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978-0-521-76027-0 - Science and Religion: New Historical Perspectives

Edited by Thomas Dixon, Geoffrey Cantor and Stephen Pumfrey

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SCIENCE AND RELIGION

The idea of an inevitable conflict between science and religion was decisively challenged by John Hedley Brooke in his classic *Science and religion: Some historical perspectives* (Cambridge, 1991). Almost two decades on, *Science and religion: New historical perspectives* revisits this argument and asks how historians can now impose order on the complex and contingent histories of religious engagements with science.

Bringing together leading scholars, this new volume explores the history and changing meanings of the categories 'science' and 'religion'; the role of publishing and education in forging and spreading ideas; the connection between knowledge, power, and intellectual imperialism; and the reasons for the confrontation between evolution and creationism among American Christians and in the Islamic world. A major contribution to the historiography of science and religion, this book makes the most recent scholarship on this much misunderstood debate widely accessible.

THOMAS DIXON is Senior Lecturer in History at Queen Mary, University of London. He is the author of *The invention of altruism* (2008) and *From passions to emotions* (Cambridge, 2003).

GEOFFREY CANTOR is Professor Emeritus of the History of Science at the University of Leeds and Honorary Senior Research Fellow at University College, London. He is the author of *Quakers, Jews, and science* (2005).

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AND STEPHEN PUMFREY



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*Dedicated with admiration and affection
to Professor John Hedley Brooke*

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nature: Theology, society and the new genetics (2003), and *Nature performed: Environment, culture and performance* (2003).

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Preface

In July 2007 a conference was held at the University of Lancaster to mark the retirement of John Hedley Brooke. The original idea for the conference came from Stephen Pumfrey, who had started his career under John's mentorship at Lancaster. Thomas Dixon, who was at that time also at Lancaster, took the lead in organizing the event. Both the Lancaster organizers were extremely grateful for the advice and support of Geoffrey Cantor, who assisted with the planning of the original conference.

The 2007 conference was attended by many of John Brooke's friends, colleagues, and students who were keen to acknowledge his substantial contributions to the historical study of science and religion, and particularly the influence he has had on a whole generation of scholars and students through his book *Science and religion: Some historical perspectives*, published in 1991, and his other publications, as well as through personal contact and encouragement. John taught in the History Department at the University of Lancaster from 1969 to 1999 and then moved to the Andreas Idreos Chair in Science and Religion at the University of Oxford until his retirement in 2006.

Over a hundred and fifty people attended the Lancaster conference. Dozens of excellent papers were given on that occasion, which could together have provided material for several edited books offering a range of historical and contemporary perspectives. The editors of this volume selected thirteen of those contributions to illustrate both the impact of John Brooke's work on the field and also major recent trends in the historiography of science and religion. The chapters collected in this volume together show how new understandings of the past continue to enrich our appreciation of how science and religion can affect one another. Most importantly, the editors intend this volume to be a companion to *Science and religion: Some historical perspectives* and, following Brooke's lead, to open up new and fruitful ways of understanding science–religion interrelations through the close study of history.

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Preface

The editors would like to express their sincere thanks to Angus Winchester and Ghil O'Neill of the Department of History and to Hilary Barraclough and Tina Warren of the Conference Office at the University of Lancaster; and to the John Templeton Foundation, who generously provided a grant towards the costs both of the Lancaster conference and of the publication of this book. At Cambridge University Press, Kate Brett, Laura Morris, and Jodie Barnes guided us through every stage of the production process with great efficiency, and we are very grateful to Aline Guillermet for finding such an appropriate cover image. The final text benefited greatly from Chris Jackson's meticulous copy-editing. We thank the University of Chicago Press for permitting us to reprint Peter Harrison's article, "Science" and "Religion": Constructing the boundaries', which first appeared in the *Journal of Religion* 86 (2006), 81–106.

The editors are deeply indebted to the other contributors to this volume for their considerable efforts in turning their original conference presentations into extended essays that address the key historiographical themes of this book.