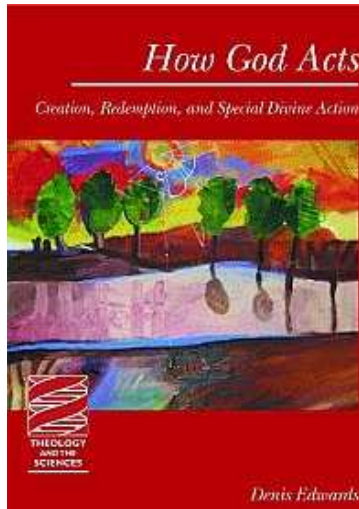


BOOK REVIEW

Edwards, Denis. *How God Acts: Creation, Redemption and Special Divine Acts*. Hindmarsh SA: ATF Theology, 2010.



How does the Christian doctrine of creation square with the picture of an evolving universe we receive from science today? How do the baldly predatory behaviour and wasteful extinction of whole species fit in a Christian understanding? How does miraculous divine action, pictured so vividly in the biblical narratives, square with the inexorable march of the laws of physics? How does a God of love permit so much death and destruction?

These and a host of related questions raised by ordinary experience are tackled in this book by theologian Denis Edwards, in which he re-conceives divine action. From providence and miracles to resurrection and intercessory prayer, Edwards shows how a basically non-interventionist model of divine action does justice both to the universe as we know it, and also to central convictions of Christian faith about the goodness of God, the promises of God, and the fulfilment of creation.

In the Preface to his book, Edwards provides this summary of its structure:

"I will begin this work with two chapters that attempt to set the scene, the first addressing some characteristics of the universe revealed by the natural science and the second exploring what can be discovered about divine action from the Christ-event. What I see as two central chapters follow: the first on creation as the self-bestowal of God, and the second on special divine acts in the history of the universe, the life of grace, and the history of salvation. Then, in the fifth chapter, I take up the question of miracles in relation to the laws of nature and follow this with a chapter on the resurrection of Jesus. This leads to two chapters on the divine act of redemption in Christ, which I explore in terms of deifying transformation. The penultimate chapter is on eschatology, the final deification of the whole of creation. Discussions of divine action seem to lead to important questions about the meaning of prayer, so the book concludes with a chapter on prayers of intercession."

This is a scholarly work, well referenced, with a comprehensive index. It is, however, relatively free from academic "jargon", and has a logic that is not difficult to follow.