

Does Belief in Biblical Miracles create an inconsistency with Modern Science?

Alfred North Whitehead was a mathematician who later devoted himself to philosophy. He once said “It is a safe rule to apply that when a mathematical or philosophical author writes with a misty profundity, he is talking nonsense.” He was in a position to know about that. I hope in this short article on a big subject I shall not be found writing nonsense. If like many a reader of novels you would like to know where and how my reasoning ends you could start on page 5, “How may a scientific mind-set find room for Biblical miracles,” but for many there are misunderstandings that need to be cleared up before my conclusions will, as I hope, be seen as acceptable.

In a previous file “Modern Science and Biblical Faith” on this website, I have pointed out that our “Modern Science” so far is less than 400 years in the making and there were other sciences that preceded it. Not long ago we used to talk about what “Every schoolboy knows” and one such thing was that China had a science long ago and the Chinese invented gunpowder. That science ceased to grow. It seems to me significant that *Joseph Needham*, who was a Marxist and for decades was the leading authority in the West on Chinese Science, wrote that Chinese science ceased to develop *because it lacked the concept of a Creator*. Prior to the 16th century the theology and science of the Christianised West was largely a sophisticated form of analogical reasoning that grew out of Aristotle’s philosophy and did little in the way of deliberate or systematic observation. The story is told how Aristotle’s followers tried to find out the number of teeth in a horse by pure reason and not by experiment – examining a horse’s mouth. *Bertrand Russell* made a parody of the story saying, “Aristotle maintained that women have fewer teeth than men. Although he was twice married, it never occurred to him to verify this statement by examining his wives mouths.” The corresponding approach today might be called *rationalism* rather than science. Following developments of Modern Science in the 17th century, that form of medieval science became

known as a *Mosaic Philosophy* because it was so closely related to the then current theology. A characteristic of medieval science was a belief that all matter possessed life and it would have been appropriate for them to talk of “Mother Earth” as some of today’s New Agers do. At the time of the Reformation, when *John Calvin* wrote his famous commentary on Genesis he warned against tying science to theology, writing, “*This book (the Bible) is to teach us how to go to heaven (God’s throne room) not to teach us how heaven goes*”. To find how the heavens (the Sun, Moon, Planets and Stars) go we should look elsewhere – by which he meant, do some Astronomy. Calvin struck a note for observational science and for the *freedom of science*. Other men of strong Biblical faith took his advice, men like Robert Hooke, Robert Boyle and Isaac Newton who were all founder members of *The Royal Society*. That was the beginning of our Modern Science and it is proving enormously successful.

In 1990, following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the EU supported a proposal for western academics to visit the former Communist countries of central and eastern Europe to teach in their universities. As some of my previous experience of teaching in third world lands was known I was approached with the request I go to the Technical University of Budapest (TUB), from where many eminent Hungarians had graduated, including Nobel Prize winners. I considered this was in line with previous jobs I had taken as a Field Partner of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES), the purpose being not only to work with integrity, living out my faith before others, but to also encourage the witness of Biblical faith by Christian students and establish Christian Unions. God had used me in that purpose and I was pleased to have an invitation to go again. As one of the first to be available, I found that the EU were not willing to support me in an untried venture until their administrative formalities were completed, so it was not until Easter 1991 that I received the go-ahead – too late for their chief purpose of lecturing to students but the TUB wanted

me to go if only for a few months. On arrival, I volunteered to fit in with their wishes as best I could and was asked to attend an Annual International Conference on Engineering Mathematics, being held within ten days in Central Europe for the first time. I assented to write a paper on “Cross-Cultural Communication of Mathematics.” Also the very next day two students arrived at my door saying they had been informed of my coming and had heard I was a Christian. “There are three of us here, can you help us?” So began a new Christian Union which has since grown. Later I was asked to give a lecture to advanced learners of English of the scientific and engineering staff of TUB organised by the British Council. I had freedom to choose a subject so chose the title “Concerning the Freedom and Limitations of Science” thinking I had matters relevant to say on this that could lead on to relatively easy discussion. So I wrote a 50-minute lecture for the conference to which my wife was also invited, at an historic location near the Danube Bend. Thinking that as a Christian I should “nail my colours to the mast” I concluded with the statement,

