Review

Stanley Jaki Foundation International Congress 2015. By PaulHaffner and Joseph Laracy, editors. Herefordshire, UK: Gracewing, 2020. 228 pages. Paperback, $22.50.

Stanley Jaki (1924–2009), Gifford lecturer, Templeton Prize winner, scientist and Catholic monk, has had a profound influence on the philosophy of science from the beginning of his scientific and theological career, despite the often dense prose of his over two dozen books, often peppered with personal polemics. The editors of this volume, themselves Catholic priests who studied and worked in physics and engineering (Paul Haffner is President of the Stanley Jaki Foundation and Joseph Laracy his recently awarded doctoral student in theology), bring together seven articles that, as a whole, provide an accessible and critical introduction to Jaki's life and thought. These easy-to-read essays, by a diverse group of scientists and theologians gathered at Seton Hall University in April 2015, cover topics as diverse as Jaki's early (and still influential) research on radon (Anthony Troha: "The Early Scientific Works of the Rev. Dr. Stanley L. Jaki") and his theories on education (Peter J. Floriani: "Newman, Chesterton, Jaki, and the Founding of the Ambrosian University"). The last essay in the book (Antonio Colombo, "From Győr to Madrid: A Biographical Sketch of Father Stanly Jaki") gives his biography, although many of the authors reveal in their essays some degree of personal familiarity with Jaki.

Those familiar and unfamiliar with Jaki's work will want an introduction to his argument that modern science is born of Christianity, and two essays by Joseph Laracy ("Creation, Revelation, and the Emergence of Empirical Science") and Stacy Trasancos ("Science Was Born of Christianity: The Facts of Fr. Jaki's Research") provide that introduction. According to Jaki (for whom science is the "quantitative study of the quantitative aspects of things in motion"), only belief in a creator distinct from the universe that such a God has created makes the universe, as a whole and in its parts, intelligible. Belief systems that incorporate the cause of creation within itself (what Jaki calls "mythos," including ancient forms of polytheism and extended to modern idealism) cannot give rise to empirical science, for science in such a system would require the human mind to encompass all being, which, as limited, it cannot do (along these lines, Jaki favored Gödel's incompleteness theorems). One may disagree with Jaki's assessment of polytheistic and cyclical worldviews, but the recent rise of theories of a multiverse by many scientists of note, which remove the cause of this universe from itself, demonstrate Jaki's basic premise without an appeal to a personal creator.

Many of the authors remark on Jaki's polemical tone as a limitation. Richard Liddy ("Jaki and Lonergan: Confrontation or Encounter?") describes this as emerging from the "naïve" Thomistic epistemology Jaki inherited from Gilson, from which "ghetto" Catholics cannot communicate with other epistemologies, and proposes instead Lonergan's dialogical method. Haffner ("Christology and the Cosmos in Stanley Jaki"), on the other hand, argues that all the cultural factors

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(social, political, economic) that have given rise to modern science are a function of Christian belief informed by such an epistemology.

Each essay contains an extensive bibliography and the whole provides a good starting point for one who is a novice in questions of science and religion or who wants a refresher on the work of Jaki.

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