

Editorial: A Note on Theological Explorations in Time and Space

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In 1969, T.F. Torrance published *Space, Time, and Incarnation*. This brought together recent work in philosophy and science on the nature of space and time in order to explore the implications for theology. Torrance's theology engaged with the scientific thought of Albert Einstein and James Clerk Maxwell, as well as the temporal logic of A.N. Prior. The influence of this work on subsequent Christian theology cannot be overstated. Yet, a great deal has changed since 1969, and most contemporary discussions in systematic theology show little awareness of recent advancements in the metaphysics of time and space.

Things are different within the field of analytic philosophy of religion and analytic theology. In 1968, Richard Swinburne published *Space and Time*, which offered minimal reflections on the implications for religion such as the spatial nature of heaven. Yet, in Swinburne's subsequent work, he developed the implications in detail for the nature of God in *The Coherence of Theism* (1977) and *The Christian God* (1994). In 1970, Nelson Pike's *God and Timelessness* ignited a flurry of books and articles that sought to address questions about God's relation to time and space. Thinkers like William Lane Craig, Garrett DeWeese, William Hasker, Paul Helm, Hud Hudson, Brian Leftow, J.R. Lucas, Alan Padgett, Katherin Rogers, Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, Linda Zagzebski, and Dean Zimmerman have made significant contributions to the debate. Several important collections of essays have been developed such as Gregory Ganssle's *God and Time: 4 Views* (2001), Gregory Ganssle and David Woodruff's *God and Time: Essays on the Divine Nature* (2001), and Christian Tapp and Edmund Runggaldier's *God, Eternity, and Time* (2011). More recent contributions come

from R.T. Mullins, *The End of the Timeless God* (2016), and Natalja Deng's excellent introduction, *God and Time* (2019).

While we believe that progress has been made in these areas, we remain convinced that more work needs to be done. We note two reasons for this. First, as discussions within the philosophy of space and time continue to evolve, the implications of these new theories for religion need to be identified and debated. Second, the philosophy of time and space are difficult areas of study, and the implications for religious doctrines are not always easy to discern without some specialist knowledge. Yet the implications for religious doctrines are quite striking. The philosophy of time and space intersects with a diverse array of doctrinal issues related to the nature of God, creation, evil, providence, personal identity and life after death.

Many of the philosophers from the world's major religions claim that God has created a world of creatures who exist in space and time, and that God is providentially guiding history towards His ultimate purpose or goal for creation. This raises a multitude of questions about space, time, and the content of those doctrinal claims. We mention two such questions. Is God timeless and spaceless? Philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas and Avicenna believe that God is timeless and spaceless, whereas Ibn Taymiyyah and Samuel Clarke affirm that God is temporal and spatial. Does God create time and space? Augustine and Maimonides claim that God has created space and time. Others disagree. Isaac Newtown and Raghunātha Śiromoṇi claim that space and time are divine attributes, and as such they cannot be created. This is merely a brief sampling of the kinds of questions that are being debated, but it should be clear that the implications of space and time touch on fundamental questions within theology and philosophy of religion.

In light of this, the Society for the Philosophy of Time (SPoT) held its first annual God and Time workshop in Bonn, Germany in 2017. The goal of the annual workshops is to advance new areas of exploration within the philosophy of time, space, and religion. After the workshops in 2018 (Vienna) and 2019 (Lugano), key members sought to find ways to expand the scope of these conversations through publications in various venues such as books and journal articles. This special issue of *TheoLogica* is one of several SPoT initiatives to keep the light moving on new and exciting areas of research. What we offer in this special issue of *TheoLogica* is only a glimmer of what is happening, but it is a bright and shiny glimmer indeed.

When discussing time and space, the topic of physics naturally arises. Yet it is often difficult to say what the implications of physics are for the philosophy of space and time, and in turn difficult to discern how any of this impacts theology. This is because contemporary physics offers conflicting theories on time, space, and spacetime. Moreover, physics often uses merely instrumental models that

have no clear ontological commitments. One topic that sometimes arises in physics is the possibility of multiple spatial and temporal dimensions beyond the ones we are familiar with. This provides new and interesting areas for theological engagement. We kick off the issue with Ben Page's "Inaugurated Hyperspace," which explores the New Testament theme of inaugurated eschatology. Many of these biblical claims seem somewhat strange, leaving some to wonder if these are merely metaphors, or perhaps metaphysical positions beyond our ken. Page offers several models from the philosophy of space that can provide literal content to these New Testament claims, thus demonstrating the potential for interdisciplinary research within philosophy and biblical studies. Up next, D.T. Everhart provides a model of divine temporality that will kick start your multidimensional heart. Everhart explores the potential of multiple temporal dimensions for answering the prisoner of time objection against divine temporality.

As is well-known, a major challenge today is trying to figure out how to reconcile the special theory of relativity's spacetime geometry with quantum mechanics. One such attempt at a reconciliation comes from the physicist David Bohm, but it has not received much theological engagement. To rectify this situation, Sampsa Korpela explores Bohm's implicate order theory and its potential for thinking about God's relationship to the universe.

Every special issue needs a healthy debate, and we provide just the thing with a series of short papers from Erik Wielenberg and William Lane Craig. Craig has famously defended the Kalam Cosmological Argument for the existence of God. Craig has also affirmed the controversial thesis that God is timeless *sans* creation, and temporal with creation. Wielenberg takes aim at Craig's thesis on the nature of God and argues that it causes problems for Craig's cosmological argument. In this special issue, we give you a fascinating exchange between these two scholars.

Once you have finished reading the debate between Wielenberg and Craig, your mind will naturally drift towards another important question. Where is the evil? After all, every good philosophical and theological discussion needs a bit of evil. Don't worry, we have you covered. Nikk Effingham uses wormholes and the multiverse to explore different responses to the problem of evil. This might provide theists with a way to worm out of particular puzzles that arise from multiverse theodicies. Aldo Frigerio and Ciro De Florio discuss four different models of divine foreknowledge and providence. They offer a helpful analysis of the different trade-offs that come with each view for divine government, human freedom, and evil.

As many of you know, mistakes happen. But have you ever wondered if God can make mistakes? R.T. Mullins addresses a particular complaint against divine temporality that attempts to show that a temporal God could royally bodge up

history. No one wants a God who could screw things up, and Mullins tells you how to avoid having such a deity.

Ideally, any special issue on time should talk about idealism. Which is why we have Matyáš Moravec explain how ontological idealism about time can help divine timelessness solve various puzzles. Medieval philosophers often claim that all of time is somehow present to the timeless God. Yet it is difficult to understand how this is consistent with dynamic theories of time. Can idealism about time save the day? Stick around and find out.

In closing, we the guest editors would like to extend our gratitude to the main editors of *TheoLogica*. We have learned a great deal about the hard work that goes into putting together a journal. This has given us an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the peer-review process, and the difficult decisions that editors have to make. We are grateful for the guidance that the main editors have given us, and we hope that *TheoLogica* will continue to flourish in the future.

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