“Some of the founders of the Royal Society of London, including Isaac Newton, Robert Boyle and Robert Hooke, were men of Biblical faith who sought to apply the same standards of honesty and integrity to both their daily living and their scientific observations and theorising. No lesser standard is necessary today”

A coffee break followed, after which we were to consider questions and observations on the discourse. The first question was, “In view of your concluding remarks, about the founders of Britain’s scientific Royal Society, does this mean you are a Christian believer and if so how do you reconcile such a faith with your scientific practice?” That was a good opportunity but to my surprise the whole of the succeeding 50-minute discussion was in answer to questions about the content of Christian faith that related to scientific activity. There was obviously a considerable interest in a topic that they had not previously found opportunity to consider openly. Biblical Miracles were a major part of their concern and they are still a live subject of debate in our own society.

Beware of Pseudo-science

My previous article, “Modern Science and Biblical Faith,” was prepared because there is a lot of confusion about the nature of genuine Science and Bible Faith founded upon the Bible. A deal of confusion is caused by some very vocal scientists who make claims for science that have little or no truly scientific support. We are exposed to assertions and generalisations in the name of science that are unscientific. It is what is called *Scientism*, to identify such inappropriate claims as if validated by science. Perhaps the most notorious is the claim that science is all that is necessary for the determination of right understanding, and religion, including Biblical faith, is based on superstitions that lead to confusion and must be discarded. The miracles of the Old and New Testaments are included in this. The term *Scientism* was coined to identify *a way of presenting science as if it is the only source of reliable explanation and implying that no other way of looking at things is necessary*. A well-known journalist and writer on science and faith, Brian Appleyard, in a book highly critical of science, “Understanding the Present” in 1992, said something very similar, “*Scientism is the belief that science is or can be the complete and only explanation about any given (situation)*.” So according to *Scientism* we would have to say goodbye to much that is eloquently expressed in poetry, love, romance, music and the visual arts as well as religious thought and history. Not a bad start in his understanding of the term but alas, in what followed he mischievously applied his definition of *Scientism* to all science. He failed to distinguish between truth and error. We all need to think clearly about what we hear and read.

What answer can the Christian give to the onslaught of falsity relating to the domains of science and faith? In view of the prominence of the miraculous in the Bible, do the miracles mean there is a large area of conflict between Science and any Biblical faith, or is there a way of finding a true harmony between them as some leading scientists in our nation believe? As previously mentioned, we need to be clear about the limits of science and about the nature of the historic revelation that the Bible claims to be and to avoid confusing the two. Miracles and Creation are two areas in which both Science and the Bible have much to offer with their different

objectives. As a former mathematical physicist I firmly believe I have not been committing intellectual suicide in holding to and teaching harmony between the practice of both these areas.

All our rational knowledge is based on presuppositions though we may not be aware of them. The presuppositions of those early modern scientists grew out of their Christian beliefs and what they read in the Bible. **Genesis 1 vv26-28** is often referred to as *the Creation Mandate*. Please read them if they are not familiar to you because those verses carried great weight in the thinking of the early scientists. *Robert Hooke* (1635-1703), writing about the new scientific society he was helping to found stated, “The business of design of the Royal Society is to improve the knowledge of natural things ... All to advance the glory of God, the honour of the King ... the benefit of his kingdom and the general good of mankind.” Others including the theologian *John Calvin* wrote of God’s revelation being in two books – the **Book of Salvation** (Bible), and the **Book of Creation** (Natural world). God, they argued had caused both to be written so just as God has revealed himself in Scripture and we must read it, He has also expressed His invisible qualities, “eternal power and divine nature” (Romans 1v 20) in the world around us and we must go-see what He has put there and not be confined by what we think ought to be out there. God has given us five senses to use as well as a mind to reason! So it seemed obvious to such Christian men that mankind would be able to understand the natural world, which must be characterised by order.

