

The COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE to SCIENCE and FAITH

Exploring the Ultimate Questions
About Life and the Cosmos

WILLIAM A. DEMBSKI CASEY LUSKIN JOSEPH M. HOLDEN

GENERAL EDITORS

Foreword by STEPHEN C. MEYER

"The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith is a rigorous and thorough defense of intelligent design, offering both scientific and philosophical discussions. Well-known scientists provide scientific arguments on the big bang, the origin of life, fine-tuning, fossils, and more. A large part of the book is also devoted to philosophy: why making inferences to a nonmaterial cause is justifiable within science, the relationship between science and faith, overturning historical myths about the church's attitude toward science, and why a purely materialistic scientific position is self-defeating. Many subjects are covered by multiple authors, each with a different focus. The result is an overwhelming barrage aimed squarely at those who deny that intelligent design is science."

Ann Gauger, PhD (Zoology), Senior Fellow Discovery Institute

"This is a heroic encyclopedic work by some of the world's top thinkers on the topics of science, faith, and the cosmos, and the God who created them all. If anyone thinks that the study of science and faith should be disparate disciplines, here are more than 656 reasons why they're wrong. What is clear from this massive volume is that the alignment of science and faith is far closer to parallel than orthogonal, and it spans as far as from east to west across the tangents of science, life, and eternity."

James Tour, Professor of Chemistry, Computer Science, Materials Science and NanoEngineering, Rice University

"The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith is, quite simply, a tour de force whose publication is an event we must understand. The release of this book is a symbol of the decades-old growth, maturity, and rigor of the intelligent design (ID) movement. No longer can people employ dismissive slogans, handwaving, and ad-hominem attacks in response to ID claims. This book demands serious engagement. Filled with highly qualified scholars, detailed and first-rate argumentation, and solid engagement with virtually all the major issues, The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith throws down the gauntlet. If the reader does not agree with the points made within its pages, then let the reader bring forth his or her case. However, if someone ignores this book or simply brushes it aside, that person does so at the price of being intellectually irresponsible."

JP Moreland, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, Biola University

"This is a fascinating book. Christians who read it—or even a few chapters—will find themselves rejoicing in the amazing consistency between God's words in the Bible and the most recent scientific discoveries. And any non-Christians who read it will likely be surprised to learn of the remarkable congruence between the Christian faith and numerous scientific findings. I am glad to recommend this book to Christians and non-Christians alike."

Wayne Grudem, PhD, Distinguished Research Professor of Theology and Biblical Studies, Phoenix Seminary "The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith is precisely the type of resource I recommend frequently to students, fellow educators, ministry leaders, and inquisitive laypersons. It has a fantastic breadth of scope, incorporating rigorous philosophical, theological, and scientific knowledge related to the major questions sparked by the intersection of science and faith. The depth of content offered by the contributing scholars is intellectually satisfying yet wonderfully accessible. This versatile book is a welcome addition to my academic and ministry tool kits."

Melissa Cain Travis, PhD, author of Science and the Mind of the Maker

"The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith is an essential reference for your personal library. The most valuable sections are those dealing with intelligent design, with contributions by the stellar specialists in this area—William A. Dembski and Stephen C. Meyer at the head of the list. The issues discussed cover a very wide range and the scholarship is impeccable."

John Warwick Montgomery, PhD (Chicago), DThéol (Strasbourg, France), LLD (Cardiff, Wales, UK); Professor Emeritus of Law and Humanities, University of Bedfordshire, England; Director, International Academy of Apologetics, Evangelism and Human Rights (Strasbourg, France)

"This book is a wonderful guide to the range of important issues at the heart of the intersection of science and faith. From artificial intelligence to theistic evolution, the editors have put together a top-rate team who explore the biggest issues being discussed today. If you're looking for an introductory book that also has some depth, then *The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith* is for you."

Sean McDowell, PhD, professor of apologetics, at Biola University; author, coauthor, or editor of 20+ books, including *Understanding Intelligent Design*

"Anyone who desires to make sense of the world around them should read this book and follow the reasoning of these serious thinkers who have grappled with major questions about meaning and life. The existence of objective truth demands that there will be a coherence between the empirical and the theoretical, between facts and meaning. This compilation of essays provides an opportunity to view the world from a Judeo-Christian viewpoint that is both rational and empirically coherent."

Donald Ewert, who received his PhD in microbiology at the University of Georgia

"I have always felt that people of faith need to learn more science, not less. Sadly, the teaching of modern science often undermines rather than strengthens faith. *The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith* will help turn doubt into delight at the works of the Designer. Whether your questions are about the origin of life, or the fossil record, or the authority of science, or any of 44 other topics, you will find thoughtful, well-written articles that will answer your questions and strengthen your faith. I would highly recommend this volume for any pastor, or anyone with an ongoing interest in how understanding the works of God supports our understanding of the Word of God."

Ralph Seelke, Professor Emeritus of Biology at the University of Wisconsin-Superior

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This book is dedicated to the many scientists and academics who have sacrificed their careers because they wanted to investigate and declare the evidence for design in nature.

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als, it is difficult to adequately acknowledge everyone involved. We are deeply grateful to the team of distinguished contributors who caught the vision for this book and generously spent their time and energy to make the volume a truly collaborative effort by experts in the field of science and faith. Without their generous giving of labor and scholarly expertise, this project would have never made it to the press. Though our team members have their own thoughts on the various details presented in the book, we are united on the point that the cosmos provides a tremendous amount of information that points to an intelligent designer.

