

concerns related to autonomy, surveillance, and technological determinism, while calling for theological responses that are sensitive to both local political contexts (e.g., China's social credit system) and global developments.

Ruth Bancewicz closes the volume with a practical guide for engaging churches in science-faith dialogue. Drawing on her experience at the Faraday Institute, she offers strategies for supporting Christian scientists in congregations, equipping clergy to speak meaningfully about science, and fostering curiosity within church communities. Her chapter serves as a capstone, reminding readers that theology and science are not only academic pursuits but also pastoral responsibilities.

The value of the book does not lie in the depth of any single essay, nor in exhaustive coverage of its topics, but in how each chapter serves as a case study rooted in particular places and experiences. Together, they form a mosaic that resists the temptation of abstraction in favor of grounded engagement. Thus this volume marks an important shift in the field of science and religion. It moves beyond the well-worn Anglo-American debates over evolution and cosmology to foreground issues such as public health, environmental stewardship, political distrust, and indigenous knowledge. In doing so, it reframes theology, not as a systematic adjudication of "faith versus science," but as a contextual, embodied, and relational witness.

The book is especially commendable for its editorial coherence, despite the diversity of voices. Brownutt's concept of "glocality" proves remarkably fertile, enabling readers to make thematic connections across culturally disparate chapters. Appendices listing relevant journals and organizations enhance the book's value as a resource for students, researchers, and practitioners alike. As a whole, the volume is instructive in illuminating how science and theology interact in complex social and ecclesial ecosystems, while maintaining an optimistic outlook for integration among church, academy, and laity.

Nevertheless, some limitations are apparent. Although the book covers six continents, South and Southeast Asia receive minimal attention. Future volumes could engage more deeply with gendered, indigenous, and interfaith perspectives—especially in areas such as land ethics, healthcare, and technology. Moreover, the theological engagement is at times underdeveloped. While many contributors are devout Christian scientists, more systematic theological contributions—drawing

from liberationist, ecological, Catholic, or Pentecostal traditions—would have added depth. Readers may also find the breadth of topics and methods disorienting. By allowing each context to set its own agenda, the book offers breadth but sometimes sacrifices analytical depth; the essays are often introductory, bordering on superficiality.

Still, these limitations do not diminish the book's value as a rich and thought-provoking resource. *Global Perspectives on Science and Christianity* is an excellent introduction for theologians, scientists, clergy, and students seeking to understand how Christian faith can thoughtfully engage scientific inquiry in a pluralistic world. Its central insight—that both science and Christianity are global and local—pushes the field forward, opening space for conversations that are intellectually rigorous, culturally sensitive, and theologically hopeful. In an age marked by epistemic fragmentation and institutional mistrust, this volume invites the church to listen, learn, and bear witness anew in the many theaters of human knowledge and suffering.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF12-25Allen>

DIVINED EXPLANATIONS: The Theological and Philosophical Context for the Development of the Sciences (1600-2000) by Paul Allen and Flavia Marcacci, eds. Brill, 2024. xiii + 370 pages. Hardcover; \$183.00. ISBN: 9789004701885.

This volume asks us to stop narrating the old melodrama of "science versus religion" and to watch, instead, how theories actually get made—inside a lived matrix of metaphysics, theology, institutions, and metaphors. Its case studies are admirably concrete: Descartes's "instituted" truths, Franciscan classrooms that stitched Newton to Aristotle, eighteenth-century quarrels over generation, Bolzano's theologically anchored infinities, thermodynamics disciplined by Duhem, Darwin disentangled from "social Darwinism," Einstein's *logos*-piety, Lemaître's primeval atom as generative hypothesis, Planck's causality and order, Wittgensteinian limits and quantum strangeness, Gödel's modal experiment, and Wheeler's "law without law." The theme is persuasive: images and doctrines are not after-the-fact varnish; they are cognitive engines and guardrails.

The editors begin with Reijer Hooykaas's tart epigraph—"An open mind is not the same as an empty mind"—and then set about filling the mind with history

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rather than slogans. The opening chapter proposes that scientific theorizing germinates within a living matrix of metaphysics and theology. Unfortunately, the narrative's first step falters: it repeats the familiar story that the "conflict thesis" emerges with Draper and White. Recent scholarship shows that their polemics are popular crystallizations of much older, intra-Protestant contests later secularized into a science-versus-religion myth. That omission matters because the chapter's broader ambition is to complicate inherited myths.

