling the glory of God;  
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.  
Day to day pours forth speech,  
and night to night declares knowledge (Ps 19:1-2).

Christians study the world because it reveals the knowledge of God (i.e., science); they thus must consider how to study the world well lest they misinterpret, misapply, or misimagine the revelation of God (i.e., philosophy of science). The task is mightily important for the Christian to consider.

#### **4. The Philosophy of Science is a Beautiful and Sanctifying Encounter with the Almighty God**

We are made to contemplate God, that is, to be raptly attentive to the Triune God.<sup>18</sup> In other words, we are made to gaze upon God and be transformed. This process occurs through the new covenant (see 2 Cor 3:16-18), and it is also our *telos*: “when [God] is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).<sup>19</sup> Thus, we also are called to be gazers of God in the present, even if we only see dimly: “For now

16. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeil, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 2:2.15-16; italics mine.

17. This is why Herman Bavinck argued that “theology has nothing to fear from thorough, multifaceted research [from the natural sciences]” (Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: God and Creation*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004], 2:507).

18. “Contemplation is rapt attention to God the cause of all things rather than to the things of which he is the cause” (John Webster, “What Makes Theology Theological?” *Journal of Analytic Theology* 3 [May 2015]: 24). It consists of “the simple act of gazing on the truth” (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* [Lander, WY: The Aquinas Institute, 2012], IIaIIae.180.3, ad 1).

19. For the full argument, see Ryan A. Brandt, “Gospel-Centered Contemplation: A Proposal,” in *Contemplation and Contemplative Prayer: A Guide for Evangelicals*, ed. John Coe and Kyle Strobel (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, forthcoming 2018).

we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known” (1 Cor 13:12). One way we can gaze upon God in the present, so to speak, is through his work of creation. Even the well-known scientist and agnostic, Carl Sagan, recognized the worship-inducing aspect of the world, stating, “I would suggest that science is, at least in part, informed worship.”<sup>20</sup> Sounding Schleiermacherian,<sup>21</sup> he elsewhere says, “By far the best way I know to engage the religious sensibility, the sense of awe, is to look up on a clear night.”<sup>22</sup> If even an agnostic considers studying the world to be a sacred encounter, how much more should the Christian who knows the Creator it reflects?

Indeed, the study of the world brings us to worship and a sense of awe: “The heavens are telling the glory of God” (Ps 19:1). Reflective thought of his creation seems not only helpful but also necessary to appreciate the beauty and wonder of God and his created world. In other words, science, and the philosophy of doing it, help us to imagine something much larger than us, something greater than the monotony of 40-hour work weeks, of the value of our possessions, and of eyes focused on the remedials of life. This is one reason we go to unique locations with breathtaking views. It is why we get lost in staring, pondering, and imagining. We seek out beauty and it changes us, for we are made to gaze upon God and be changed. Philosophy of science is a way of practicing this sacred dance. It is a way of appreciating truth and beauty and yet noting that, while the world is reflective of God as it images him, its beauty still falls surpassingly short of the final gaze, the Beatific Vision. Even more, pondering the vastness of it is a small analogy to pondering the unsearchable depths of God (see Ps 145:3; Isa 40:28).

## **5. Philosophy of Science Helps Us to Avoid Becoming Reductionistic in Our Thinking of the God-World Relation**

Christians have often claimed (and rightly so) that Humeian empiricism and its twentieth-century extension, logical positivism, are reductionistic.<sup>23</sup> Choosing between the empirical, concrete experiences and the transcendent, intangible realities, these thinkers chose only the former. Indeed, they thought, if there is a natural or scientific explanation, then God (or the soul, free will, etc.) need not be part of the equation.<sup>24</sup> Rudolf Bultmann reflects this perspective with his famous words: “We

20. Carl Sagan, *The Varieties of Scientific Experience: A Personal View of the Search for God*, ed. Ann Druyan (New York: Penguin, 2007), 31.

21. Friedrich Schleiermacher was well-known for suggesting that true religion is the “feeling of absolute dependence” (Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart [Berkeley, CA: Apocryphile, 2011], 17).

22. Sagan, *The Varieties of Scientific Experience*, 2.

23. Humeian empiricism is an empirically-based school of philosophy that stemmed from David Hume.

24. See, for example, David Hume, *Inquiries concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975).

cannot use electric lights and radios and, in the event of illness, avail ourselves of modern medical and clinical means and at the same time believe in the spirit and wonder world of the New Testament.”<sup>25</sup> In other words, somehow the transcendent wonder of the Bible is undone by our understanding and use of modern technologies.

While many Christians might intuitively understand where Bultmann goes wrong in his reasoning, Christians can be prone towards the same reductionistic problems without proper thinking, that is, without the philosophy of science. The real desire to show that “God did it” can sometimes make Christians erect conceptual dichotomies between two realities that are both true, even though this schema might prevent them from seeing it. Sometimes this tendency looks the opposite from the naturalistic worldview: If God did it, then there must not be a scientific explanation, and a scientific explanation might cause me to question my faith.<sup>26</sup> This tendency can be seen historically within various debates in science, including the Noahic flood, the generation of bacteria, and, more infamously, the heliocentric controversy.<sup>27</sup> The problem is extended today through the controversies surrounding evolution and the Christian faith.<sup>28</sup> A way forward in these debates (though many more questions will need answer to fully solve the problem) is overcoming a reductionistic mindset. Proper thinking within the philosophy of science—especially, in this case, the limits of science and its relationship to other disciplines—would help traverse and amend the apparent difficulty.<sup>29</sup>

In summary, philosophy of science is a subject worth studying for anyone, especially for those people who are committed Christians in the biblical and theological fields. The philosophy of science helps to explicate our committed but unconscious assumptions, to imagine our story, to uncover knowledge of God, to gaze upon God in a beautiful and sanctifying encounter, and to avoid becoming reductionistic in our thinking of the God-world relation.

