

*The Origin of Science
and the Science of its Origin*

STANLEY L. JAKI

Modern man owes an immense debt to science. He has received on the one hand the practical benefit of powerful tools and on the other the stimulus to his imagination through the unveiling of the remote past. Yet science is a recent phenomenon. Its three-hundred-year-old history has occupied but a few moments of recorded time. No wonder that its novelty has provoked not a few reflections.

These reflections on the recent origin of science are the materials and rudiments of the science of its origin. For the first time they are surveyed and analysed in this book, the text of five lectures delivered at Balliol College, Oxford in 1977.

The historical survey is given in the first four lectures which deal in succession with the material accrued during the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. The lesson provided by this historical material and the analysis of that lesson, given in the fifth lecture, are the support of this book's major claim: only a Christian outlook can provide that view in depth of the origin of science which is needed for a proper appraisal of the past of science, and of its future impact.

Stanley L. Jaki, a Hungarian-born Benedictine priest, is Distinguished Professor at Seton Hall University, South Orange, N.J., who has been internationally acclaimed for his books on the history of physics and cosmology. In 1975 and 1976 he was Gifford Lecturer at the University of Edinburgh and has lectured widely in the United States and Europe. He was the recipient of the Lecomte du Nouy Prize for 1970.

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