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Korpel, M.C.A.

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Philosophy of Religion and Ethics

Christopher Lilley & Daniel J. Pedersen (eds), *Human Origins and the Image of God: Essays in Honor of J. Wentzel van Huyssteen* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2017), ISBN 9780802875143; xiv + 322 pp., \$ 60,00 (hardcover), £ 49,99 (e-book).

This volume, written in honor of J. Wentzel van Huyssteen (who studied philosophy and theology at Stellenbosch, Amsterdam and Munich) on the occasion of his retirement from Princeton Theological Seminary covers his interdisciplinary field at the intersection of science and theology and circles around the distinctiveness of humans, the evolutionary human capacity of symbolic thought and the contrast between evolutionary and theological (biblical) ideas on humans and religion, especially that of *imago dei*. It has been written by natural scientists, philosophers/historians and theologians, believers as well as atheists and is structured after the three disciplines. Some articles (Gregersen, Fuentes, Welker, Fergusson) were published earlier in *Theology Today* (2015). Niels Henrik Gregersen presents an overview of the life and work of Van Huyssteen. Part 1 (natural scientists) starts with Ian Tattersall who in a nutshell describes the complicated evolution from first humanoids until modern *homo sapiens* (25-42), opposing the simplistic idea that humans directly would originate from apes. The relatively fast evolution of *homo sapiens* cannot be reduced to natural selection alone and this is illustrated by a genealogical tree-scheme of the hominid family (27). On the basis of his archaeological research on religious expressions at the site of Çatalhöyük (Turkey) – Van Huyssteen visited the site several times – Ian Hodder demonstrates that religion seems to have more to do with practical engagement than with abstract faith (43-63). Justin Barret and Tyler Greenway discuss the difficult question at which point in evolutionary history humans can be viewed as *imago Dei* (43-63). Agustín Fuentes discusses the origins of human imagination and the role of *niche construction* in the evolutionary process (82-94) as Richard Potts does on symbolic understanding of the world (95-110). In Part 2 (philosophers/historians) Keith Ward considers human distinctiveness and the question whether Christian belief adds to this view (113-131) stating that if there is a God-given purpose in evolution an evolutionary view increases the respect for humans (123). Wesley Wildman enters the discussion with Van Huyssteen on axiological sensitivity and defends that theological constructions on moral values makes absolute reality impossible, and considers God merely as the ground of all being but not as a transcendent being (132-155). Michael Ruse offers a thought-provoking philosophical essay on the modern view

on human evolution and its meaning for Christians (156-173) and criticizes Darwin for describing the difference between the sexes as miraculously suited to the Victorian idea. In human evolution women and man appear to be equal and Ruse states that if God apparently did so, than it is unnatural to give women subservient roles (162). John Hedley Brooke discusses God's influence in new technologies, as well as human future with manipulation of nature and human genes (174-197), but it is remarkable that despite his mentioning of the possibility of a 'post-human' world he omits discussion of the growing role of robots in this new phase of human evolution, where he could have asked whether robots will be religious or even Christian. Part 3 (theologians) starts with a contribution by Celia Deane-Drummond on moral origins and evolutionary ethics and comes to the conclusion that also among animals some kind of morality and justice exist, and contrary to the biblical Fall she observes a gradual and collective intensification of tendencies to harm, 'culminating eventually in a self-conscious turning away from God and each other' (224). Michael Welker offers nine levels for the definition of theology in the discussion with science (225-235). David Fergusson writes on the distinctiveness of human beings and the idea of anthropocentrism that already was present among the first hominids and therefore is not unique to *homo sapiens* and discusses the consequences for ideas of incarnation, providence and eschatology (236-249). Etienne de Villiers discusses post-foundationalism and the ethic of responsibility in light of the scientific idea of evolving moral awareness (250-272) and the volume is closed by Dirk Smit with a well-structured contribution on the different features of altruism in light of evolutionary ethicism (273-313). As a whole the volume is worth reading for all those interested in scientific views of human evolution and their impact on theology.

Marjo C.A. Korpel, Protestant Theological University Groningen

Systematic Theology

Sigurd Bergmann (ed.), *Eschatology as Imagining the End: Faith between Hope and Despair*. Routledge New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology, and Biblical Studies (Abingdon, Routledge, 2018), ISBN 9781138481367; vii + 188 pp., € 127,62.

In this publication multiple writers focus on the question of the relevance for a Christian reflection on eschatology for society today. While 'multiple writers' imply a polyphonic reflection, the reflection in this book is

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