We also want to thank Bob Hawkins, president of Harvest House Publishers, and senior editor Steve Miller, for presenting us with the opportunity to share with our readers the wonders of the universe and believing in the project from start to finish. Their leadership and their continued attention to the needs of the reader made this project truly an enjoyable experience.

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General Editors

William A. Dembski, PhD, PhD

Board of Directors and Founding Senior Fellow of Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture

Casey Luskin, PhD, JD

Associate Director of Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture, cofounder of Intelligent Design and Evolution Awareness (IDEA) Center

Joseph M. Holden, PhD

Cofounder and President, Professor of Theology and Apologetics, Veritas International University

Contributors

Douglas Axe, PhD

Maxwell Professor of Molecular Biology, Biola University, the founding director of Biologic Institute, and the founding editor of BIO-Complexity

Günter Bechly, PhD

Former curator for amber and fossil insects in the department of paleontology at the State Museum of Natural History in Stuttgart, Germany, and senior fellow of Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture

Michael Behe, PhD

Professor of biological sciences at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, and senior fellow of Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture

John Bloom, PhD, PhD

Professor of physics and founding director of MA Science and Religion Program at Biola University, and Fellow of Discovery Institute

Walter L. Bradley, PhD

Fellow of Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture, and former professor of mechanical engineering at Texas A&M University, professor of metallurgical engineering at Colorado School of Mines, and distinguished professor, Baylor University

Frank Correa, DMin

Academic dean, professor of theology and apologetics, Veritas International University

David R.C. Deane, MA

Engineering contractor for the Royal Australian Air Force, author and speaker in Christian apologetics, Australia

Michael Egnor, MD

Professor of neurosurgery and pediatrics at State University of New York, Stony Brook, and senior fellow of The Walter Bradley Center for Natural and Artificial Intelligence at Discovery Institute

Miguel Angel Endara, PhD

Professor of philosophy and religion, Veritas International University

Terry Glaspey, MA

Author of *75 Masterpieces Every Christian Should Know* and *Not a Tame Lion: The Spiritual Legacy of C.S. Lewis*, DMin (in progress), professor at Northwind Seminary

Guillermo Gonzalez, PhD

Senior fellow at Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture and coauthor of *The Privileged Planet: How Our Place in the Cosmos Is Designed for Discovery*

Bruce L. Gordon, PhD

Associate professor of the history and philosophy of science, Houston Baptist University, and senior fellow at Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture

David Haines, PhD

Associate professor of philosophy and religion, Veritas International University

Christopher Travis Haun, MA (IP)

Senior editor of Bastion Books, and author, speaker, and graduate student at Veritas International University

H. Wayne House, JD, ThD

Distinguished research professor of theology, law and culture at Faith International University, and member of board of directors at Intelligent Design and Evolution Awareness (IDEA) Center

Richard G. Howe, PhD

Emeritus professor of philosophy and apologetics, Southern Evangelical Seminary

Cornelius G. Hunter, PhD

Adjunct professor, Biola University and author of *Darwin's God: Evolution and the Problem of Evil, Darwin's Proof*, and *Science's Blind Spot*

Michael N. Keas, PhD

Adjunct professor of the history and philosophy of science, Biola University, and senior fellow of Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture

Robert J. Marks II, PhD

Distinguished professor of electrical and computer engineering, Baylor University, and director of The Walter Bradley Center for Natural and Artificial Intelligence at Discovery Institute

Stephen C. Meyer, PhD

Director of Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture and author of *Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design, Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design, and Return of the God Hypothesis: Three Scientific Discoveries That Reveal the Mind Behind the Universe*

Brian Miller, PhD

Research Coordinator for Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture

Paul Nelson, PhD

Adjunct professor of science and religion, Biola University, and senior fellow at Discovery Institute

Denyse O'Leary

Canadian journalist, blogger, science writer, and coauthor of *The Spiritual Brain: A Neuroscientist's Case for the Existence of the Soul, by Design or by Chance*, and *What Are Newton's Laws of Motion?*

Fazale Rana, PhD

Vice president of research and apologetics, Reasons to Believe

Jay W. Richards, PhD

Assistant research professor in the Busch School of Business, The Catholic University of America, executive editor of *The Stream*, and senior fellow at Discovery Institute

Hugh Ross, PhD

Founder and president of Reasons to Believe, and adjunct faculty member at A.W. Tozer Seminary and Southern Evangelical Seminary

Henry "Fritz" Schaefer III, PhD

Graham Perdue Professor of Chemistry and director of the Center for Computational Chemistry, University of Georgia

Wesley J. Smith, JD

Chair and senior fellow at Discovery Institute's Center on Human Exceptionalism

Richard Weikart, PhD

Professor of history and graduate program director, California State University, Stanislaus, and senior fellow of Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture

Jonathan Wells, PhD, PhD

Senior fellow at Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture and author of *Icons of Evolution* and *Zombie Science*

John G. West, PhD

Former chair of Department of Political Science at Seattle Pacific University, now vice president and senior fellow at Discovery Institute, and managing director of the Institute's Center for Science and Culture

Foreword

eginning in about 2006, a group of scientists and philosophers known as the new atheists ignited a worldwide publishing sensation. A series of bestselling books, led by Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion*, argued that science, properly understood, undermines belief in God—and that science and theistic belief conflict. Other books—by Victor Stenger, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens, Daniel Dennett, Stephen Hawking, and Lawrence Krauss—followed suit.