Reality of the natural world

Many of my former colleagues who are not yet committed to Christian faith never the less have a deep sense that the world is “Given.” At least older generations will recall in school geometry starting off proofs with a statement of what was “Given,” a statement of a conjecture “To Prove” and then following a watertight, logical argument called the “Proof”, so that the given and the conjecture could be entitled a “Theorem”. *Rev Dr John Polkinghorne*, who converted to Christian faith while he was Professor of Mathematical Physics at Cambridge, has described well how in research into nuclear physics one is “cramped” into what we find experimentally and it is useless forming a theory that

doesn’t fit major features of the physics we find in the lab. or observatory. Centuries before, *William Gilbert* (died 1703), who was the first to make a systematic study of magnetic phenomena wrote, “Look for knowledge not in books but in things themselves.” *Peter Fellgate FRS*, an emeritus professor wrote a useful short letter to *The Times* in September 1997. “At its most basic, science is the humbleness to recognise that human thought alone is not a reliable guide to understanding the material Universe but needs to be corrected and guided by experience i.e. to say, by systematic observation and experiment.” The Christian who is a scientist will say “This is still God’s World, He rejoices in it and the heavens declare His glory.” For some the problem of the miraculous may be an excuse for lack of faith, but I am sure that without an adequate consideration, it is a sincere hindrance to strong Christian faith for many in the West.

Paul believed in the power of prayer – so may we – and we should pray about the challenge and use our minds to study what has been found in the World and is taught in the Scriptures about Divine activity, past and present. Paul also believed in the need to preach Gospel truth and to seek the power of the Holy Spirit on his preaching. When writing to the Corinthians in his second letter about misrepresentations of the truth, in Ch. 10 he said we are not to adopt worldly tactics of answering falsity in an arrogant or cynical way nor are we to back off. Paul said we have weapons to fight with that have divine power “to demolish strongholds.” What are the weapons the Christian is to use? Do please read **2 Corinthians 10 vv3-5**. Ours is a **reasonable faith** and we are to use godly reason and intelligence to answer our critics and so take captive every thought that is opposed to Christian truth. The context shows that Paul found false ideas and attitudes within the Church as well as outside it and a prime concern was to put the Christian house in order. Peter likewise in his first letter Ch 3 v15 wrote “in your hearts (or as we would say, in your minds) set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have. But do it with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience.” We are to use our minds to give appropriate answers, as far as God enables us, to those who are not yet believers.

Colin Russell, who is an Emeritus Professor of History of Science at the Open University has identified four currently held views about the relation of modern science to Christianity. We have already mentioned the first two. One is the view that was almost universal until the mid-19th century, namely *Harmony*. Since then three other views have gripped the majority of the population in the West. One is the notion of *Conflict* between true science and true Christianity. Another is an attitude of *Relegation*, which for many means that science has won, Christianity had been superseded and is a fossil not worth investigation. A fourth attitude that is popular among some New-Agers is an attitude of *Absorption* – both science and all religions can be absorbed into the greater entity of Mysticism. The Christian Church has lost ground that it needs to reclaim if attitudes of indifference to the Gospel are not to persist. Of course I am not suggesting this is the only cause for widespread apathy, but it is one that is apparent and that we need to stand against.

Current beliefs of many today

A few years ago Tony Blair said he had been put off science at school by dull teaching. Some relevant surveys had been conducted among school pupils. It seems that a reasonably high proportion of pupils find science lessons hard but interesting. A lot has been done to make science more popular but some special surveys have probed pupils understanding of *what they believe science is and some things they understand Christians are required to believe that impinge on science*. In one survey **in Scotland**, of over 6000 pupils, aged 11-15yrs., more than a third, believed that true Christians believe the universe was made in 6 days of 24 hours. Nearly half thought that Christians accept the whole Bible has to be taken *literally* as being historically accurate. A quarter of the pupils believed that science will eventually give complete control over the world, nearly half believed that theories in science can be proved to be definitely true, and over a quarter believed nothing should be believed unless it can be proved scientifically, though the percentage of these decreased a little from the 11 year-olds to the 15s. Something is clearly wrong with the understanding of the nature of true science but also with an understanding of basic Christian faith – and the Church has a clear responsibility here. For a similar survey in England of nearly 4000 pupils (12 to 16

