



WHY SCIENCE AND FAITH BELONG TOGETHER: Stories of Mutual Enrichment by Malcolm A. Jeeves. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2021. 294 pages. Paperback; \$35.00. ISBN: 9781725286191.

Many sense tension between modern science and Christian faith. Malcolm Jeeves, however, intends to show how the two are quite complementary. As Emeritus Professor (University of St. Andrews), past-President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Fellow of both the Academy of Medical Sciences and the British Psychological Society, and a prolific author in the arena of science and faith, he is supremely qualified to write this book.

The Preface reveals his motives: emails from distraught students despairing over a faith that seems incompatible with modern science, and polls showing the mass exodus of young people from faith for the same reason. The emails come from those appealing desperately to believing experts for help to hang on to faith, while the polls represent those making the opposite choice by voting with their feet. Scripture has much longer roots than modern science: the written texts go back two or three millennia, and the oral traditions underlying them another several millennia, whereas modern science is very new. So, when these two divinely inspired searches for truth seem to come into conflict, the tendency for some is to favor the tried-and-true, whereas others feel it necessary to favor what is seen as the “new-and-improved.” Jeeves’s goal is to show how these two books actually complement one another even when they appear to conflict.

The book is divided into three sections. The first looks at how science and cultural changes seem to keep shrinking and changing God, while introducing new alternative gods. God had long been the explanation for many previously unanswerable questions (the origin of the universe and of life, for example), but as modern science made more and more discoveries and filled in knowledge gaps, God grew smaller and smaller. At the same time, changes in societal values prompted some to re-define God to conform to more modern thinking. Essentially, we started making God in our own image using insights gleaned through science (psychology, psychoanalysis [pp. 35–38]) and theology (Augustine, Aquinas, Jonathan Edwards, Karl Rahner [pp. 38–41]). A plethora of substitute gods came into view, chief of which is technology. Social media and the internet seemed to facilitate the erosion of belief. However, Jeeves closes

out this section looking at how science and technology can also expand our view of God. From studies of the very small (including DNA and the genetic code) to the very large (the known universe expanding from an estimated radius of 100,000 light years in 1917 to the present day estimate of 46 billion light years), there is now greater reason to be in awe of the Creator God.

The second section explores five major questions: (1) human origins; (2) human nature; (3) miracles of nature; (4) healing miracles; and (5) the nature of faith. For each, there is a pair of chapters: one subtitled “evidence from scripture,” and a complementary chapter subtitled “evidence from science.” Those subtitles might be misconstrued to imply that evidence would be proffered to explain or answer the question. Sometimes, that is the case. More often, distinct lines of evidence are cited to raise thought-provoking questions, provide divergent perspectives, add a bit of color or fill gaps, and call for more careful nuancing of the data. They serve more to stimulate questions and reflection than to provide an overview or explanation. I eventually came to see that the two sources of human evidence, when brought together within the mind of the reader, become a three-dimensional stereoscopic hologram.

In chapters 4 and 5, on human origins, Jeeves opens with the challenge, voiced by other secular scientists, that genetics does not explain everything about humanity, such as the emergence of personhood and consciousness, our moral values and ethical sense, and language. Therefore, standard evolutionary theory is too limited in scope and needs a “re-think.” Equally true, however, theological explanations of these also need a “re-think.” The scientific data clearly shows that humans are not starkly different from other animals, and in fact that it is almost certain that we evolved from them. We humans are, though, much more than genes, tissues, and organs.

In chapters 6 and 7, on human nature, nonscholars (both believing and not) are in nearly unanimous agreement that Christianity is critically tied to substance dualism—the idea that humans comprise a material body and an immaterial soul/spirit. In contrast, many scholars, across the spectra of belief (belief/nonbelief) and knowledge (science/theology/philosophy), see major problems with such dualism. Can science explain the soul? Is the case of a child with nearly normal cognitive abilities but lacking a major proportion of brain mass, evidence for a nonmaterial soul (p. 101)? Does Libet’s experiment say anything about free will (p. 102)? If humans do not exhibit categorical differences from animals, how are we created in the image of God?