The new atheists have explained the basis of their skepticism about the existence of God with admirable clarity. According to Dawkins and others, for a long time the evidence of design in life provided the best reason to believe in the existence of God because it appealed to publicly accessible scientific evidence. But since Darwin, Dawkins insists, scientists have known that there is no evidence of actual design, only the illusion or "appearance" of design in life. According to Dawkins and many other neo-Darwinian biologists, the evolutionary mechanism of mutation and natural selection has the power to mimic a designing intelligence without itself being designed or guided in any way. And since random mutation and natural selection—what Dawkins

calls the "blind watchmaker" mechanism—can explain away all "appearances" of design in life, it follows that belief in a designing intelligence at work in the history of life is completely unnecessary.¹

Although Dawkins allows that it is still possible that a deity might exist, he insists there is absolutely no evidence for the existence of such a being, thus rendering belief in God effectively "delusional." Popular TV figure, Bill Nye the "Science Guy," has echoed this perspective. In his book Undeniable: Evolution and the Science of Creation, he says, "Perhaps there is intelligence in charge of the universe, but Darwin's theory shows no sign of it, and has no need of it."2 Consequently, Dawkins has concluded that "Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist"3 and that a simpler and more parsimonious explanation of what we see in nature is that God does not exist.

Other new atheists, including Lawrence Krauss, say that physics also renders belief in God unnecessary. Krauss contends that the laws of quantum physics explain how the universe came into existence from literally nothing. Consequently, he argues, it is completely unnecessary, even irrational, to invoke a creator to explain the origin of the universe.⁴ Stephen Hawking, formerly of

the University of Cambridge and until his death in 2018 the world's best-known scientist, made a similar argument in his book *Brief Answers to the Big Questions*. There, he argued that "the universe was spontaneously created out of nothing, according to the laws of science." Consequently, for him, that meant "the simplest explanation is that there is no God."

This perception of a conflict between theistic belief and the clear implications of modern science has percolated into the popular consciousness. Recent polling data indicate that in North America and Europe, the perceived message of science has played an outsized role in the loss of belief in God. In one poll, more than two-thirds of self-described agnostics affirm that "the findings of science make the existence of God less probable."

Not all scientists accept the idea that the findings of science and faith in God conflict. Instead, some religious scientists believe that science and faith cannot conflict. They subscribe to an idea known as compartmentalism, or what the late Harvard paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould called Non-overlapping magisteria, or NOMA.8 Compartmentalism holds that science and religion describe completely different realities. Proponents often support this view by quoting an aphorism used by Galileo that affirms that the Bible teaches "how one goes to heaven, not how the heavens go."9 Others subscribed to a closely related idea called complementarity. Proponents of this view hold that science and religion may sometimes describe the same realities; however, they do so in complementary but ultimately incompatible or "noncommensurable" language.10

Proponents of both views deny that science contradicts religious belief, but they do

so by portraying science and religion as such totally distinct enterprises that their claims could not possibly intersect in any significant way. In other words, both models assume the religious and metaphysical neutrality of all scientific knowledge. This assumption seems to insulate theistic belief from scientific refutation, but it also denies the possibility that scientific evidence could offer any support for theistic belief. Thus, until recently, few scientists have thought—as Newton, Boyle, Kepler and the other founders of early modern science did—that the testimony of nature actually supports important tenets of a theistic or Judeo-Christian worldview.

The authors of this volume deny that the evidence of the natural world, rightly understood, conflicts with theistic or Judeo-Christian belief. Many of them think that certain discoveries of modern science—in particular, discoveries concerning biological and cosmological origins or discoveries about the nature of the human mind—may actually support theistic or Judeo-Christian belief. Here, in this book, they have helped to develop another understanding of the relationship between theistic belief and science—one that I call "qualified agreement."

This idea maintains that, when correctly interpreted, scientific evidence and theistic belief can and do support each other. While accepting some disagreement about details as inevitable given the limits of human knowledge, advocates of this model affirm a broad agreement between the testimony of the natural world and the propositional content of Judeo-Christian theism—between science and religion so defined. Though advocates of qualified agreement acknowledge (with compartmentalism and complementarity advocates) that much scientific research and theorizing does address metaphysically and religiously neutral topics, we do not

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agree that *all* scientific theories have this characteristic.

Instead, the qualified-agreement model, like the conflict model, asserts that some scientific theories do have larger worldview or metaphysical implications. Nevertheless, unlike the conflict model, proponents of qualified agreement deny that the best or most truthful theories ultimately contradict a theistic or Judeo-Christian worldview. Instead, they view theological and scientific truth as issuing from the same transcendent and rational source—namely, God. Advocates of qualified agreement anticipate, therefore, that these two domains of knowledge, when rightly understood and interpreted, will come increasingly into agreement as advances in science and theology eliminate real points of conflict that sometimes have existed.

Many of the founders of early modern science held this view of the relationship between science and Judeo-Christian religion. Indeed, from the late-middle ages through the scientific revolution (roughly 1250–1750), scientists often affirmed the agreement between the book of nature and the book of Scripture, both of which were understood to be mutually reinforcing revelations of the same God. This present volume includes many authors who have helped to

revive this perspective and includes entries from them that will help you to consider it as well.

In the Bible, in the book of Romans, St. Paul not only affirms that God created the world, but he also argues that the signs of God's handiwork are "clearly perceived" in "the things that have been made." The collection of essays that you have in your hands considers whether scientific evidence supports this biblical claim. The authors of this volume-who include a diverse group of scientists, scholars, and theologians-also consider many other relevant questions about the relationship between scientific knowledge and theistic belief (or even biblical teaching). I encourage you to read their entries and arguments. If you do, I think you will find yourself better equipped to dialogue with your friends, family, and colleagues about the relationship between science and faith and to explain how scientific evidence from the book of nature and insights from the book of Scripture can provide mutually reinforcing ways of knowing about our universe and its creator.