year-olds), the results were very similar. In their survey two questions were asked about whether the pupils saw *Conflict* between science and religion. In answer to the question “Do you think science has disproved religion”, 16% said Yes, and to the question “Do you believe scientific laws make miracles impossible” 20% said Yes. In this survey the children were asked not only about whether they understood Christians had to hold creationist views but were asked whether they held such views themselves, and 23% said Yes. There was an analysis of the results that showed the group who perceived Christians had to be creationist was not identical with those who admitted to such beliefs themselves. It would be wrong to assume that these surveys represent a good cross-section of all secondary school children, they probably don’t, but there is clearly cause for much concern about what young people are taking on board, sometimes at school but also through the media – TV etc. An unfortunate proportion is the media’s treatment of things scientific does propagate what we have already identified as *Scientism* and it was scientism that the questionnaires were probing – a kind of *triumphalist philosophy* that is built upon science but does not warrant the label of being well-attested science. As mentioned, some popularisers of science are guilty of promoting scientism as science itself. *Werner Heisenberg*, an outstanding physicist of 20th century and one of the founders of Quantum Theory, gave his definition of the *scientific expert* as “someone who knows *some of the worst mistakes* that can be made in his subject *and how to avoid them*.” Scientists do not normally claim perfection and are willing to admit errors they have made, as well as those made by colleagues! But sometimes journalists go too far in their rhetoric against the success of modern science. Persons in many walks of life can go too far in ‘cutting others down to size’. We need to be aware of those who make dramatic claims to solve difficult problems with ‘quick fixes’. Christians need the humility to play fair, listen to others and accept advice even from those who differ from them on major issues, like Christian belief.

There is a well-known philosophical fallacy known as *Reductionism*. Donald Mackay coined the phrase “*Nothing-buttery*” which helps to identify when an error is being made. For example a chemist once listed the chemical constituents of the human body

as so much carbon, sodium, calcium, oxygen, etc and gave the then current price of all the chemicals. He then jokingly added that man is ‘nothing but’ those chemicals. A biochemist can make up a similar list, and so can the physiologist and the psychologist. They are each in their way complete lists but no one with any sense will believe that any or all of those scientific descriptions is an adequate account of what it is to be a human being. To many scientific descriptions we need to add the descriptions of the historian and the poet and so on and anyone of any religious faith will want to add a religious or spiritual dimension to what it is to be human. To reduce human experience or truth to a scientific description alone is a colossal “nothing but”, reductionist error. ***True science makes no such claim.*** Science is a way of understanding many things and has been enormously successful in enabling mankind to control and constructively use the world’s resources. Science cannot make a claim to being complete now, and if we ever were to attain to a complete scientific understanding, it would not satisfy us with all we need to live fully human lives. *Scientific methods have self-imposed limitations and it is these very limitations that have helped it to be so constructive within its own sphere of understanding.* (Big questions arise when people seek to roll back the currently recognised bounds of science that challenge ethical standards and moral values.)

How may a scientific mind-set find room for Biblical miracles?

Our objective here is to discuss the crucial question of Miracles recorded in the Christian Bible. The influential philosopher *David Hume* (1711-76) disposed of the possibility of any miracle by his way of defining them: “Miracles are a violation of the laws of science and as the laws of science have been established by an *incontrovertible experience*, the proof against miracle is unchallengeable”. Not many scientists today would wish to defend that statement, not even if they are atheists, like Richard Dawkins. Science is not complete and has long needed to be restated more carefully as new data and phenomena become known. The laws of science are certainly not “incontrovertible”. When Kepler in the early 17th century was seeking to express the way astronomers saw regularities of planetary motion, he wrote down in succession a total of 9 laws but in

steps he replaced 6 of them in favour of the other three which he found fitted the data on planets. Again, major changes to some of the Laws of Physics had to be introduced in the early part of the 20th century to make way for the requirements of Relativistic and Quantum phenomena, by identifying the ranges over which Classical Physics is now believed to be applicable. And what may become necessary when the Large Hadron Collider is switched on later in 2008? As yet science has no satisfactory way of adequately describing all the phenomena known to High Energy (Elementary Particle) Physicists and we hope new observations with the new discoveries will help resolve some current problems of the physical sciences.