25. Rudolf Bultmann, *New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings*, trans. Schubert M. Ogden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1984), 4.

26. For a helpful reflection here, see Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies Science, Religion, and Naturalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

27. See David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers, eds., *When Science and Christianity Meet* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); and Richard G. Olson, *Science and Religion: From Copernicus to Darwin* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004). For a more popular treatment, see McGrath, *Science & Religion*, 7-32. For a broader treatment of the interdependent relationship of religion and science, see Joshua M. Moritz, *Science and Religion: Beyond Warfare and Toward Understanding* (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2016).

28. For a helpful and accessible survey of the evolution debate and its effect on Christianity, see McGrath, *Science & Religion*, 33-42. For a defense of evolutionary creation, see J. B. Stump’s article in this issue.

29. For an engaging reflection along these lines, see Stephen Donaldson’s final article in this issue.

## **An Introduction to the Special Issue: Christianity and the Philosophy of Science**

While this issue is not meant to be a cohesive whole, each article broadly introduces the subject of the relationship between God and the world.

The first two articles helpfully introduce the reader to some of the larger issues surrounding the relationship between Christianity and science. Josh A. Reeves's contribution frames the discussion around three fundamental questions, which he argues, when answered, will effectively decide the various positions that a Christian might have on matters of philosophy of science: (1) does the Bible contain modern scientific theories, (2) how much can non-Christians know, and (3) how far does science reach? John A. Bloom, a scientist and a theologian, asks and answers the important question: Can science answer life's fundamental (theological and philosophical) questions? His response is no, and he shows science's shortcoming in various ways, also suggesting that theistic evolution is an improper solution.

Joshua M. Moritz contributes to the discussion through his (mostly) historical work. Surveying the history of the philosophy of science, he notes that science presupposes the very metaphysical assumptions that theistic religion, and in particular Christianity, provides. Moritz thus concludes that science does indeed need faith. R. Clinton Ohlers's article, also historically orientated, investigates the "conflict thesis" between science and religion, focusing particularly on the nineteenth century with the rise of the Victorian scientific naturalists. Ohlers's work evaluates the rise of the conflict thesis, noting that the two authors of the conflict thesis, John William Draper and Andrew Dickson White, held to and even championed theological views in their works. He then shows how the thesis is still influential today, particularly, he argues, in shaping the discourse on divine action addressed in the works of Alvin Plantinga, Lydia Jaeger, and James Stump. Ohlers also critiques the "God of the Gaps" objection as an invention of the late nineteenth century.

The following article, by James (J. B.) Stump, defends evolutionary creation against popular misconceptions of the position, first, by defending the terminology against the more common "theistic evolution," and then, by responding to four typical theological concerns about evolutionary creation. The theological concerns that he tackles are (1) the origin of sin and the need for a savior, (2) human uniqueness and the image of God, (3) divine action and deism, and (4) the problem of evil and the goodness of God.

Bruce L. Gordon's article is a substantial summary of modern scientific cosmology and quantum physics that draws out their implications for theological and philosophical views of God's creative and providential action in nature. The article also includes a discussion of the ways in which the universe is fine-tuned for life and how the strategies used by scientists trying to explain away this fine-tuning "both fail

and undermine scientific rationality in the process.” Students and scholars alike will find much information to mine and ponder in this lengthy article.

Kurt P. Wise’s article notes a lack of awareness in the literature of what he calls paleoevil, that is, natural evil that can be inferred from the geological record. He summarizes the massive extent of this paleoevil and then reasons that the old earth and evolutionary perspectives cannot adequately (biblically, theologically, or philosophically) account for it within their views. He engages with the recent theodicies developed by Alvin Plantinga and William Dembski, respectively, and then notes that they both fail in various ways: the former, he says, is not consistent with biblical angelology and the latter is not consistent with biblical theology. He concludes that only an Augustinian type of theodicy can adequately explain paleoevil, and then only a young-earth view of earth history is consistent with this type of theodicy.

Finally, Steve Donaldson offers a reflection that concludes the special issue with a cautionary tale of the human propensity towards having the “final word” on a matter, especially as it relates to the philosophy of science. The article tackles the common binary fallacy, the limitations of science, and the inclination we sometimes have of making God too small in our philosophical and theological thinking.

I noted before that the articles vary in their level of readability. Several articles are addressed to beginning and intermediate undergraduate students, such as the contributions from Josh Reeves, John Bloom, and J. B. Stump. If you are a student or new to the field of philosophy of science, it might be a good idea for you to start here. The articles will also provide conversational sparks for those scholars in the field. Other articles, while readable for an intermediate audience, are more particularly addressed to the scholarly community as a whole, including the contributions of Joshua Moritz, Kurt Wise, R. Clinton Ohlers, and Bruce L. Gordon.

As a final note, each of these articles are written by scholars whose point of view is different from the next. While parts of this issue read cohesively, the reader should remember that contributors disagree about fundamental questions in the philosophy of science. What is science? How much of the contemporary “scientific consensus” is valid? Is the earth young or old? Is evolutionary creation or theistic evolution a viable option for the Christian? Regarding the last question, for example, readers should contrast the views of J. B. Stump, Josh A. Reeves, and Steve Donaldson, each of whom argues (explicitly or implicitly) for evolutionary creation, with the views of John A. Bloom, R. Clinton Ohlers, and Bruce L. Gordon, who contend for Intelligent Design (and against evolutionary creation). This question, and many other questions, will be addressed in different ways in this special issue of the *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies*.