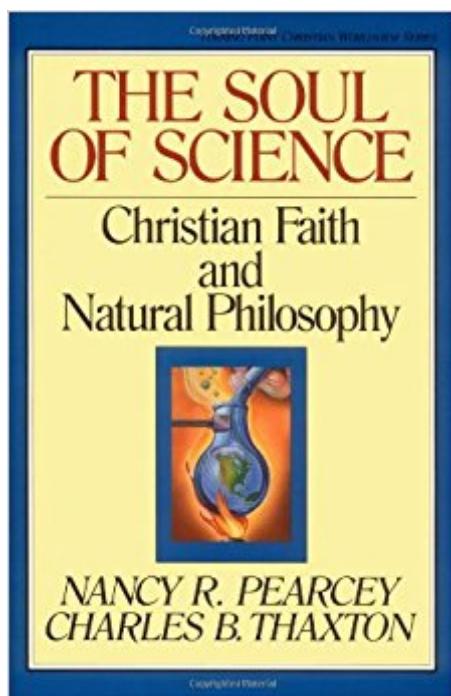


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The Soul Of Science: Christian Faith And Natural Philosophy



Synopsis

"I consider The Soul of Science to be a most significant book which, in our scientific age, should be required reading for all thinking Christians and all practicing scientists. The authors demonstrate how the flowering of modern science depended upon the Judeo-Christian worldview of the existence of a real physical contingent universe, created and held in being by an omnipotent personal God, with man having the capabilities of rationality and creativity, and thus being capable of investigating it. Pearcey and Thaxton make excellent use of analogies to elucidate difficult concepts, and the clarity of their explanations for the nonspecialist, for example, of Einstein's relativity theories or of the informational content of DNA and its consequences for theories of prebiotic evolution, are quite exceptional, alone making the volume worth purchasing." --Dr. David Shotton, Lecturer in Cell Biology, Department of Zoology, University of Oxford "Pearcey and Thaxton show that the alliance between atheism and science is a temporary aberration and that, far from being inimical to science, Christian theism has played and will continue to play an important role in the growth of scientific understanding. This brilliant book deserves wide readership." --Phillip E. Johnson, University of California, Berkeley "This book would be an excellent text for courses on science and religion, and it should be read by all Christians interested in the relationship between science and their theological commitments." --J.P. Moreland, Professor of Philosophy, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University

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Customer Reviews

The authors, both science writers, argue that science in the West has progressed because of, rather

that in spite of, Christian faith, since belief in an ordered universe, governed by God-given laws, was essential for its advance. The authors show a good grasp of both science and theology, something rare these days, although, as the authors show, not quite so rare among the earlier scientists. This is a well-presented and much-needed contribution to the discussion about the so-called conflict between religion and science, although it is perplexing that Stanley Jaki's *The Savior of Science* (Regnery Gateway, 1988), which already made the same point, and at a more sophisticated level, is not mentioned. For lay readers and specialists alike. Augustine J. Curley, Newark Abbey, N.J. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Pearcey and Thaxton deliver what they call a more accurate portrayal of the progress of science by . . . recognizing the influence of Christianity on science. Refuting the popular impression that great discoveries were made despite or in refutation of Christian beliefs, rather than within the framework of religious and philosophical ideas, the authors show the influence of the medieval church upon scientific advancement, and demonstrate that Newton, Descartes, and others were working to prove or expand upon their religious principles. Moving from history to contemporary scientific thinking as it relates to or contests religious thinking, their story is interesting, but not as free of polemics as they assert. Denise Perry Donavin

Well researched and organized. Like all of history, science history is somewhat open to interpretation, but they do an excellent job of presenting the case for the greatness of science in the past, including during the "dark" ages. They also present a concrete explanation of why experimental science flourished in Western Europe and not in other areas that had many years of a "head start" like the Middle East and China. Worldview does matter, and it really matters in the area of experimental science.

One of the more interesting intersections of theology and the reality is the philosophy of science. What impact does our worldview (which is founded in theology) have on our pursuit of science? The authors of this very readable book argue that without religion -- without the Christian Middle Ages specifically -- there would be no science as we know it. The authors begin with a simple question: Why should science, or rather scientific thinking, exist at all? Why is it that throughout the recorded history of man, "science" should be limited to "just so stories," and pure math? Why is it that the "modern scientific method," should only arise in Christian Europe? The first section of this book deals with the supposed "war" between scientific thought and religion, and building a new history of

science that shows a more subtle interplay between the two major systems of thought. The authors work through a number of examples, from Galileo to Calvin, showing how both the reigning Catholic and upstart Protestant Churches actually supported scientific thought, giving it impetus and support from the very beginning. In the second section, the authors move from defense to offense. Is science just about facts? No, because most scientific revolutions are based on new readings of existing facts, rather than the new facts themselves. In the real world, facts tend to be interpreted in the framework of existing belief, stretching belief as needed to accommodate them. Scientific revolutions happen when a new way of looking at existing facts emerges which better accounts for both the existing facts and newly discovered facts. In other words, it's not facts that drive science, but worldview. This section is very helpful in outlining the difference between the Platonic and Aristotelian worldviews, and their impact on the practice of science. The authors also helpfully trace how the Church originally sided with Aristotle. The spread of Islam in the Middle East, however, drove Eastern Churches into Europe (there was no fabled "golden age" of Islamic dominance associated with "the rise of science"), the writings of Plato were rediscovered. The ensuing crisis in thought as neo-Platonic thinking spread through the Church, and the eventual attempts to bring the two worldviews together, resulted in what we now consider the seedbed of science through the vehicle of math. Section three deals with the rise and fall of math in the quest for a single overarching "theory of everything," and section four deals with the rise of relativistic theory. This final section is very helpful in bringing to light the world in which Einstein lived, the foundation of the theory of relativity, and his reaction to that theory being taken from the realm of physics into the realm of worldview (a process that has only accelerated since Einstein, himself, left the scene). If you really want to understand the history of science, and the relationship between science and Christian thought, there are few better places to start than with *The Soul of Science*.

I found this book very interesting. Full of information that I was not aware of. I even understood the concept behind Einstein's theory of relativity. But in no way is this book an easy one to read. Some concepts were profound although the writer tried to keep it simple. Excellent book overall. The whole planet should have it in their libraries.

I think this book is providing a sense of balance to the somewhat biased views on the history and philosophy of science which often show the tone of unfairly minimizing the significance of any facts that in a way or another give credit to the Christianity.

Certainly worth reading. However be as the Bereans, check on the facts. All Christians should read it.

1Great read.

Whether you agree with the author's premise or not, the Soul of Science offers a fascinating perspective on the development of science through the influence of Christian theology and philosophy. The author provides plenty of examples and evidence to support her claim. Highly Recommended.

Excellent book

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