

Book Reviews

values on the framework of relationships to be very helpful in thinking about the ethical implications of different genetic technologies. If I were still actively teaching a bioethics course, I would seriously consider using the relationship test described in this book as a model for how to apply Christian values to all bioethical conundrums.

In summary, I recommend this book for any Christian—whether a specialist in genetics or not—who wishes to engage seriously with the moral and ethical implications of advances in genetic technology, and I urge us all to participate in broad-based dialogue with others in providing input into public policy decisions regarding these advances.

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CHEMISTRY

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF9-26Abraham>

CHEMISTRY, FAITH, AND STEWARDSHIP: Uniting Biblical Wisdom with Scientific Practice by Liza Abraham, foreword by Sy Garte, Resource Publications, 2025. 142 pages. Hardcover; \$34.00. ISBN: 9798385258062. Paperback; \$19.00. ISBN: 9798385258055. e-book; \$19.00. ISBN: 9798385258079.

How can we inspire young scientists to be passionate about chemistry while also being good stewards of the beautiful planet God has entrusted to our care? Is it possible to remain attentive to creation amid the many pressing challenges that chemistry seeks to address? Can even the most ordinary objects in nature lead us to marvel at our Creator? If questions such as these capture your attention, then *Chemistry, Faith, and Stewardship* will be a welcome, entry-level read—one that deepens appreciation for chemistry while inviting the reader into a wonder-filled experience of God.

The author has the technical background to speak thoughtfully from a chemical perspective, having earned a PhD in physical organic chemistry and previously holding faculty positions at notable universities. This book, however, is not meant to be a highly technical treatment of chemistry. Instead, Abraham weaves together basic principles of chemistry and green chemistry, articulating them through the lens of Christian faith. Each chapter centers on a particular theme and includes a hands-on activity designed to connect scientific concepts with faith, along with reflection questions. While most chapters maintain a clear scientific focus, a few are primarily theological, with little direct engagement with chemistry—particularly those addressing Sabbath, delighting in God’s Word, and living a life anchored in the Bible. Regardless of emphasis, Abraham consistently grounds her claims in Scripture, supplying numerous biblical references that keep the focus on Christian faith.

Although this book is not intended for graduate-level chemistry, it could readily find a place in high school education (including private and homeschool settings) as well as in Christian higher education. Each scientific concept explored in the book is paired with a biblical parallel. For example, in chapter 2, Abraham surveys several prominent trees in the Bible—the shoot from Jesse’s stump, the cross, the healing tree at Marah, and the vine and branches—while drawing attention to the biblical call for Christians to be rooted, as trees are rooted. She follows a similar pattern in chapters on water, precious stones, light, and design in chemistry. Throughout, the writing carries a poetic tone that invites worship.

A strong and recurring theme of the book is stewardship, a topic that is often underemphasized in scientific education. Early in the book, Abraham writes, “We are not the masters of the earth, nor are we called to idolize, exploit, or dismiss it. Instead, we are stewards, entrusted by God with the land, its creatures, and its resources—not as owners, but as caretakers” (p. 2). This statement sets the tone for the remainder of the book, as she explores how science points to God, how Scripture speaks to these truths, and how faithful stewardship becomes an act of worship. The result is an invitation to explore the world meaningfully while keeping God at the center of scientific inquiry.

One distinctive feature of the book is its inclusion of activities designed to connect the scientific topic under discussion with biblical principles, often reinforcing the theme of stewardship: for example, creating bioplastics from milk, making natural mosquito repellent using essential oils, dyeing fabrics with water-soluble dyes, examining stones, performing flame tests on various salts, making soap, observing timed color changes in solutions, and evaluating the components of common household chemical products. Some chapters include less tactile but equally effective practices, such as researching the faith of notable scientists, creating a periodic table of God’s attributes, or engaging in guided reflection through Psalm 119. These are well suited to homeschool and private school environments, where students are encouraged not only to learn scientific concepts but also to integrate them with faith.

Following each activity, Abraham provides reflection questions intended to prompt deeper engagement with the chapter’s themes. For example, in the chapter on light and matter (chap. 5), she asks, “How does the call to ‘walk as children of light’ (Eph. 5:8) challenge or encourage you in your daily life? In what ways can you reflect God’s light to others?” (p. 54). In chapter 9, on chemistry, she asks how the structure and order of the periodic table might reflect both scientific principles and divine intentionality. These questions are not designed to assess scientific mastery but rather to encourage contemplation of how scientific insights intersect with Christian faith.

