

Now, theism by itself does not seem to entail any observation statements, so it is at best weakly falsifiable. As Sober explains, the difficulty for theism concerns auxiliary hypotheses about God, that is, claims concerning what God is like and how he acts. To take one of Snoke's examples, he claims that if theism is true, we would expect there to be "many, daily, direct, miraculous communications from God" (p. 156), a prediction he takes to be falsified and that requires a modification of theism. However, this prediction only follows on the assumption of knowledge about how God would reveal himself to human beings, if he existed. But why suppose that Snoke or anyone else could *know* this? The problem with auxiliary hypotheses about God is that they are not independently confirmed or falsified. Is there any way of confirming or falsifying auxiliary hypotheses about God without presupposing theism? I raise these issues not to take a firm stance on them, but merely to suggest their complexity and cast doubt upon the idea that we can easily find falsifiable predictions for theism and Christianity.

Ever since Hume and Kant, natural theology has been on the defensive, only making a serious comeback in the last twenty-five years or so. Snoke welcomes natural theology as part of his evidentialist epistemology, and wants theism to subscribe to the "normal rules of evidential discourse" (p. 154). In our pluralistic world, this is an understandable and reasonable reaction. However, it is not clear that this is a move theism and Christianity can make, as the problems I have outlined show. Some serious issues concerning faith and reason still need to be addressed.

Notes

¹On the Intelligent Design—Evolution controversy, see Massimo Pigliucci, "Design, Yes, Intelligent, No," *Skeptical Inquirer* 25, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 2001): 34-9; Niall Shanks and Karl Joplin, "Behe, Biochemistry, and the Invisible Hand," *Philo* 4, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 2001) available at the website <www.philoonline.org>; and *Skeptic* 8, no. 4 (2001), which has an excellent section on Intelligent Design. On fine-tuning arguments for the existence of God, see Theodore M. Drange, "The Fine-Tuning Argument Revisited," *Philo* 3, no. 2 (Fall-Winter 2000).

²"The Irrelevance of Proofs from the Biblical Point of View" in John Hick, ed., *The Existence of God* (New York: MacMillan, 1964), 209-10.

³For an introduction, see Theodore M. Drange, "Incompatible-Properties Arguments: A Survey," *Philo* 1, no. 2 (Fall-Winter 1998). Available at the website <www.philoonline.org>.

⁴For the critical side, see Michael Martin, *The Case Against Christianity* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), and Walter Kaufmann, *The Faith of a Heretic* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961), an older work still worthy of careful study. For a defense of the Incarnation, see Thomas V. Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), and of the Atonement, see Richard Swinburne, *Responsibility and Atonement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁵See Elliot Sober, *Core Questions in Philosophy: A Text With Readings*, 3rd ed., lecture 9, "Is the Existence of God Testable?" (Old Tappan, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001). For a much fuller and more sophisticated treatment, see Elliott Sober, "Testability," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 73 (1999): 47-76. Available at the website <philosophy.wisc.edu/sober>.

Shawn Dawson
11 Princess Place
Regina, SK S4S 2K3 Canada
email: sl.dawson@sk.sympatico.ca

Choice of Research Topic

Although I am now retired, I was for many years head of a research group and chairman of a university department of electrical engineering. I was therefore particularly interested in the recent issue of *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* (53, no. 4 [December 2001]) reporting on a conference dealing with the choice of research projects by young graduates and post-docs. I have to say that I found the advice offered rather disturbing.

My chief cause for concern was the overriding importance attached to individual choice. My experience suggests that a fulfilling career in research generally requires team work. It may be that a few outstanding scientists work best in isolation, although I doubt it. But the creativity of most ordinary research workers is enormously enhanced by regular discussion with colleagues. The conference did not mention that giving is the other side of receiving. In this connection, I found the advice on choosing a supervisor to further one's career somewhat distasteful.

Nor do I like the idea of encouraging research workers to live from grant to grant. In my experience, the financing of research is best left to the head of a research group. Younger members need to be protected from commercial pressures so that they can give themselves unreservedly to the quality of their work and the enjoyment of it.

I fear that much of the advice given at the conference may increase the perception of science as a self-regarding pursuit and may strengthen the postmodern backlash against it.

I have been an appreciative reader of *PSCF* for many years and hope you will forgive the criticism.

Professor Percy Hammond
The Dingle
Whinfield Road
Dibden Purlieu
Southampton SO5 4AA
UK

A Reply to the Dialogues

The March 2002 issue of *PSCF* contains a dialogue concerning science, naturalism, biology, and design.¹ Walter Thorson argues for a new definition of naturalism in science, with the unstated assumption that evolutionary biology would be included in such a science.² Although biology is usually classified as a science and biologists use the scientific method for investigation, the biochemical evolution of the first cell and macroevolution are supernatural. Uniting evolutionary biology with naturalistic science joins two mutually exclusive categories.

If science is defined as the study of natural things and natural processes in which supernatural causation is absent, evolutionary biology is not scientific. If science is defined as the study of the physical universe in which causation could be supernatural, evolutionary biology would be scientific. The two sets of definitions are functionally equivalent if God does not exist. Since the large majority of scientists accept a definition of science that excludes supernatural causation, such a definition of science should be accepted as the best working definition.