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Finding God in Science's Deficiencies
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When the Kansas State Board of Education last year removed the requirement to teach evolution, it acted out of religious conviction. A majority of the board's members held that the Theory of Evolution requires the disbelief in the idea that God created the world and all that lives within it. Since the Scopes trial of the 1920s, this scientific explanation has been pitted against the biblical view of creation -- usually called "creationism" -- and has nearly always found itself on the defensive. So when the Kansas board found that it had a majority of believers in the religious version of creation, it decided to turn the tables on science and eliminate it.

There is much that has been and can be said about the religious debate over evolution. But one observation that has not been heard enough is that the claims of creationism are more dangerous to religion than they are to science. Why? Because they show atheists exactly how to prove religion wrong.

The religious arguments against evolution focus almost exclusively on what proponents see as "gaps" in the theory. These may be missing pieces of the fossil record or unexplained aspects of how molecules and cells change and adapt. This means that God's activities are found in what science "cannot" explain. In other words, what is unknown and mysterious comes from God, what is known and explainable does not.

But as Kenneth Miller observes, "If we accept a lack of scientific explanation as proof for God's existence, simple logic would dictate that we would have to regard a successful scientific explanation as an argument against God." As Miller states in his book, "Finding Darwin's God: A Scientist's Search for Common Ground

Between God and Evolution" (Cliff Street Books, 2000), all that atheists need do is "show that evolution works, and it's time to tear down the temple. This is an offer that the enemies of religion are all too happy to accept."

So those who argue against the evolutionary account of creation live in the rejection of past scientific discoveries and in the fear that future discoveries -- "successful scientific explanations" -- will increase understanding and thus reduce the arena in which God can be found. The religious position, then, is consistently under attack from a variety of scientific explorations and experiments.

The solution for this is not for religion to reject science and its never-ceasing search for understanding, but to embrace it. Ongoing scientific discoveries should not be seen as a threat to religion, but as an opportunity to understand how God carried out his activities. As Miller points out, "if God is real, we should be able to find him...in the bright light of human knowledge, spiritual and scientific."