Stephen C. Meyer, PhD

Director of Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture

Part I:

SCIENCE AND FAITH

1

What Are Science and Faith and Are They Compatible?

William A. Dembski

f by science we mean modern science (not medieval or ancient science), and if by faith we mean classic, orthodox Christian faith (not, say, gnostic varieties of Christianity or other faiths entirely, such as Jainism or Islam), then science and faith are obviously compatible. After all, since the rise of modern science to the present day, top scientists have also been orthodox in their Christian theology, seeing no contradiction between their faith and their scientific work. Indeed, those most closely associated with the rise of modern science were overwhelmingly Christian.

Atheists might counter that if Christian scientists really understood the full implications of science, they would understand that their Christian faith is, in the end, unsustainable. But such accusations, on closer analysis, always ring hollow and display special pleading, trying to make obviously bright and reflective scientists of faith seem like idiot savants who happen to be really good at their science but really bad in thinking through its implications, especially for their faith.

As a case in point, while lecturing at the University of Toronto some years back, I

encountered a biologist in the audience who claimed that evolution made it impossible to be a scientist of faith. Many scientists who are Christians believe in evolution. I'm not one of them, thinking the evidence for evolution to be sketchy at best. But it needs to be noted that many scientists hold to classic Christian orthodoxy (i.e., the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus, his bodily resurrection and ascension, etc.) and are also evolutionists—some even of a Darwinian stripe, seeing God as creating through an evolutionary process that gives no evidence of design. Of course, their interpretation of Scripture will be suspect to those who see Genesis as teaching that creation occurred a mere 6,000 years ago in six literal 24-hour days.

If you think that a literalist interpretation of Genesis is crucial to being a Christian, then you'll deny that evolutionary science and Christianity are compatible. But that seems to be asking too much for the compatibility of science and faith. The more things you require to be believed, whether on the side of science or on the side of the faith, the more incompatible you make the two. My own view, and the one I'm recommending in this chapter, is to

take a minimalist approach to science and to faith. Don't make embracing science require holding on to too many controversial and suspect scientific views, and likewise, don't make faith major in minors, forgetting Christ, who purchased us with his blood.

In any case, sociology confirms that top scientists have also been orthodox Christians. Indeed, it's a matter of record that the society of scientists and the society of orthodox Christians intersect in a nonempty set. Certainly, we should be concerned about the compatibility of science and faith if no such people residing in both groups existed. As it is, I've personally engaged with not one but two Nobel laureates who were reasonably orthodox in their Christian faith (William Phillips at a conference in 1997, and Richard Smalley for lunch in Houston shortly before his death in 2005). So, I can attest from personal experience that such people exist.

Even so, it's always good to look deeper than sociology. What is modern science, and what is orthodox Christian faith, and are they the types of things that do well together, as with things that are genuinely compatible? Is the relationship between science and faith like a happy marriage, in which the spouses mutually support and reinforce each other and reside in wedded bliss? Or is it more like an uneasy marriage in which the spouses would just as soon be rid of each other? I personally think that modern science and orthodox Christian faith can reside in something like wedded bliss provided they are properly conceived.

Let's look at science and faith more closely, starting with science.

What Is Science?

Science is a sustained and systematic inquiry into nature. It tries to understand

nature. It does so through observation, experiment, and theory construction. It is evidence- and reason-based. A scientific claim is considered true or compelling not because someone in authority asserts it to be so. Its strength in commanding our assent derives from the evidence for it and how it helps bring light to our understanding of nature. There are often aesthetic elements here, as in a scientific explanation being so pleasing or beautiful in how it ties things together and illuminates our understanding of nature that we think, *It must be so.*

Aesthetics, however, can also be misleading. A theory can be beautiful but untrue. Science is a fallible enterprise with many pitfalls. It has gotten some things astoundingly wrong (e.g., alchemy, phlogiston, phrenology, the luminiferous aether, etc.). Moreover, scientists have been implacably committed to wrong scientific theories, exuding a confidence in those theories that later was shown to be wholly unfounded. Indeed, the confidence with which scientists hold their theories is no gauge of their truth.

We need always to keep a critical eye on such overconfidence, especially in public policy discussions where scientists or politicians acting "in the name of science" attempt to steamroll people into some view or course of action because science says it must be so. Science has gotten many things wrong, especially when invoked in public policy recommendations. Yet provided that scientific discourse is allowed to be free and open, self-correction becomes a feature of science. Unfortunately, the self-correcting capacity of science is often more myth than reality, as when certain scientific theories attain a sacrosanct status and deny any place at the table to competitors.

What Is Faith?

The physicist Bob Bass was a friend of mine. A believing Roman Catholic, he died a few years back when in his eighties. He had been a Rhodes Scholar in the 1950s and had thereby gotten to meet Albert Einstein. As Bob shared with me, Frank Aydelotte, former president of Swarthmore College and head of the Institute for Advanced Study, was able to gather the 32 Rhodes Scholars at the time (one of them Bob) and have them meet with Einstein as the guest of honor. During their time together, Aydelotte posed this question: "Now, Einstein, can you give these young men any parting advice?" (Note that the Rhodes Scholarship did not start admitting women until 1977.) Einstein replied, "If I could give the young men any advice, it would be this: Don't believe anything is necessarily true just because you see it in the newspapers, or hear it on the radio, or everybody else believes it. Always think for yourself!"

