

CAUSE & EFFECT IN A RATIONAL UNIVERSE, 5 pgs

In physics **action and reaction are considered cause and effect**. This is known as Newton's third law of motion, which states that *for every action (cause), there is an equal and opposite reaction (effect)*. It describes an if/then relationship and is therefore sequential. A plane doesn't move forward on the runway until the engine achieves sufficient thrust to overcome its stationary inertial resistance.

It is apparent that the universe is rational and therefore cause and effect must necessarily be the basic principle by which it operates. In other words, **cause and effect is the underlying principal of rationality**. For every effect observed, only causes deemed firstly possible and secondly adequate may be posited. This means that every effect is caused and tracing the chain of causes and effects means considering **adequate causes** only. Christianity sees the world as an open system, where there is a cause and effect interaction and relationship not only between various aspects of the physical world in the mathematical or mechanistic sense of physics and chemistry as in a closed system (meaning the matter/energy universe is all there is), but also between the seen (material) and unseen (spiritual) portions [see *The Church Before the Watching World*, p.111-112]. The Bible recognizes the ordinary causes and effects that are intrinsic in the make-up of our world, and reveals interactions of causes and effects that are **outside nature**. Because He is sovereign, God can alter the laws and intervene as He will. For example, though we recognize dying and death as natural processes, **their original cause is judicial**, God's curse upon man, *in the day you eat of it, dying you shall die*, was God's just response to man's rebellion. Or to express it in reverse, the judicial consequence of man's disobedience.

Intellectually speaking, the proposition that *the living God revealed in the Bible really is there*¹ is founded in the evident observations that **the universe exists and is rational** - therefore it is governed by cause and effect.² There is no other sufficient explanation. The ideas included in evolution result from the materialistic concept that the universe is a closed system cannot be supported by what is observable and measurable even at the most rudimentary levels.³ Nothing derivative, dependent, or finite can exist unless something exists that has the power of existence (being) within itself - a necessary being. Given the fundamental nature of all things as dependent particulars, the nature of **the NECESSARY BEING has to be personal as well as intelligent**.⁴ For me or any other particular to be, He must necessarily be. He cannot not be if anything finite is to exist.

Every particular must have an origin. Neither the universe nor any part of it can be perpetual because the chain of cause and effect requires a first cause.⁵ The idea in any theory-of-everything is to identify an overall universal - that which gathers in and relates all particulars under a single description - under a single category.⁶ The Bible gives us this and at the same time anchors all things to an overall absolute⁷ from which we can take our bearings both in the scientific sense and in the ethical sense. Every natural thing⁸ is the creation⁹ [the universal] of God¹⁰ [the absolute].

The chief thing to lay hold of is that God governs the universe and that the universe *as He describes it* is the world in which we live (must live). He is the Living God who-is-there, and the elements of the universe act and react predictably (rationally) in accord with their makeup. **This is the core of rationality and the reason cause and effect works reliably** [see cause & effect in *Appreciating*

God]. Each thing functions as He designed it consistent with the laws He set to regulate it making possible the accumulation of knowledge and understanding - predictability and the consistent repeatability and reproducibility necessary for science, technology, and manufacturing. It is for good reasons that the world is like it is and we are as we are. **This is the reality from which there is no escape**, be it through fantasizing, deception, or insanity.

1. the record reliable, the history factual, the redemptive story true, etc.

2. Ultimately, it is not because of this or any other argument that one turns to Christ for forgiveness and deliverance from the wrath of God. The Bible describes the sin of man as resulting in blindness and a kind of death. The realization of God as really living and sovereign and trusting in the resurrected Christ is a matter of God's work in the heart – His grace to lost sinners.

3. Careful examination of **macro evolution** reveals that it fails the **adequacy test** of a responsible cause because, though it presents **a model that can be imagined**, it overcomes none of the hurdles relating to existence with **a viable explanation**: it fails to explain in terms of (1) proving that the existence of what we know to be part of reality or that proposed changes are possible [**viable – capable as proposed, workable, practicable, feasible**] without outside intelligent manipulation; and (2) that such changes actually happened as the means by which the current universe came to be. The answer that the universe exists, therefore it must have happened is circular reasoning which discounts the biblical position out of hand.

