

Book Reviews

part of some of the more general discussions on tolerance, I do feel that there was a missed opportunity to address more-current social issues, such as racial reconciliation and gender equality, that younger generations are likely to be concerned about.

However, overall, I recommend this as a great resource for those starting to seek answers to these questions. Having them all in one place and addressed thoughtfully will be valuable to students in need of a digestible introduction to the issues. I also admire this work as one of service that clearly was done with heart. It is a demonstration of commitment to teaching, mentoring, and equipping the next generations to be thoughtful and well informed about the intersection between their faith and science.

Reviewed by Brandon E. Haines, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, Westmont College, Santa Barbara, CA 93108.

THE WORK OF HIS HANDS: A Scientist's Journey from Atheism to Faith by Sy Garte. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2019. 255 pages. Paperback; \$16.99. ISBN: 9780825446078.

The Work of His Hands is a curious book in that it is part memoir and part research, part expository and part apologetic. The book follows Garte's conversion from confirmed atheist to devout follower of Jesus Christ. Garte was raised in a nonreligious Jewish family with deep commitments to the Communist Party. He was reared to believe that religion was not only wrong but evil. His parent's atheism was passionate and deeply felt; like all faiths, "the faith I was born into raised questions" (p. 22). With the help of science, Garte says he began to lose faith in atheism.

The book is laid out in two parts. The first part deals with the issues, mainly scientific but some social and philosophical, that persuaded Garte's eventual conversion to Christianity. The second part deals with the questions he had to face once he committed to the faith. These questions are more philosophical in nature and deal with the problem of evil, love, freedom, and, most applicable to this work, the relationship of science and the Christian faith.

Garte explains that discoveries of chance, complexity, and chaos began to chip away at his faith in scientific materialism. The "simple, elegant solutions that scientists have traditionally sought are consistent with a materialistic view of nature ... chaos, fractals, complexity, and other modern findings of science" led him to doubt pure materialism (pp. 49-50). A positive reason to believe in God came in the form of cosmic fine-tuning. The sheer improbability that nuclear (strong and weak), gravity, and electromagnetic forces would have just the

right values at the moment of the big bang to produce a life-affirming universe is nothing shy of a mystery. There are possible explanations for this improbability. For example, the multiverse theory is a possibility, but this is no less a supernatural explanation, according to Garte, than is theism.

The questions hardly stop with the complexity of physics and quantum mechanics but extend into biology and chemistry. Life itself is terribly complex (and "magical," to use Garte's word), from chemistry to genetics to evolution. But the most special of all life is human life. Some people accept plant and animal evolution but draw the line at human evolution. "I can understand that, and in a way I even agree." Not that Garte rejects descent with modification, but that "I strongly believe that people are special" (p. 82). Garte seems to affirm some form of substance dualism when he argues that human exceptionalism which has produced masterpieces of art, technology, and self-sacrifice, to name a few, is due to two things: evolution which has produced our bodies (including the brain), and the mind.

In the chapter, "Origins," Garte argues that there is a tripartite mystery that science has struggled to explain—the origin of the universe, life, and human consciousness. He notes that it would be a "God-of-the-gaps" fallacy to appeal to the divine as the explanation for these unanswered questions. But it is in these epistemic gaps that Garte first considered the possibility of God's existence. Some may accuse Garte of blurring the lines between science and faith (and that may be his point) when he writes, "I believe that if and when we do finally gain some scientific understanding on the origin of the universe, the origin of life, and the origin of human consciousness, we will find further pointers to the creative action of God" (p. 98). He uses the remainder of this chapter to show how it is reasonable to conclude that God is the rational explanation for these three origins. However, these origin mysteries were not what finally led to Garte's faith; no, it was not until Garte could see the limits of science that his eyes were opened to faith.

"Science and knowledge are not synonymous ... there are other kinds of knowledge that are not scientific—they fall outside the methods or interests of science." These other kinds of knowledge include not only social science but also "art, love, and compassion" (p. 120). Garte here is going after scientism, the view that science is our only means of truth. If science cannot answer all questions, even all scientific questions, then there is reason to consider other claims. Garte says that the scientific method took him as far as it could, but the epistemic road continued even though it could not be traversed any further by science. It was time for a new means of travel.

