

Review of Paul Davies, *God and the New Physics* (1983)
for *Eternity* magazine, published sometime after July 1984?

Paul Davies, God and the New Physics. Simon and Schuster, 1983. \$17.95; x + 255 pp. Reviewed by Robert C. Newman, Professor of New Testament at Biblical Theological Seminary, Hatfield, PA, and Director of the Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute. Dr. Newman has a PhD in theoretical astrophysics from Cornell University as well as graduate degrees in theology.

Davies presents an atheistic (or at least agnostic) response to recent works finding evidence for God in nature, such as Robert Jastrow's popular *God and the Astronomers*. Davies, a physics professor in England, writes in something of a popular style, but for an audience of above average sophistication. The reader need not have college mathematics, but he or she should be comfortable with physics articles in *Scientific American*.

In seventeen chapters the author covers a wide range of topics relevant to the origin and nature of the universe, matter, life and mind, making it impossible to describe or critique the book adequately in a short review. Davies interacts with the classic theistic arguments (cosmological and teleological) and the traditional view of God, discussing how these have been affected by discoveries in modern physics such as quantum mechanics, relativity and particle physics. His conclusions are largely negative though he is refreshingly candid about what is and is not known in modern science.

Davies is a sharp and interesting writer; his pages are filled with thought-provoking material. Though reasonably fair to theists, he assumes far too easily that modern physics has outmoded the Biblical idea of God; that space and time could not exist without the universe; and that quantum phenomena really allow us to postulate an uncaused universe. Davies does not discuss the possibility that our universe is embedded in a larger multi-dimensional space, a suggestion which would solve several of the problems he raises and explain some puzzling Biblical materials as well. Among his alternative theories for origins, most Christians will feel his suggestions are frequently rather far-out. For instance, he suggests the extremely high level of order in our universe may be a fluke of observation; if there were less order, there would be no minds to observe it! A good discussion of some of this order from a Christian perspective can be found in Alan Hayward's book, *God Is* (Nelson, 1978).

Christians who are scientists, theologians, philosophers or apologists would do well to know what the other side is thinking these days. Here is a good collection of non-theistic alternatives under one cover.