Problems/Obstacles

origin of the universe [existence of matter, energy, and forces];

existence of structures in the universe [planetary and stellar systems] **and governing laws**;

transition from inanimate matter and energy to living entities;

transition from one type of living being to another [What is the purpose and function of genes - to serve as a mechanism for change? No - to maintain the distinctiveness of what an organism is.];

transition to mankind.

Each of these obstacles contains numerous barriers that likewise have not been explained in any sense of the word “adequate” [sufficient for what is required]. For instance, the origin of living organisms requires the following mechanisms and controlling information be present and functioning simultaneously: organism's composition and structure [**such as membranes**]; a safe place (Is a chemical soup safe?) to live without being destroyed by detrimental elements within its environment; the animating feature of life; food and a means to recognize and distinguish from poisons; a means to ingest it, metabolize it, including mechanisms for respiration and excretion; a means for growth, healing, maturing, reproducing, and dying; etc.

Chaos theory and probability calculations for the random building of any of these systems are inadequate and inappropriate until their natural development is proven possible [**they have zero probability**]. Even if these unaided progressions could be shown to be possible and could be shown to have occurred in one instance, they still must be proven to be the mechanism by which the actual

changes did happen in history that led to the present condition and state of all things. Until such a time, the Bible's ascription of great praise to God for having done them offers the only adequate model.

4. - and of such qualities ascribed to **the Christian Trinitarian God. God alone is HOLY** in the absolute sense of being supreme in His transcendence and excellence. **He is perfect in essence** (self-existent, eternal, unchanging, etc.); **nature** (knowledge, power, wisdom, etc.); and **character** (righteous, good, full of mercy, etc.). [Perfection is not equatable with the idea of limits.] **His authority is total.**

5. an uncaused cause which **cannot itself be an effect**

6. A universal is comprehensive over its sphere.

7. ultimate standard and reference point

8. each particular thing, excluding decisional responses or reactions

9. the overall universal

10. who is the overall absolute

What is a Principle?

A principle is a description of how things generally operate, relate, and interact. It is also used of a rule that determines outcome. A fundamental principle describes how things must relate and interrelate because of their natures and the nature of the world and life of which they are a part.* The characteristics that are intrinsically part of each thing or being allow principles to be formulated that predict interactions, reactions, and consequences. Principles describe what you can expect to happen when you act foolishly, unreasonably, or immorally and what steps are necessary to recover from same. On this level principles are formulated as logical, procedural, and operational insights (both do's and don'ts) directing our paths toward achieving a goal.

* The statement of a rule, policy, or command **may embody an implied principle**. *You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain (Dt.25:4)* implies the universally acknowledged sentiment that a worker has the right to expect compensation for his labor. This principle is stated outright in **Lk.10:7, the laborer deserves his wages**. Scripture brings the two statements (express and implied) together in **1 Tim.5:17-18** to show they have **an equivalent meaning**.

BOUNDARY CONDITIONS

see Pollution and the Death of Man, 1970 by Francis Schaeffer, **p.71-72, 74, 86-88, 90-91**

In a rational world, **each particular behaves according to the absolute of its own nature** - according to what it is. Under given conditions it will act the same way every time. For example, a body at rest or in motion will not change its state of rest or motion unless it is acted upon by an outside force. A **stable compound**, a gas, or a material will remain stable as long as it is not acted

upon by an outside force such as heat, radiation [something that is inherently unstable will decay predictably], sound, vibration, pressure, chemicals, etc. Iron will always form oxides in the presence of moisture and air at room temperature. In other words, without an adequate cause, there will be no change (effect). The same applies to living organisms. A bulldog can walk perhaps 2 MPH but cannot run 30 by virtue of its intrinsic make-up - each thing is in a circle of its own bounded by an impassible wall. Inside the boundary represents each thing's total potential, everything it is able to do and be used for by virtue of its nature as the thing it is.¹¹ The boundary represents the barrier it is not able to cross because the area outside depicts what it cannot do - I am restrained physically and mentally by my very nature. This is the first-class condition (1) applicable to every created thing. God himself is also constrained in this way by his essence, nature, and character⁴ - He is unchanging, omniscient, always does right, etc., therefore the world is objective, not arbitrary, capricious, or subjectively understood.¹²