Einstein was here giving crucially important and sound advice, and yet the spirit of this advice seems at odds with much of what typically goes by faith. Faith is often viewed as a matter of obedience, even slavish obedience, where you are expected to accept certain doctrines uncritically, and where any deviation marks you as a heretic and thus outside the body of true believers. Instead of giving pride of place to "think for yourself," faith is sometimes thought to underscore "trust and obey."

Now that I'm more than 40 years into my experience of the Christian faith (my conversion occurred in 1979), I don't see faith and science as conflicting in this way. The fact is, whatever we mean by an authentic or real Christian faith, it had better be a faith that you own, that you've thought through carefully for yourself, and where you're convinced

that it holds up and can sustain you through life's toils and snares. The flip side is going through the motions, pretending you believe something when you really don't, often to keep people in authority happy (your parents, perhaps, if you're younger; your deans and school presidents if, like me, you taught at a seminary).

If you are forced to pretend to believe something that you really don't think is true or holds up, you're asking for trouble. And this can hold as much in science as in faith. Science, as currently practiced, has its sacred cows and preferred dogmas, and if you step outside those boundaries, you can expect to be punished. Ditto for faith. The problem with pretending to be a believer is that you end up hating yourself for it. It makes for moral licensing—in other words, hypocritical behavior in which you allow yourself (i.e., give yourself the moral license) to do things contrary to what you say you believe because you don't really believe. Think climate change advocates flying in private jets to climate change conferences; think Christians advocating the sanctity of marriage but cheating on their spouses and getting divorced.

It's been said that God only has children, not grandchildren. You cannot inherit the Christian faith as you inherit a piece of land. Your faith is an intrinsic part of you. But it is truly your faith only if you have thought it through, worked it out, and embraced it deeply. Such a faith is not a matter of convenient assent, as in, "Gee, I better say I believe this and that because others will be unhappy with me if they suspect I have doubts about those things, to say nothing of my actively disbelieving them." So I would say Einstein's dictum about thinking for yourself holds as much for faith as for science. It must precede commitment and obedience.

Science and Truth

The question of truth in science as well as in faith needs now to be addressed. For many, science seems less concerned about truth than faith, whose concern with truth is nonnegotiable. Orthodox Christian faith (I'm talking lowercase o orthodox as in the sense of the Christianity encapsulated in the early church creeds as opposed to that form of Christianity known as Eastern Orthodoxy) claims to know and articulate humanity's chief truth, namely, that God, by taking human form in Jesus, then dying on the cross, and then rising bodily from the dead, redeems fallen humanity. To this chief truth we can add the Apostles' and Nicene creeds. Lowercase o orthodox Christians believe these creeds to state the exact truth about their faith. This is not to say these creeds are exhaustive of Christian truth, but they do capture the basic core.

Science, on the other hand, often seems less about finding the exact truth about nature than about successfully understanding and explaining natural phenomena. Success here can refer to the ability of science to help us build stable bridges or predict certain measurements, but without any pretense for knowing the exact truth about nature. Some philosophers of science go further, contending that the success of science argues for its truth (how could science be so successful without being true?).

Some see science as approximating truth in an endless quest to approach the truth, yet never quite hitting it on the head. Others take a more empirical approach, seeing the value of science in its ability to faithfully describe and predict our observations of natural phenomena (sometimes called *empirical adequacy*). And others take a pragmatic approach, in which any ideas that help advance our understanding of nature are seen

as legitimate. The philosopher Wittgenstein took this latter approach, arguing that neither Copernicus nor Darwin gave us the truth but rather a fruitful way of looking at nature.

My own sympathies lie more with the empirical and pragmatic approaches to science. Look where I might in science, and I see a fallible enterprise where yesterday's ways of viewing nature give way to today's more powerful ways of viewing nature. I therefore have no confidence that "we've arrived" and that science has come to the end of the line, with tomorrow's science identical to today's science. Science is fallible, as the history of science demonstrates. Some philosophers of science even write of a "pessimistic induction" in which the consistent failure of scientific theories to withstand the tests of time demonstrates that no scientific theory is to be taken too seriously. Even Newton's laws of motion, which seemed in their day to capture exactly how nature operated, have been displaced. Along came Einstein. Then came quantum mechanics. Newton's laws were shown to work for a certain range of phenomena, but not beyond. And even where Newton's laws work, newer theories suggested that they are approximations and not exact renditions of the natural phenomena in question.

Once one accepts that science is in a state of flux—that it is a fallible human enterprise and that it stands in constant need of correction—certain grandiose claims about science immediately fall by the wayside. Take, for instance, the claim that the only knowledge that deserves to be taken seriously is scientific knowledge. From such a claim, it obviously follows that orthodox Christian faith doesn't rank and needs to be discarded. But what is the nature of the claim that only scientific knowledge deserves credence? Is it a scientific

claim? Obviously not. No experiment or observation or act of reason or theoretical insight justifies it. The view that only science constitutes legitimate knowledge is known as *scientism*, and it is self-referentially incoherent. In other words, it defeats itself, and because it defeats itself, scientism can be safely disregarded.