It is not necessary to labour other reasons for rejecting Hume’s attempt to define miracles but we cannot ignore his definition entirely because many folk have retained the idea that scientific knowledge is a form of absolute truth – the notion that the laws of science are necessarily correct and unchangeable. To quote from Peter Fellgett’s letter alluded to before, “Science has no dogmas and makes no claim to absolute truth, *it simply offers the best available systematic description of what has so far been observed to happen. In other words, the laws of nature proposed in science are concise statements of regularities that appear so far to accord with a wide variety of experimental observations*” (my italics).

Scientific laws are Descriptive. In contrast, the laws of Monopoly are **Prescriptive**. If you land on Chance and pick up the card “Go to Jail”, to play the game, you have to go there. Likewise, the Highway Code states the limitations that governments have put on the way we may drive our cars. To be more positive, how does this open a way for the Christian to believe her/his Bible and not have hang-ups about science? We need a much better description than David Hume gave of what we believe we should understand by the miracles recorded in Holy Scripture.

In 1984 a conference of the Research Scientists Christian Fellowship in London was devoted to the topic of Miracles and Bible-based Christian faith and the description of miracles that was readily adopted was one I find most helpful,

a MIRACLE is an unusual event which is a wonder (teras) due to God's power (dunamis) intended as a sign (semeion).

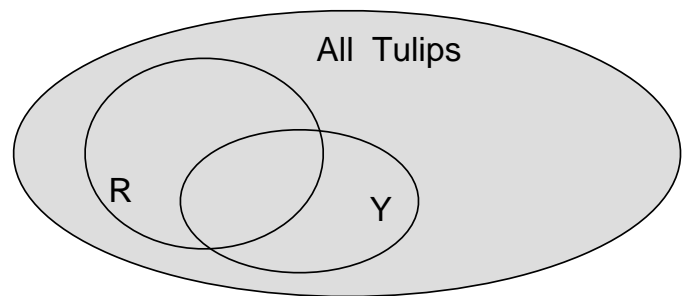
The words in brackets are the three distinct Greek words the Bible uses for the kind of Divine activity known as miraculous. I for one believe Divine activity appropriately called miraculous still occurs and Christians who take the Bible to be God's authoritative book should base their thinking on the concepts they find in the Bible itself. We need to consider events in the Bible which are known as miraculous and see how, as I believe is possible, we may on occasions relate them to the science that we believe is a way of understanding realities of the natural world – natural in contrast to the spiritual. For this we must introduce a longstanding theological term that has been largely overlooked in recent decades. It is vital to our discussion. From the beginning of Genesis throughout both Old and New Testaments, we read that God is both Creator and Sustainer of all things in the universe. We must not get away from the emphasis that this is still God's precious universe. Miracles are not the 'norm' – they are special events, not everyday experience. But God is to be seen as continually active in keeping the universe in regular being and caring for the whole of his creation – animate and inanimate, the Earth, the solar system and all else 'seen' and that is yet to be discovered in the universe. He is a faithful God on whom we can rely for loving care. The whole of God's regular care is embraced by the term Providence and its theological definition is

PROVIDENCE is that relationship of God to events by which he rules all things.

God Sustains as well as being the Creator. It may sound unfamiliar to our ears but it is a term and definition that theologians have long used. Our question is, how can we understand the miraculous activity of God alongside of our scientific understanding of how he holds many aspects of the natural world in regular and predictable ways that enable us to plan much of our day-to-day living. A simple tool that serves to illustrate the reasonableness of belief in both scientific understanding and the possibility of what we term the miraculous makes use of what is known to

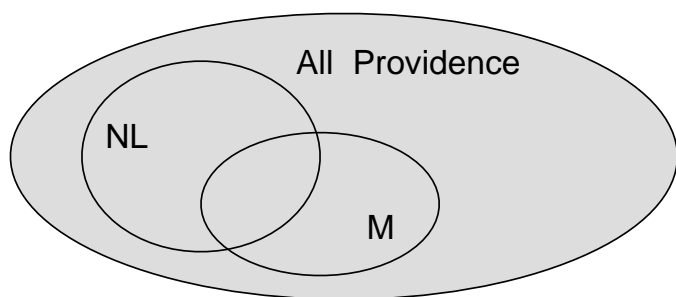
philosophers as a *Venn Diagram*. It is sometimes introduced in school mathematics and is used by statisticians to sort out valid and invalid logical deductions from a mass of statistical data.

