On Science, Part 4 [1]

Submitted by Wessel on Thursday, 29 September 2016 - 09:20



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This article is the last in my current series on science [2]. I want to share one final thought on this debate. At the end I link to a set of slides which I presented to my Bible study group a couple of years ago. It does not have any notes and is not exhaustive, but does briefly capture many of the thoughts which I had shared in this series.

Science is Not a Worldview

When people say things like "I believe in science", as opposed to holding a "religious" view, they are confusing two different things. Science is not a worldview [3]: it is a methodology. As a Christian theist, I also believe in science, in the same way I believe in algebra or apples falling to the ground. But as mentioned before, science is the studying of the *natural world*. It cannot say anything about a spiritual reality (if such a thing exists). What the person making this declaration is trying to say, is that they believe in *scientific naturalism*. This *is* a worldview and presupposes that the physical reality is all that exists. Note the word *presupposes*: scientific naturalism cannot be proven or disproved (least of all through the scientific method). If, for example, Jesus really *did* rise from the dead, or Muhammad really *did* receive divine revelation through an angel, then scientific naturalism is not true. Even if deism is true, that is, that God exists, but is completely aloof, uninvolved and disinterested in the world, science cannot prove or disprove this "prime reality". The uncomfortable truth that scientific naturalists need to face, is that theirs is a worldview based as much on faith as those of the ancient religions.

Of course, Christianity is the only falisfiable worldview [4]. Given this challenge, Christianity warrants earnest investigating by those who are intellectually honest—that would be the most scientific thing to do.

For the Christian reading this, know that the study of God's created world is not at conflict with knowing Him or His revealed Word to us.

Further Reading

The is much that has been written on the topic of science and religion. I have barely scratched the surface. I am only going to recommend two resources, and trust that they will lead the reader to further investigation if necessary. The first is the more accessible of the two, God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God? [5], by Professor John Lennox (who is himself a Christian apologist and professor of mathematics at Oxford University). The next book is more advanced: Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion and Naturalism [6] by philosopher and Christian theist Alvin Plantinga.

Presentation

This presentation was the result of being asked to speak to my Bible study group on an apologetics topic. I decided on the topic of "Science vs Religion", because my Bible study group members were not trained in science, and there are always misconceptions which need to be cleared up before having constructive dialogue on related topics. There are no notes for these slides, but the content of this series of articles on science should fill the gaps.

- Microsoft 2010 Powerpoint Presentation [7]
- PDF [8]

Categories:

- Talks [9]
- Terminology & Concepts [10]

Tags:

- science [11]
- presentation [12]
- science vs religion [13]
- religion [14]
- john lennox [15]
- alvin plantinga [16]

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Links
[1] https://siyach.org/node/1147
[2] https://siyach.org/node/1144
[3] https://siyach.org/node/1142
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[11] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/58
[12] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/600
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[15] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/602
[16] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/603