Methodological Naturalism

Another grandiose claim made in the name of science is that science is uncompromisingly committed to methodological naturalism (also known as methodological atheism or methodological materialism). The idea here is that science needs to treat nature as following unbroken natural laws without leaving any place for things like divine action or miracles. As the argument goes, if science were to allow for God to intervene in the world, then anything could happen, and science could offer no insight into what nature does and displays. This sounds good if one thinks, for instance, of a forensic scientist trying to understand money missing from a safe. Without methodological naturalism, would this forensic scientist need to take seriously the possibility that God (or perhaps Satan) removed the money by making it magically dematerialize from the safe?

But in fact, methodological naturalism is just an arbitrary rule for doing science. And who gets to set the rules? Our word *science* derives from the Latin word *scientia*, which was the generic Latin word for knowledge—all knowledge. In the nineteenth century, the term came to mean specialized knowledge of nature, but the fact is that what we call science today has a long history, and throughout much of that history, it was called *natural philosophy*. What's more, the rules of science or natural philosophy have

changed over time. Scientists most responsible for the rise of modern science—such as Copernicus, Kepler, and Newton—rejected methodological naturalism outright, finding in nature clear, scientifically discernible marks of the divine intelligence.

At best, methodological naturalism should be regarded as a starting point for scientific inquiry, in which we try to understand phenomena in terms of undirected natural laws and processes. But if those do not suffice, then intelligently directed or even supernatural explanations may become reasonable. Jesus turning water into wine defies methodological naturalism. And even a forensic scientist trying to understand the disappearance of money from a safe might be convinced of a supernatural dematerialization of the money if sufficient safeguards were put on the safe to monitor the money during its disappearance.

Of course, in such circumstances, one can always appeal to unknown, and perhaps unknowable, natural laws that might have been at play. But such appeals to ignorance can be less insightful and less convincing than simply ascribing a divine miracle. We know, for instance, how nature brings about wine—namely, through a lengthy process of fermentation. We know of no natural process by which water is instantaneously transformed into wine. If it happened, it was a miracle. That's why metaphysical naturalists (i.e., those who think that nature is all there is) will not try to defend that some natural process did indeed turn water into wine at the wedding at Cana, but rather will argue that the Bible is in error when it attributes this miracle to Jesus.

Where methodological naturalism becomes especially problematic for science is with intelligent design. Intelligent design is the study of patterns in nature that are best explained as the result of intelligence. Yet from a naturalistic point of view, intelligence is a consequence of nature, not something that was present in nature from the start. Methodological naturalism is thus limited to seeing intelligence in nature as something that came about by an undirected or unintelligent natural process—in other words, by evolution.

Methodological naturalism requires that all intelligences in nature derive from processes that give no evidence of intelligence. Any intelligence studied by science is thus required to be an evolved intelligence. Intelligent design turns this view on its head, arguing that there can be good reasons and evidence to think that intelligence in nature can be scientifically studied and discovered even if the intelligence is unevolved. For the methodological naturalist, intelligent design is fine for archaeology, where evolved human intelligences create, say, burial mounds, but not for DNA, say, whose information-rich design would require an unevolved intelligence.

Turning Science into an Idol

Earlier I remarked that faith tends, more than science, to be about truth. I need to elaborate on this claim because there is also a sense in which both are essentially about truth. But as one first approaches faith and science, faith seems more about truth (especially the truth about the person and activity of God in history), and science seems more about explanation and understanding (especially gaining valuable insights into nature regardless of their truth status). Thus, orthodox Christian faith sees itself as "contending for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). It sees certain core doctrines as essential to faith and their repudiation as denials of truth.

Science, by contrast, as I noted earlier, tries to understand nature by means of theories that work within certain ranges of phenomena but not outside. Take superconductivity, for instance. The original theory of superconductivity was for extremely low temperatures (liquid helium temperatures, close to absolute zero). The newer theory of high-temperature superconductivity was for significantly higher temperatures (liquid nitrogen temperatures). The original theory could not explain high-temperature superconductivity. It was right for lowtemperature superconductivity, but it could not be generalized to all cases of superconductivity. We therefore say that it was true for a certain range of phenomena, but not for others. That seems reasonable. Indeed, any scientific theories can only be tested within a certain range of phenomena and thus never verified to be exactly true across the board.

If the theories of science rarely seem exactly true, the implications of those theories and the claims made for them—and thus in the name of science—can be true or false. At the time of this writing, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to command worldwide attention. Models claiming to describe the expected rates of infection and death have been widely distributed and advertised. One such model made the dire prediction that, in the US alone, the coronavirus would quickly cause the death of over two million people. As a consequence of taking this model seriously, the US government made many public-policy decisions, not least to radically curtail the economy. Now it may be that most of those decisions should have been made even if the death toll was, as it now appears, only a tenth of that two million figure. But the point to note is that the model, inspired by science, was wrong. Rather than giving us true insight into the

virulence of the coronavirus, the model vastly overstated it.

The lesson I want to draw here is that the invocation of science must not become a wand for magically giving credence to claims, especially for special interests who want certain things to be true and who use science to make it seem that they are true. Just because scientists have used science to draw certain conclusions does not mean those conclusions are justified or deserve credence. A kind of mystique has come to surround science, where, as soon as one says that a claim is scientific, its stock suddenly jumps in price. The first commandment of Moses is against idolatry—that is, against setting up anything in place of God. Science, in today's culture, often becomes an idol.

Science, it needs to be reiterated, is a fallible enterprise. Moreover, the marshaling of scientific evidence is itself more art than science. The same evidence in the hands of different scientists can point in radically different directions. Many of the scientific controversies of our age result from scientists looking at the same evidence and drawing different conclusions. Sometimes prior commitments make all the difference. In my own scientific work on intelligent design, I've consistently felt that the evidence and arguments are stronger on my side than that of the Darwinian naturalists, but precisely because they are committed to a naturalistic account of biological origins, no evidence can, for them, count in favor of intelligent design.

