

God and the Atom by Victor Stenger: A Very Brief Review

Post by "Godfrey" of February 21, 2020 at 9:45 PM

Cassius, I was thinking after I posted that you might make points such as these 😊, and I agree with what you're saying. I read the book as an Epicurean, and for me it provides an interesting basis from which to go back and review Lucretius and the letters of Epicurus. I expect to have a richer understanding afterwards.

A committed Christian, Muslim, spiritualist or the like might find a "god of the gaps" in there, although Gleiser does explicitly reject that position as anti-scientific. The reason I like this book is that it gives a pretty clear description of the various theories over time: the thinking that went into them and the experimental verification. As for his conclusion (which I probably don't present very well), I think he's just describing the state of science today. I read the book to find out just that, so on that level it was just what I was looking for. I gather from the two books that one physicist today may say "the Big Bang means that everything came from nothing" where another (Stenger, for one) may say "not at all, the Big Bang was the result of a quantum tunnel from another universe." Gleiser actually gives a nice presentation of one recent physicist's desire to prove an eternal, unchanging universe and how that was discounted by the expansion of the universe. But it wasn't entirely discounted, which leaves open various possibilities.... In other words, there's a ton of nuance in the physics, and getting some understanding of that is what I enjoyed.

But I ramble. I'm with you in hoping that somebody who has seriously studied this subject unpacks this at some point!