In chapters 8 and 9 (on miracles of nature), Jeeves asks a number of questions. Do miracle claims constitute proof of God? Is God a divine upholder, or occasional gap filler? Do attempts to explain miracles “[explain] them away” (pp. 140–41)? What exactly do we mean by words such as “miracle” and “supernatural”? What does the Bible mean by “signs” and “wonders”? Is there merit in trying to normalize biblical phenomena that appear to be miraculous, using modern scientific explanations? Or do such attempts only raise other problems?

Chapter 10 addresses healing miracles. If someone claims an experience/event which can be shown to have a probability of one-in-a-million, is that a miracle ... given that those odds predict that roughly 7,500 such events will occur within the present global human population? Do religious people tend to live healthier or longer lives than their secular counterparts? Studies that look at cognitive variables (depression; optimism) might suggest “yes,” while those that look at biological variables (cancers; cardiovascular events) say “no” (p. 171). Do prayers become cosmic-vending machines? Do miracle claims stand up to medical/scientific scrutiny? Do they need to?

Chapters 11 and 12 concern the multifaceted nature of faith. Jeeves describes faith as involving “credulity,” “intellectual assent,” and “the psychological processes involved in the act of believing” (p. 178), and then compares faith with belief, doubt, trust, certainty, action, and discipleship (pp. 178–82). Jeeves recounts fascinating evidence from patients suffering various forms of brain disease (Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s), discussing how such biological injuries degrade their enjoyment of faith because they rob them of the ability to focus attention, feel emotion, or keep track of a sermon or a passage of scripture (which, Jeeves points out, is another argument against substance dualism). He also looks at how brain dysfunction affected many well-known people of faith, including Martin Luther, John Bunyan, John Wesley, William Cowper, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Lord Shaftesbury, and Christina Rossetti.

The third section focusses on a central theme in this book: that of God interacting with creation in general, and humans in particular. God does this by creating all things, including humans, in his image (as the divine creator), by constantly upholding that creation through natural laws which he has set in place to maintain it (as the divine sustainer), and by putting off his divinity and embodying himself within creation (divine self-emptying or kenosis). Here, Jeeves unpacks divine kenosis, as well as the evolutionary origins and emergence of kenotic behavior in

his creatures (otherwise commonly known as altruism, love, compassion, and empathy).

The book concludes with a valuable resource for self-reflection and group study. For each of the thirteen chapters, he provides a few relevant scripture passages, a variety of short paragraphs to review and reflect upon, a number of specific questions for discussion, and suggestions for further readings (books, articles, web-links).

The book is written at the level of a well-read and informed lay-person. No formal training in science or religion is needed, although a keen interest in both is essential. Overall, I found the book very useful, and I highly recommend it. But actions speak louder than words. My first thought upon reading it was to suggest it to my own church pastor for a small group book study; he read the book, then promptly and convincingly made the sales pitch to our church leaders.

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STANLEY JAKI: Science and Faith in a Realist Perspective by Alessandro Giostra. Rome, Italy: IF Press, 2019. 144 pages. Paperback; \$24.24. ISBN: 9788867881857.

The subject of this short introduction—Father Stanley L. Jaki (1924–2009), a giant in the world of science and religion—is more important than this book’s contents, a collection of conference papers and articles published between 2015 and 2019.

Readers of this journal should recognize Jaki, a Benedictine priest with doctorates in theology and physics, 1975–1976 Gifford lecturer, 1987 Templeton Prize winner, and professor at Seton Hall University, for his prolific, valuable work in the history of the relations between theology and science. He sharply contrasted Christian and non-Christian/scientific cosmologies and unfortunately, often slipped into polemics and apologetics. The title of Stacy Trasanco’s 2014 examination of his work, *Science Was Born of Christianity*, captures Jaki’s key thesis. Science in non-Christian cultures was, in Jaki’s (in)famous and frequent characterizations, “stillborn” and a “failure” (e.g., see Giostra, pp. 99, 113). Incidentally, Giostra seems unaware that various Protestant scholars shared Jaki’s key thesis and arguments.

The Introduction begins with a quotation from Jaki that so-called conflicts between science and religion “must be seen against objective reality, which alone has the power to unmask illusions.” Jaki continued, “There may be clashes between science and religion, or rather between some religionists and some