My point here is not to argue for intelligent design or for any method of advancing one scientific theory over a competitor, but rather to stress that science, as a fallible enterprise, needs to keep its options open and be willing to discuss alternatives and opposing views. Too often these days we see self-important scientists claim that there's only

one legitimate scientific way to view a given phenomenon, and that anyone who dissents is too uninformed or dense to deserve a place at the table to discuss the matter scientifically. Thus, one hears about "consensus science" or "settled science" as though science, like a religious dogma, has permanently established the truth of some claim and that no questioning of it can henceforward be permitted.

The fact is that science advances by questioning settled opinion. Ptolemy, so it seemed, had settled the motion of the sun, moon, and planets. It took Copernicus to question the settled science of his day to unseat that old view and replace it with the true(r) view, in which the sun became the center around which the planets, including Earth, revolved. Science advances by revolutions, revolutions overturn settled science. Thus, whenever I hear the words consensus science or settled science, I reach for my wallet because I know I'm about to be scammed. If some scientific claim is truly settled, you don't need to say so—there simply won't be any debate about it. It's only when a scientific claim is unsettled that advocates (ideologues) on one side invoke the term settled science to quash dissent from the other side.

There's a broader point here, and that's the need for freedom of thought and expression in science as well as in any other area of inquiry, and that includes faith. Are we ready to put all claims of science, faith, etc., on the table for discussion? Of course, we are entitled to be fully convinced of our understanding of science and faith and whatever. But are we willing to discuss our views and put them on the chopping block so that dissenters can subject them to scrutiny? Or do we have sacred cows that we are unwilling to subject to scrutiny because we are so certain of them or think it is somehow impious to question them? This is fundamentalism,

and it's as much a problem for science as it is for faith.

Test Everything

In his autobiographical adventure *Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!*, Richard Feynman, perhaps the greatest physicist of his generation, said that one's first task in explaining science is not to fool people, to which he immediately added that the easiest person to fool is yourself. When it comes to science or faith, our aim must be to tell the truth. It is not to fool people, and that means not fooling ourselves. It means being honest about what we truly believe, about the strength of the evidence for our beliefs, and where our beliefs may be firm and yet unjustified or even unjustifiable.

Too much of both science and faith is agenda-driven. We want to push through a certain public-policy proposal, so we misrepresent science to help us advance it. We want to usher someone into God's kingdom, so we misrepresent faith to elicit the commitment we are seeking. Both science and faith are easily abused. The challenge for scientists and Christians, and those who are both, is simply to be honest, neither overselling nor underselling their positions, and striving to convey the truth as they best understand it without insisting on any predetermined outcomes. The truth can take care of itself, in both science and faith, provided we get out of its way and let it have its say.

Instead, however, corrupt people can bend science and faith to their agendas. Christian faith takes the Bible as its point of departure, and yet the Bible can be misread in numerous ways. In the hands of a skillful skeptic, the Bible can be shown to be utterly unbelievable and discredited or to show things that no orthodox Christian has

ever believed. It therefore takes someone to "rightly divide the word of truth" (see 2 Timothy 2:15) to refute such a skeptic. Likewise, science can be made to prove just about anything. Indeed, it's been widely discussed in the scientific literature just how many scientific studies are fraudulent, with data being falsified to establish claims that are known to be false.

We always need to take seriously Paul's dictum in 1 Thessalonians 5:21 to test all things and hold fast to what is good (and that obviously includes what is true). Paul places the burden to test, to check things out, on each of us individually. Verification is not something we can outsource. Each of us personally needs to test the things in life that confront us, discarding the bad, keeping the good. This is true even of scientific claims. We need to do our best to educate ourselves and figure out the truth of the claims being thrust at us. This is true even of nonscientists. As a nonscientist, you might not know the nuts and bolts of the science underlying, say, climate change. But you can understand the broad patterns of evidence and how they are being used or abused. Thus, whenever someone says to me "science has shown ," I say, "Not so fast." If the claim is controversial, I check it out for myself and dig deeply enough to draw a conclusion: yes, it does show that; no, it doesn't show that; maybe, but the evidence is inconclusive.

Many scientific studies invoked these days to prove some point or other are bogus. Many use fraudulent data because it's easier to make stuff up rather than actually run experiments that may not confirm the result you're after. But even the absence of blatant fraud doesn't protect science. A widespread problem here is "the file drawer effect." Suppose I tell you that I just flipped a coin ten

times and saw ten heads in a row. You might think that's an unusual result and question whether the coin is fair. But what if you learned that I had spent an hour flipping the coin until I witnessed ten heads in a row? In that case, getting ten heads in a row would be unexceptional—indeed, you'd expect to see such a run of heads if you had that long to flip the coin.

With many scientific studies that purport to establish some result, it's possible to keep running the study until you get the result you want. You then report the desired result to a scientific journal, but keep silent about all your failed attempts to achieve it (i.e., you put all the failures in "the file drawer," hoping that by leaving them there, they will be forgotten). In this way, many widely reported yet bogus scientific claims have crept into the literature. At the same time, it's hard to excise and correct them. Indeed, it's been found that many scientific results can't be replicated precisely because they bank on the file drawer effect, which can capitalize on one "success" in an experiment among what otherwise are all failures. The problem with getting these bogus results corrected is that it's much harder to get failures published than successes, and correction here requires public recognition of failure. "I wasn't able to replicate so-and-so's otherwise amazing study" typically won't get published, whereas so-and-so's amazing study, even if bogus, will.