First take a very simple example: suppose we think about all the tulips in all gardens and let us imagine each tulip is associated with a *point* on this sheet of paper and lying within the large elliptical region shown below. Geometrically, a mathematical point has a precise location in space but occupies zero area so that a finite area, no matter how small, has an unlimited (infinite) number of mathematical points in it (No matter how close the points may be we can always find space to insert other mathematical points). Let's move the tulip points around so that all the tulips with red are close together, say in a region R, and all the tulips with yellow in their petals are pushed to be in a region Y. Why have we made the regions overlap? Because we know some tulips have petals that are both red and yellow and the overlap of the two ellipses imply this. We can describe all sorts of sets of objects in this way. If we were to show R and Y as non-overlapping regions that would logically mean that we believed tulips having both red and yellow in their petals did not exist. We know such do exist, so it is required that an overlap region be shown.



Now apply this simple idea to Divine Providence – to all 'events' that have occurred since the Universe began. From the mathematical concept of a 'point' the number of points in our large ellipse is infinitely great so every 'event' can be envisaged as identified with some point in the large elliptical region on the next page. The Biblical Christian need not hesitate to accept that this region embraces *the whole of God's Providential care*. For many events we already know an explanation in terms of what we call Laws of Science. Let's imagine we put the points corresponding to all these in the region NL (Natural Law). You may note that there is a

substantial part of the Providential Care area not included in the NL region. This is appropriate as there is much that current science and subjective experience cannot account for as yet, nor would we wish to call them miracles for they are events that occur with great frequency and would seem to have no special ‘message’ for us, so it would be inappropriate to call them miraculous, in a Biblical sense. But there are events that correspond to the description given above of Biblical miracles. These must be located within the region called Providence and we will identify it by the label M. Is it appropriate to show the region M as overlapping with NL? I believe the Bible requires it. Why?



Scripture records some events for which it gives two relevant descriptions – a NL-type description and an identification as a Miracle. Some of the clearest examples of such events occurred in the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. God we are told intervened for the young Israelite community to enable them to escape from Pharaoh and the Egyptians who had oppressed them for many years. One particularly important event was the parting of the Red Sea. Exodus 14 v21 gives a brief explanation of the physical evidence: “all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry ground” but Moses also taught the people that it happened because it was Jehovah who intervened specially as part of His providential care for them: it was a Miracle. With regard to the plagues of Egypt, we read in Deuteronomy 29 vv2-3 that Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, “your eyes have seen all the Lord did in Egypt to Pharaoh, to all his officials and to all his land. With your own eyes you saw those great trials, *those miraculous signs and great wonders.*” These happenings are recalled repeatedly in the Old Testament. so that the Israelite nation should not forget God’s Miraculous activity. But careful study of those plagues and how they are described in Scripture indicate that the sequence of plagues can

also be given at least *some natural description* as they correspond to similar plague experiences in more recent times. They relate in what we call ‘*a causal chain*’. Again for the story of the crossing of the Jordan, do read Joshua 3 v15 for the specific details given there. A footnote in one of my Bibles mentions, “as recently as 1927 a blockage of the water in this same area was recorded (after an earthquake) to have lasted for over 20 hours. But awareness of this should not diminish the miraculous element in the book of Joshua”. Again, some commentators consider it is not inappropriate to give some ‘natural’ account of the fire that fell on Elijah’s sacrifice on Mount Carmel but it is apparent that those who witnessed the event had no doubt it was ‘a divine action’ to confirm that Jehovah alone was the true God who all the people should worship and doubters were silenced. The event was a great wonder and a sign. But especially, we can learn much from actions and teaching of the Lord Jesus that challenged the people of his day to believe he was who he claimed to be, God Incarnate. I would strongly recommend any reader of this paper to read with care the whole Gospel of John and note the ‘signs/miracles’ John chose to record and the messages that he was confident God was giving through the life and ministry of Jesus to confirm that the Father was acting through Jesus, to reveal Himself and his way for all who believe in Jesus, to receive salvation from the otherwise inevitable consequences of their sin. St Paul in Romans 1 v3 says the evidence for the miracle of the resurrection is highly significant because it shows Jesus “*was declared with power* to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead”. Biblical miracles were messages as well as wonders. It is possible that as science and Biblical research progress we may be able to find possible natural explanations of other miracles of both the O.T. and N.T. The overlap of M and NL regions in our Venn diagram allows for the possibility that the Christian may learn of other ways in which the Natural Sciences and Christian Faith complement each other. The Natural Sciences offer no cause for embarrassment by Miracles such as we find in Holy Scripture.