Set that aside and the argument quickly gathers power. Leaning into the historical turn in philosophy of science, the chapter examines the "conditions of possibility" for science: assumptions about order, intelligibility, and lawlikeness articulated as much in sermons and schools as in laboratories. Its most fruitful pages treat religious metaphors—"the book of nature," providential "laws," even demonological thought experiments—not as pious ornaments but as cognitive engines that open new lines of inquiry before the equations harden.

The conceptual net would benefit from a tighter weave. "Theology" ranges here from doctrinal content to ambient culture to institutional ecology; readers would benefit from a simple taxonomy—doctrinal (creation, providence), metaphoric/analogical ("book," "law"), moral-vocational (intellectual virtues), and institutional (universities, orders). Clarifying that spectrum would help distinguish correlation from causation and guard against mistaking after-the-fact rhetoric for genuine heuristic dependence.

In chapter 2, Simone Guidi offers a deft, tightly argued rereading of Descartes's most unsettling terrain—the 1630 letters on the "creation of the eternal truths" and the evil genius of the *Meditations*. The chapter advances a constructive thesis: Descartes replaces any Platonizing pipeline into the divine intellect with "instituted innatism"—God efficiently establishes the logical truths of things and inscribes adequate ideas in finite minds.

Guidi rejects the familiar polarity in which "Descartes versus late scholastic essentialism" does all the work. He shows that Mersenne is not the possibilist bogey often imagined, and Suárez is not the essentialist foil of legend. Descartes's real opponent is not "scholastic essentialism" but a logicism that treats identity-claims as primitive. The reconstruction of the demon's function—less a cheap epistemic scare than the *reductio* of atheistic contingency—maps neatly onto the architecture of the *Meditations*.

In chapter 3, Paolo Capitanucci rescues an understudied corner of early-modern Catholic thought: Franciscan engagements with "the new sciences," filtered through eclectic scholastic classrooms and textbook cultures. He shows how textbooks, classrooms, and convent libraries—not just academies—mediated Descartes/Newton to Italian friars, and how an "enlarged Aristotelianism" absorbed, sifted, and contested new physics. This reframes the usual conflict/drama as curricular grafting and incremental habit change.

Luca Tonetti follows with a surprisingly lively thread through early-eighteenth-century debates on generation: how biblical exegesis, medical theorizing, and microscopes got tangled around the phrase "mother of all the living" (Gen. 3:20). The chapter shines when showing where ideas travel: pulpit-adjacent disputations, reference-stuffed textbooks, and encyclopedic medical compendia—not just laboratories and academies.

In chapter 5, Fábio Bertato reconstructs Bolzano's "theological anchoring" of the actual infinite. The core claim is programmatic: the axiom of infinity in mathematics can be viewed—historically, not deductively—as a corollary of a theological theorem. From God's existence and attributes, Bolzano infers that an actually infinite real being exists and that infinitude pervades reality. The chapter elegantly ties Bolzano's grounding theory to a crisp proof that an unconditioned real exists—and then cashes that metaphysic out in a disciplined account of infinite multitudes.

In chapter 6, Stefano Bordoni tracks how the second law of thermodynamics became a cultural lightning rod between 1850 and 1905. Heat death travels through popular novels, British Association for the Advancement of Science lectures, encyclicals, and textbooks. The coda centers on Pierre Duhem and his principled embargo on using physics as apologetics or anti-apologetics. Duhem emerges as the chapter's lodestar: theories are "suitable or unsuitable," not true or false in a metaphysical register, and physics must not be dragooned into settling theology.

