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**The Science Fallacy**

By Freddy Davis

I can't count the number of times I have been in a discussion with an Atheist about the topic of evolution, or even science in general, and have been accused of being anti-science. Those people seemed to think that because I believe in God, and that since the foundation of belief in God is faith, that somehow it means that I don't believe in science. It is a ludicrous thought, and it actually says more about the lack of understanding of those Atheists than it does about my own beliefs. The Christian faith absolutely does recognize the validity of the scientific method; in fact modern science got its start among Christians who recognized that God had created a world based on order, and governed by natural laws.

**What is the Issue?**

Rather than Christians being the ones who are confused about the scope of science, it is actually Atheists who don't know how to draw that line. The problem they have in this regard is that they acknowledge only the existence of the natural universe, but don't know what to do with matters that don't fit into their paradigm. Since Atheism doesn't acknowledge the existence of transcendent reality, Atheists must define science in a way that actually goes beyond science, and in doing that they violate their own beliefs. In their attempt to hold a consistent view, they have to assert that science has a reach that goes beyond what they are able to demonstrate using science – and they must do it by faith.

Science has a specific definition. It is the study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment.

Thus, the scientific method can only be used in relation to that which is an expression of the material universe. When it comes to contemplation of things concerning God, the origin of matter and energy, the origin of life, the nature of human consciousness, the things that govern the operation of the human mind, and the like, there is nothing to experiment upon. These matters are all beyond the scope of the scientific method. However, since atheistic Naturalism doesn't allow that anything exists beyond the scope of the scientific method, it must insist that all of these things can ultimately be understood by science, even if it is currently beyond science's ability to deal with them.

**The Presuppositions of Conflicting Notions of Science**

In order to get at the modern societal conflict about science that exists between people who are Christians and those who believe in atheistic Naturalism, we have to look at the worldview foundations of those two beliefs. It is these underlying worldview beliefs that are at the root of the conflict.

***Biblical Theism***

While the Bible is not a book about science, it is built upon certain worldview assumptions that support the use of science. It certainly does acknowledge the existence of God, and expresses a point of view that recognizes his ability to interact with the natural world in a way that can override the operation of natural laws. This is, certainly, a point of view that requires people to recognize God's existence and his activity in the world, and to do it by faith.

That said, the faith that it asserts is not "blind faith." There is evidence that can be brought to bear con-

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cerning God's existence, and some of that evidence actually is empirical. Biblical beliefs actually do acknowledge the regularity of natural laws, and also recognizes man's ability to study and learn about it. Some Scripture verses that affirm this viewpoint include the following (all are from the ESV):

*"Can papyrus grow where there is no marsh? Can reeds flourish where there is no water? While yet in flower and not cut down, they wither before any other plant. Job 8:11-12*

*Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. Proverbs 6:6-8*

*The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north; around and around goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns. All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again. Ecclesiastes 1:6-7*

*"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater. Isaiah 55:10*

*Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? James 3:11*

Beyond that, the Bible also affirms that there are some things that science simply cannot account for. This truth is evident as we seek to explore the operation of the natural world we live in.

*He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he*

*cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. Ecclesiastes 3:11*

*Then I saw all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out. Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out. Ecclesiastes 8:17*

*Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing. Isaiah 40:26*

*For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. Romans 1:19-20*

*By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. Hebrews 11:3*

Biblical Theism is based on faith in an unseen God who cannot be understood using only empirical inquiry. But this understanding does not set science aside. While acknowledging the existence of God, it also recognizes that the natural universe that he created is based on natural laws that can be understood and used in ways that help us make our way in the world.

### Naturalism

Naturalism, on the other hand, begins with the premise that the natural universe is all that exists. With that as a starting point, the only possible conclusion is that everything that exists, in all of reality, is operated by, and can ultimately be known based on the laws of nature. Since the natural universe is

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If you wish to contact us directly, you may do so by the following methods:

321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312

E-mail:

[info@marketfaith.org](mailto:info@marketfaith.org)

Phone: 850-383-9756 (Tallahassee, Florida)

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all that exists, the natural laws of the universe govern EVERYTHING. Thus, based on naturalistic beliefs, there is no God and no such thing as a transcendent reality.

As a result, in Naturalism, science is more than a methodology. It is acknowledged to be able to account for not only the things in the natural universe that are known to be based on natural laws, but also for the things that cannot be known – because no other possibility is permitted.

When this approach is taken, however, the concept of science is given a scope that includes not only empirical methodology, but also philosophy. In fact, science and philosophy are actually conflated to allow it to account for everything in all of existence, even things it cannot account for.

There is a serious problem with this approach, however. The belief that everything in all of reality can be accounted for using the scientific method must be believed by faith. In other words, it is a religious point of view.

## Is the Secularist view of Science True?

Science is only a methodology and must be divorced from philosophy. Scientific results can be interpreted within a philosophical framework, but it is not the same as philosophy. Conflating science and philosophy is a perversion of science and is simply not true.

## What is the Answer?

Christians absolutely believe in the use of the scientific method. We believe God created the universe in a way that operates by fixed natural laws, and when studying the natural world we can discover its secrets.

However, there are things that cannot be accounted for based on natural laws because there is a part of reality that transcends the natural universe and is not subject to natural laws. Christians believe in both the regular operation of natural laws in the material universe, and in God who is the creator of the natural universe. He exists outside of that universe in a place where the natural laws of the universe don't apply. And he has the power to act in the universe in ways that science can't measure.

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