

Homage to Pascal

by Thomas Scheff (December 2012)

Blaise Pascal was a theologian and also one of the earliest scientists. In his book *Pensees* (*Thoughts*, 1660) some of his comments are relevant to our current dilemma: what should be the relationship between science and religion?

As it stands, religion and science are not friends, to put it mildly. Pascal pointed out, however, that in a subtle way, they need each other badly. He proposed that science was based on what he called the spirit of *geometrie*, which translates as system. On the other hand, non-science, including religion, is based on the spirit of *finesse*, which translates as intuition.