I don't mean to cast a pall over science. Science is great. And faith is great. But as the preacher says in Ecclesiastes 7:29, humans have a tremendous facility for searching out and manufacturing shady schemes. Leaving aside such schemes, let's return to the compatibility of science and faith. If we think of science and faith each as a set of ideas, it's straightforward to make them compatible by simply not claiming too much for science or

for faith. The smaller each set, the easier it is for them to be compatible. Conversely, the more that is claimed in each set, the more you have to defend and the more opportunities there are for contradiction. Hence my advice about going minimalist with science and with faith—that is, going with the best-established science and the core doctrines of Christian faith. By conceiving of science and faith each as a set of ideas, a minimalist science and a minimalist faith can, it seems, be kept free of contradiction and thereby made compatible in the sense of maintaining logical consistency.

Christianity and Science

To change gears, the compatibility between science and faith can be considered less formally (less a matter of logic) and more organically. One point that my departed colleague Stanley Jaki (a Catholic priest who was a physicist and historian of science) made in many of his writings is how Christianity provided the matrix within which modern science could develop. "Why," he would ask, "did the ancient Greeks not create modern science?" Their math skills certainly were up to the task. But, as he noted, they viewed the universe not as a creation but as an eternal, sacred mystery.

The Judeo-Christian view of the universe as a creation meant that it was an invention, that it sprung from the mind of God, and that we, who are made in God's image, could likewise understand it. Moreover, because it was a creation, and thus not identical with God, it would not be impious to experiment on the universe. Christianity, according to Jaki, made modern science possible, overcoming all the past abortive attempts to get science off the ground by giving us permission to understand the universe, and thus

the natural world, from the vantage of a creator God. Thus, when secular scientists suggest that Christian faith impedes scientific progress, the tables can legitimately be turned: It is reasonable to think that, without the Christian faith, science as we know it would never have developed in the first place. Accordingly, science and faith are compatible because faith gave rise to science.

But that was then, and this is now. What has faith done for science lately? Such questions prompt still another way of viewing the compatibility of science and faith: When confronted with a challenge, where do we go for help first—to faith and God, or to science and technology? I've purposely stated a false dichotomy here because the choice is never to go with science over faith or faith over science. If you're sick, pray and go to a doctor. The doctor, especially a good doctor, may be God's instrument for healing, and at the same time, as people of faith, we are called to lay all our concerns before God. Faith and science can thus work together. Faith and science constitute a both-and proposition, not an either-or opposition.

And yet, in our age, science and faith are often portrayed as being at odds, as though you're supposed to choose one over the other. On one side are those who elevate faith and denigrate science, such as faith healers who counsel throwing away one's meds and trusting divine miracles entirely for healing. On the other side are those who look only to science and have no thought of God or faith. I was particularly struck by the latter when I watched The Martian, in which the Matt Damon character is an astronaut stranded on Mars who must somehow survive. His approach is entirely secular. Without exhibiting any faith or offering any prayer, he comes to terms with his predicament by turning science into a verb and saying that he's going to have "to science" his way out of his predicament. Many atheists and agnostics approve this attitude.

As a Christian who embraces both faith and science, I would, in such a circumstance, pray to God for deliverance and also make use of science as best I can to survive. The approach of Matt Damon's character, by contrast, is emblematic of our age—yet it need not be. Indeed, a healthy faith, and the gratitude it engenders, can maintain an optimism that helps us through life's challenges, even as we also creatively and energetically use science to meet those challenges.

This chapter has focused on the compatibility of science and faith, but in some sense it is as much about how Christians should think about their faith in relation to science. As I've shown, at issue here is much more than just trying to square certain scientific theories (such as Darwinian evolution) with certain understandings of faith (such as a literalistic reading of Genesis). Science holds tremendous prestige in our day. Whereas in centuries past it was the theologian and preacher who was the most respected figure in society, nowadays the scientist and technologist commands that position. Science has immeasurably increased our understanding of the world. It has helped cure our diseases. Thanks to science (and thanks to the God who gave us science!), we live on average much longer than in times past. Secular thinkers thus expect, and even demand, a hushed awe before science while at the same time being dismissive of faith. By contrast, I would urge that we give science and faith each their due and see them as mutually reinforcing each other.

Faith in a Person

In closing, I want to make a final point about science and faith. Faith is personal in

a way that science is not. Sure, science is the result of human activity, and thus personal in that sense. But there's also a sense in which science is in the business of making propositional claims about the world and about how it works and about how to exploit its working through technology. Faith, too, can be viewed as making propositional claims, as with its core doctrines, but it is also radically personal, requiring a real-time direct relationship between the human person and the infinite personal God revealed in Christ. In John's Gospel, Jesus says that he is the way, the truth, and the life (14:6). The truth underlying Christian faith is the person of Jesus Christ, not some proposition. When we say we trust Jesus, we are

not merely taking a cognitive stance toward some proposition (thinking of it as true versus false, plausible versus implausible, etc.). We are expressing confidence in the person of Jesus, believing that he will do right by us even when circumstances and evidence seem to the contrary.

Faith as a direct personal relationship with the living God must always take center stage in our understanding of faith. A lived faith is not one that depends on constantly reminding yourself of a set of propositions, even if those propositions come from the Bible or the Apostles' Creed. A lived faith springs from a living relationship with the living Savior, Jesus Christ. It is faith not in an idea or proposition, but in a living person.