The main body of the book ends with Garte explaining how he accepted the call to faith. This chapter is personal and reflective, as he recalls a dream, his first experiences attending church, his conversion, and his discovery that there were other scientists who were committed Christians. The chapter ends with Garte recalling an imaginary, but quite lovely, sermon he preached in his mind while driving the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

Part 2 of the book, “Issues and Questions,” is more philosophical than the first half. Here Garte takes a somewhat defensive apologetic stance, defending Christianity against claims such as Christianity is oppressive, dogmatic, baseless, or contradicting. The most theological chapter, “Love and Freedom, Chance and Will,” delves into the problem of evil, theodicy, divine love, and purpose. Garte admits, “My own approach to theodicy is not theologically sophisticated” (p. 164). While I did have some musings about the assumptions and implications of Garte’s approach, I was nonetheless appreciative of many of his affirmations, especially his commitment to the idea that love and freedom are necessary features of this world. “We must be free in order to love and to be loved. Free will allows us to have faith and a relationship with God” (p. 174).

The final chapters of the book delve into a defense of evolutionary creationism, critique of atheistic evolution, and appraisal of the intelligent design movement. Garte believes that the universe is designed, but he prefers to speak about “divine design” instead of “intelligent design” because “the mechanisms by which life was designed and created are not currently within our ability to understand” (p. 186). Although we may never know such mechanisms, Garte takes the radical stance that faith and science, the books of scripture and nature, “will in the end meet at one single point of perfect harmony” (p. 212). He ends declaring that “modern science leads to faith in God and that a scientific understanding of nature can never be complete without the acknowledgment that the Creator of the universe is the Author of all” (p. 221).

The book was both enjoyable and informative. I would not normally have read a memoir had I not been asked, but I am happy that I did. There is a bit of a question as to just who this book is written for. The scientific discussions do not require a science degree, but a fair amount of acquaintance is presumed. For those who are less versed in science (like this author), do not fear, there is a brief but helpful appendix which provides some details regarding molecular biology and evolution. My sense is that the book is less for Christians who need to come to terms with the real findings of science and more for

the science-minded agnostic who questions whether Christianity can reasonably be considered.

Reviewed by Wm. Curtis Holtzen, Professor of Philosophy and Theology, Hope International University, Fullerton, CA 92823.



TECHNOLOGY

AUTOMATION AND UTOPIA: Human Flourishing in a World without Work by John Danaher. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019. 336 pages. Hardcover; \$39.95. ISBN: 9780674984240.

John Danaher opens his book *Automation and Utopia: Human Flourishing in a World without Work* with the claim, “Human obsolescence is imminent.” What we do, he argues, is increasingly less relevant “to our well-being and the fate of our planet” (p. 1). The Anthropocene is yielding to the Roboscene, and soon “there will be little left for us to do except sit back and enjoy the ride” (p. 2). If we don’t want to end up sated and stupefied in *WALL-E* world, Danaher urges, we need to imagine how humans will find meaning and value in a post-work society.

Danaher begins by making a case for the possibility of automating all forms of work “performed in exchange for an economic reward” (p. 28). Automation, which already has a long history, will continue to advance further into agricultural, industrial, financial, legal, medical, governmental, scientific, and every other form of physical labor and into the affective domain. Next, Danaher argues that we should accept this as a good thing and hate our jobs (even if we love them). The current reality of work for many is bad—precarious, inequitable, oppressive, and unsatisfying—and it is getting worse. Since the “structural badness” of work is very difficult to reform, Danaher concludes that we should embrace the economic liberation that autonomous and intelligent technologies may provide. After these discussions of automation and work in the first part of the book, Danaher turns his attention to what he sees as the next significant human project: creating a world in which humans can thrive when they no longer need to work for economic benefit. Danaher presents two possible worlds: a cyborg utopia, in which we merge with technology to upgrade ourselves and maintain our cognitive evolutionary niche; and a virtual utopia, in which we retreat from our cognitive dominance and cultivate crafts through games.

Danaher makes many careful moves in this book, and it is worth following his argument and thought experiment all the way through—even as one’s disagreements may mount. One can be skeptical about the absolute automation of work, pointing to work that requires