

excerpts from **The Soul of Science** by Pearcey & Thaxton, 2 pgs

Scientific investigation depends upon certain assumptions about the world—and science is impossible until those assumptions are in place ... Western thinkers had to ascribe to nature the character and attributes that made it a possible object of scientific study *in advance* of the actual establishment of science ... faith in the possibility of science came *antecedently* to the development of actual scientific theory, p.21

Science is the study of nature, and **the possibility of science depends upon one's attitude toward nature**. Biblical religion gave to Western culture several of its fundamental assumptions about the natural world. To begin with, the Bible teaches that nature is real. If this seems too obvious to mention, recall that many belief systems regard nature as unreal. Various forms of pantheism and idealism teach that finite, particular things are merely “appearances” of the One, the Absolute, the Infinite. Individuality and separateness are illusions. Hinduism, for instance, teaches that the everyday world of material objects is **maya**, illusion. It is doubtful whether a philosophy that so denigrates the material world would be capable of inspiring the careful attention to it that is necessary for science.

The Christian doctrine of creation, on the other hand, teaches that finite objects are not mere appearances of the Infinite. God made them; they have a real existence ... the doctrine of creation implies that the world is not illusory; it is a realm of definable structures and real relations, and so is a possible object both for scientific and for philosophical study, p.22

The de-deification of nature was a crucial precondition for science. As long as nature commands religious worship, dissecting her is judged impious. As long as the world is charged with divine beings and powers, the only appropriate response is to supplicate them or ward them off ... the tendency to regard nature as sacred has been a discouraging impediment to science, p.24

To become an object of study **the world must be regarded as a place where events occur in a reliable, predictable fashion**. This, too, was a legacy of Christianity. Whereas paganism taught a multitude of immanent gods, Christianity taught a single transcendent Creator, whose handiwork is a unified, coherent universe, p.24

In a similar vein ... on **the fundamental conviction in science that the universe is ordered** ... As I try to discern the origin of that conviction, I seem to find it in a basic notion discovered 2000 to 3000 years ago, and enunciated first in the Western world by the ancient Hebrews: namely, that the universe is governed by a single God, and is not the product of the whims of many gods, each governing his own province according to his own laws. This monotheistic view seems to be the historical foundation for modern science.

Of course, the idea of order in nature rests not simply on the existence of a single God but also on the character of that God. The God revealed in the Bible is trustworthy and dependable; the creation of such a God must likewise be dependable ... As the creation of a trustworthy God, nature exhibited regularity, dependability, and orderliness. **It was intelligible and could be studied**. It displayed a knowable order, p.25

The order of the reasoning here is important. The early scientists did not argue that the world was lawfully ordered, and *therefore* there must be a rational God. Instead, **they argued that there was a rational God, and *therefore* the world must be lawfully ordered.** They had greater confidence in the existence and character of God than in the lawfulness of nature, **26-27** The idea of natural law ... was not derived from observations; it was derived *prior* to observations from belief in the Biblical God. **It was** not a fact of experience but **an article of faith, p.27**

Belief in a rational order in nature would have no practical benefit for science were it not accompanied by the belief that humans can discover that order. Historically ... science stemmed from the sheer act of faith that the universe possessed order *and could be interpreted by rational minds.* The latter is just as important as the former. It signifies that science cannot proceed without an epistemology, or theory of knowledge, guaranteeing that the human mind is equipped to gain genuine knowledge of the world. Historically, this guarantee came from the doctrine that humanity was created in the image of God, **p.29**

excerpts from **Reason in the Balance** by Phillip Johnson

Why do the leading voices of official science teach that **science and naturalism are inseparable?** The reason is that they assume that the scientific method is inherently characterized by a thorough-going methodological naturalism (MN), and MN strictly limits the alternatives that may be taken seriously, **p.207** A methodological naturalist defines science as the search for the best naturalistic theories ... Hence all events in evolution (before the evolution of intelligence) are assumed to be attributable to unintelligent causes. The question is not *whether* life (genetic information) rose by some combination of chance and chemical laws, to pick one example, but merely *how* it did so, **p.208**

... an a priori commitment to metaphysical naturalism is necessary to support Darwinism ... MN – the principle that science can study only the things that are accessible to its instruments and techniques – is not in question. Of course science can study only what science can study. MN becomes metaphysical naturalism only when limitations of science are taken to be limitations upon reality.

The key question raised by the qualifier **methodological** is this: What is being limited — science or reality? When MN is combined with a very strong **a priori** confidence that materialistic theories invoking only unintelligent causes can account for such phenomena as genetic information and human intelligence, **the distinction between methodological and metaphysical naturalism tends to collapse.** (Example: Science can study only naturalistic mechanisms; therefore we can be confident that life must have arisen by a naturalistic mechanism, since science continually advances and solves problems of this kind.) That science has its limitations is not in doubt; **the question is whether unsound assumptions about reality have been made to permit science to escape those limitations, p.212** [see Cultural Mand, Great Com, Machen <http://pop.eradman.com/>]