

Are Science and Christianity Compatible?

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- Some atheists still cling on to it, however

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- Manual work is for slaves, not philosophers!

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Negative Influences for the development of science:

- Under-estimation of human power (copying Nature)
- Deification of nature: the world is an organism
- Over-estimation of human reason
- Undervaluing manual work

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- Greek: Man can have full understanding of God's works
- Biblical: We have to find out what God actually did

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- Less emphasis on tradition and Greek philosophy, more on Bible exposition

Seventeenth Century

Seventeenth century mechanistic philosophy sees the world as a *machine* rather than an *organism*:

- Closer to the Biblical view of creation: a machine is created for a purpose
- A machine can be copied, an organism cannot.

Robert Boyle (1627–1691): hostility exists only between speculative metaphysics on the one side (which overrates human reason) and religion and true science on the other side (where reason is guided and corrected by experience)

The Royal Society (founded in 1645) included tradesmen, merchants and scholars working together. Motto: *Nullius in verba* (“Take nobody’s word for it”)

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The Christian world view sees knowledge as something to be shared freely:

“teaching everyone in all wisdom” Col 1:28

and greed is a sin:

*“Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly:
... and greed (which is idolatry)”* Col 3:5

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4. Therefore: Our theories must be tested by experiment

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3. God is a God who communicates with people and does so through his “two books”: the book of Scripture and the book of the world
4. For science to be successful, theoreticians and practical people need to work together in cooperation, sharing results

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The chief priests and scribes knew that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, but could not be bothered to walk six miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem to see the Messiah!

What about Miracles?

Science can only investigate what happens normally.

Cause and effect are not *necessary* in the way that mathematics and logic are.

Cause and effect are simply two events that we have observed together sufficiently often that we begin to count on the effect occurring when we observe the cause.

We risk the remote possibility of a miracle as we do that of a poisoned pancake or a world-destroying comet. We leave it out of account, not because it is a miracle, and therefore an impossibility, but because it is a miracle, and therefore an exception. — G. K. Chesterton

Science points beyond itself

The Big Bang proves that there was a creation: therefore there was a Creator

Fine Tuning: if the fundamental forces and constants were only fractionally different, then we would not be here. A tiny change in the strength of gravity or some other force would prevent stars and planets developing

History and archaeology confirm the reliability of the NT documents

The “unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics”: “The most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible.” (Albert Einstein)

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The whole scientific enterprise is based on certain assumptions which cannot be proved scientifically, but which are guaranteed by the Christian world view — William Lane Craig

Conclusion

C.S.Lewis in the essay “Is Theology Poetry?” writes:

Christian theology can fit in science, art, morality, and the sub-Christian religions. The scientific point of view cannot fit in any of these things, not even science itself. I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.