The book also includes several chapters with minimal scientific content, focusing instead on spiritual formation and encouragement. In chapter 6, for instance, Abraham reflects on rhythms of rest by encouraging meditation, attentiveness to creation as sacred space, and a movement from wonder toward love. Additional themes include examples of faithful biblical figures, reminders that the Bible is not meant merely for intellectual consumption, and encouragement to recognize God's fingerprints in creation. These chapters serve as an important counterbalance to the more science-focused sections, reminding readers that science itself is not worthy of worship.

Overall, *Chemistry, Faith, and Stewardship* is a thoughtful and accessible resource for readers seeking an integrated approach to science, worship, and care for creation. Although neither the scientific nor the biblical content are technically advanced, the book's accessibility, poetic tone, and intentional integration of science and faith make it suitable for a wide audience. When combined with the end-of-chapter activities and reflection questions, it offers a meaningful way to delight in God through the study of the created world, and may also inspire a renewed sense of responsibility for caring for the planet God has given us.

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CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF9-26Kingsnorth>

AGAINST THE MACHINE: On the Unmaking of Humanity by Paul Kingsnorth. Penguin Random House, 2025. 348 pages. Hardcover; \$32.00. ISBN: 9780593850633.

Paul Kingsnorth is an English Christian technology and cultural critic standing in the line of Jacques Ellul and Wendell Berry. Like Berry, Kingsnorth's pursuit of grounded creaturely living led him to relocate with his family to a remote agrarian region, Western Ireland in his case, in about 2020. Around the same time, a spiritual pilgrimage prompted a turn from environmental activism and Wicca to the Orthodox Church. *Against the Machine* is in many ways a synthesis and systematization of Kingsnorth's intellectual and faith journey. Although much of the book's material is a reworking of his Substack posts over the last decade, the arc of the book bears witness to his new rooting in biblically informed traditions.

The essays in the middle section of the book dig into the social and economic history of the West's last millennium, building off the work of thinkers such as Ellul, Simone Weil, Lewis Mumford, Mary Midgley, Philip Sherrard, Stephen Toulmin, Ivan Illich, and Carl Trueman. Kingsnorth argues that until the modern era, the roots of human flourishing, across human cultures, were always understood to rest upon the "4Ps": Past, People, Place, and Prayer. In Europe, for over a thousand

years, the biblical narrative provided a firm foundation upon which to build "layer upon layer of meaning, tradition, innovation, and creation, however imperfectly" (p. 5). Yet the trajectory of Western Christendom, since the Middle Ages, has been a turning away from the 4Ps in the ever-accelerating pursuit of a different vision for human flourishing, captured in our modern moment by the "4Ss": Science, Self, Sex, and Screens. The result today is that "We—at least if we are among the lucky ones—have every gadget and recipe and website and storefront and exotic holiday in the world available to us, but we are lacking two things that we seem to need, but grasp at nonetheless: meaning and roots" (p. 13).

The Machine, for Kingsnorth, is the "unprecedented [worldwide] technological network of power and control" that has driven, and continues to drive, this societal transformation (p. 114). Drawing from Lewis Mumford, "The Machine manifests today as an intersection of money power, state power, and increasingly coercive and manipulative technologies, which constitute an ongoing war against roots and against limits" (p. 38). Indeed, "'growth' is the overriding purpose of the 'global economy' which the Machine has built; everything else is of secondary concern" (p. 37). Kingsnorth observes that the "growth has no specific aim and no end in sight," and even if it creates problems, these can be solved by more growth (p. 37). Kingsnorth quotes wilderness writer Edward Abbey that "growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell" (p. 37). The most recent, and arguably most thoroughgoing, examples of this commitment to exponential acceleration can be seen in the transhumanist movement and the global rush to develop AI. Tech entrepreneur Peter Thiel is not mentioned in the book, but one need only listen to him for a few minutes (for example, his June 26, 2025, interview on Ross Douthat's *Interesting Times* podcast) to hear the values and worldview of the Machine, as Kingsnorth has described them.

Kingsnorth notes the hegemonic narrative power of the Machine:

Across the spectrum from conservatives to liberals, Marxists to fascists, believers to atheists, very little serious criticism of the entwined myths of progress, growth and materialism will ever be heard in the public sphere. (p. 40)

He quotes Mumford: the Machine "feels 'absolutely irresistible ... and ultimately beneficent.' Opposition to it is presented as naïve idealism at best, and a dangerous denial of its benefits to the needy at worst" (p. 42). Thus, Kingsnorth argues that "the Machine is not simply a vast, soulless mechanism for accruing material wealth. It is, in some deadly fashion, a sacral object in itself. It is its own enchantment" (p. 39).

Completing the arc of the book, in the last few chapters Kingsnorth invites us to consider the possibility that "principalities and powers," i.e., the demonic, underlie the Machine. Is this diagnosis of our present moment