When lecturing to mathematics and science students on Electromagnetic Theory I saw it appropriate to make historical allusions, pointing out that the scientists Faraday & Maxwell – who in the 19th

century researched and unified a vast range of physical phenomena and summarised them in a theory that is expressed by just four beautiful mathematical equations, were men of Christian conviction. Students were often clearly surprised to learn that such dedicated scientists had embraced both Science and Christian faith in their daily lives. Much more recently, Melvin Schwartz, a Noble prize winner in physics, has shown that by incorporating a basic assumption of Einstein's relativistic theory, those equations can be expressed even more concisely and convincingly because one does not need the astute 'guess' that Maxwell had made to overcome an inconsistency he initially encountered. That guess started an experimental search for electrical wave motion and led on to ways of producing oscillating currents. So we now have an enhanced mathematical expression of the beauty to be found in modern science.

This insight into God's handiwork has been used to produce hi-fi record players and advanced surgical equipment and much else that is for the benefit of mankind, but fallen mankind has also applied their understanding for selfish ends leading to both waste and pollution of the world. For many a Christian, the study of natural science is thrilling and adds to our wonder of the majesty and power of the Almighty Creator-Sustainer. I worship Him for the beauty and elegance of His Creation and for giving mankind minds to appreciate and devise ways of using it. That was the intent of the early Royal Society – to advance God's glory and for the general good of mankind! We need to return to the restraint that submission to God's will for mankind can be better observed.

Conclusion

To summarise, I have tried to write as simply as I know how, to bridge a gap in our understanding of God's good works and to warn against running to unnecessary and sometimes false conclusions. We should not attempt to use science to prove the existence of the God who has revealed himself in Scripture. Hebrews 11 vv3 & 6 are a clear statement that faith in God is indispensable and always will be. But we can warn those who are impressed by the outpourings of atheistic writers, that science by its self-imposed limitations, is an insufficient tool for asserting either the existence or the non-existence of

God. God has not forced himself upon mankind, he created us to be responsible beings with a true freedom of choice so that we can choose freely to love and worship him.

The title of this article has been chosen so as not to imply more than I attempt to discuss and deduce. There are many questions we may ask about specific miracles and I, on many points if asked, would have to acknowledge, I do not know but I continue to believe and trust a faithful God who is Holy-Love. Moses advised his people not to be proud and make false claims: "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may follow all the words of this law" (Deut. 29:29). Much that was hidden to Moses became known through Jesus Christ. We still do not know all we may wish to hear but sufficient is known for us to have assurance of faith and ours is the responsibility to read and act upon it. Thomas was no 'easy believer' and the Lord Jesus knew Thomas needed to see him after his resurrection if he was to become an Apostle, to bear an effective and convincing witness to far distance parts of the then known world. When Thomas saw Christ his response was one of the greatest statements of Christian belief, "My Lord and my God!" We have a wonderful record for us to read and believe. The writer of Hebrews quietly issued an urgent warning of the need for all who have access to the truth to act upon it: (Hebrews 2 vv 1-3) It is apparent that God is far less concerned whether we identify some of His personal influences in our lives as 'miraculous' as he does that we obey His call to go, preach the Gospel and make disciples to his praise now and to populate His heaven at the assured return of the Lord Jesus.

David M HUM, Feb 2008