There is a second-class condition (2) that applies to all rational beings.¹³ This is the circle that may be crossed, but ought not to be. It is an ethical boundary governed by the character of God - what one should and should not do. Here the line is in the sand and crossing it a matter of character, of decision and choice. In both instances, the circles represent divisions between positive and negative behavior.¹⁴ Notice that within each circle, there is a lot of room. You are capable of all kinds of things (1) and permitted to pursue plenty of activities (2) within your circle. For example, what would the boundary be for you with respect to relationships with the opposite sex? Are you single, where is the line? Are you married, where is the crossover point? Do you not have great freedom within your circle? What is the path that leads across the line? Suppose you were to focus on the tremendous liberties you have within your circle, rather than imagining what lies beyond - would that make a difference?

Second-class conditions may be further distinguished as to what is permissible in the legal sense (2a), and what is appropriate or commensurate with the teachings of supernatural biblical faith (2b). This distinction filters out greed, haste, pragmatism, subjectivism, and relativism with respect to methodology. It is the practice of living in the world under God by faith. 2b goes further than what one can get away with (2a) and describes the personal discipline of self-imposed limits. For example, for a ministry to use certain techniques in raising money or attracting new people merely because they are not unethical (illegal) and have been proven to work (pragmatic) is not enough. Does the means used honor the Living God by giving substance to your faith? See discussion at the end of *Admonition to Prison Fellowship* at <http://pop.eradman.com/>

After the flood, mankind was allowed to eat any animal flesh (**Gen.9:3**). **The legal circle (2a)** is drawn around all meats. Yet within this context is another consideration - **what affects the exercise of my freedom** to eat meat that has been sacrificed to an idol will have upon others (2b) - believers whose conscience will not allow them to eat and don't understand your freedom to do so; and unbelievers who associate eating sacrificed meat with the practice of their religion. Paul referred to his self-discipline *I have become all things to all people* and in his working for a living to support himself and others even though he was eligible to receive support from the churches (**1 Cor.8-9**).

11. Individual living things cannot be expected to do everything their kind is **potentially capable of**.
12. Though one's experiences may be real, one's interpretation of them or conclusions from them are **subject to verification or falsification** in the light of the biblical revelation and the objective world in which one lives.
13. and perhaps to all **conscious creatures** as well
14. Second class conditions apply to **means and end** and the use of utilitarian or pragmatic principles.

FORM & FREEDOM

see True Spirituality, 1971, **p.154-157, 160-163**; TRILOGY, 1990, **p.123, 220, 263-264**;
A Christian Manifesto (revised), 1982, **p.25, 27, 29, 44-45, 55, 71, 114, 134, 137**;
The Great Evangelical Disaster, 1984, **p.21-23**, by Francis Schaeffer

All things, including fields of knowledge (disciplines such as history, science, art) and living things have a context, a framework, a form in which they exist, make sense, and may be understood. The **form** is a category – a universal (a unity) that describes and governs those particulars within it. It may also be thought of as its boundary (2a) - the legal circle within which **diversity**, the freedom of expression takes place. Nothing - not government, or philosophy, or relationship can flourish in the fullness of its nature **outside a proper form**. If the form is drawn too tightly or too loosely, the expression of its nature suffers – diversity, meaning, beauty, and enjoyment are diminished. This balance between form and freedom can be seen in the rules of games, sports or laws and regulations governing every endeavor of a civilized society. If the rules or regulations are **too restrictive**, they hinder or stifle play - the game becomes a chore and is no fun or the project is not worth the effort of meeting the regulatory requirements. If the rules or regulations are too broad, people will take advantage of one another or of the society (the problem of abuse of the “commons” (public property and forests) in England, wild game in Africa, and overfishing water resources, and illegal mining). Often intellectual contexts (world views - orthodox Christian vs. secular humanist) within which discussions of a scientific or a governmental nature are framed are polar opposites and **result in completely different outcomes**. Schaeffer coined the term “true truth” to get behind the image of reality projected by the closed system scientific community to the actuality (what was really going on).