In the following chapter, Paul Allen reframes the standard "Darwin versus Christianity" set piece by tracking how nineteenth-century Christian receptions of evolution fixated on creation and scriptural hermeneutics while overlooking Darwin's moral anthropology—his abolitionist, monogenist insistence on human unity. A bracing, usefully revisionist chapter that clears conceptual space to see how Darwin's common descent cohered with—rather than subverted—a Christian grammar

of human equality. Moreover, Allen provides a necessary critique of Terence Keel's recent work, *Divine Variations: How Christian Thought Became Racial Science* (2018), which claims that "racial science" originated in a Christian theological anthropology. Keel's position is utter nonsense, both historically and theologically. He simultaneously claims that Christianity was "replaced" by secular racial science and blames Christianity for causing that same racial science. However, you can't argue that Christian anthropology was sidelined and "translated" into secular terms, then turn around and blame Christian theology for the resulting racism. Allen is to be commended for his cogent takedown of the view.

In chapter 8, Don Howard re-reads Einstein's "cosmic religion" against the grain of the stock Spinoza label. He argues that the deeper grammar is Stoic and Philonian: *logos*—"reason made manifest in nature"—rather than full Spinozist metaphysic. Howard rescues Einstein's theology from the Spinoza shortcut and installs *logos* at the center—reason manifest, personally de-centering yet morally energizing, shaped by deterministic commitments and yet alive to mystery.

In chapter 9, Dominique Lambert reconstructs how Lemaître moved from an expanding, beginningless cosmos (the 1927 Eddington-Lemaître model) to the primeval atom idea of 1931. By separating hypothesis from model, origin from creation, and heuristic from theory, Lambert lets readers see why Lemaître could champion a scientific beginning without this amounting to doing theology by other means. It complicates the neat "Lemaître the apologist" stereotype and offers a persuasive account of how a theologically literate physicist coined a generative concept that helped science learn to speak about "before" space-time.

Moving further afield, in chapter 11, Fausto Fraisopi proposes that twentieth-century revolutions in physics and logic don't deepen a rift between science and religious feeling; they erode the rift. Quantum theory's discontinuity, non-commutation, and uncertainty principle, combined with Wittgenstein's demonstration that language cannot capture its own logical foundations, restrain maximalist rationality and reopen the space where wonder and inquiry meet. When the grand mirror cracks, science doesn't end—its austere limits become the very condition for a chastened, non-triumphal "mystical" outlook.

In chapter 12, Andrea Vestrucci and Christoph Benzmüller frame Kurt Gödel's ontological proof as continuous with his cautious realism rather than

treating it as a philosophical curiosity detached from his mathematical work. By placing Gödel's proof within his modest Platonism—and then stress-testing it with automated reasoning and careful variants—they provide a disciplined map of what different axiom choices buy you: consistency at the price of re-defining essence; necessary existence without modal collapse; or, embracing collapse, a bracing necessitarianism.

In the final chapter, Stefano Furlan and Rocco Gaudenzi's portrait of John Archibald Wheeler traces his pivot from "daring conservatism"—Einstein-loyal geometrodynamics—to the confession that black holes had pushed that program to its limits. Wheeler emerges neither as mystic in disguise nor mere methodologist, but as a craftsman of questions who, when classical tools failed him, learned to work at the edge where explanation becomes invitation.

My assessment of *Divined Explanations* is overwhelmingly positive, with two reservations. First, the book sometimes reproaches the "conflict thesis" while quietly borrowing its plot; the genealogy of that thesis is older and more intra-Protestant than a Draper-and-White origin story admits, and ignoring that fact weakens the historiographic footing. Second, several reconciliations come with a theological price tag (especially in post-Darwinian settlements); they deserve greater attention, not a wave through.

The volume's strongest chapters succeed through methodological clarity and sense of place. They show how doctrines, metaphors, and habits shape the imagination of inquiry without sliding from order to a necessary Orderer, from heuristic metaphor to metaphysical conclusion, or from boundary-work to quiet concordism. The result is a capacious frame: not a Kuhn-lite atmosphere but a thicker ecology in which theological imagination has been less an antagonist of science than one of its provocateurs.

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SOCIAL SCIENCE

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF12-25Scimecca>

THE NOT SO OUTRAGEOUS IDEA OF A CHRISTIAN SOCIOLOGY by Joseph A. Scimecca. Routledge, 2023. 153 pages. Paperback; \$54.99. ISBN: 9781032360171.

There have been a plethora of books touting the outrageousness of Christian academic endeavors in a secular age, and this book, while building on the theme,