

# Brevieu

## book: Can Science Explain Everything?

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JOHN LENNOX

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**P**rofessor John Lennox is well-known among Christians following his debates with prominent atheists such as Richard Dawkins and Peter Atkins on the interface between science and Christianity. He has also regularly spoken at CMF events. His book *Can Science Explain Everything?* is helpful for Christians wishing to engage with the scientific community; Lennox navigates the topic clearly, in a way that is easy to understand, drawing together themes from a number of previous works.

Tension still exists within academia between science and faith. There is widespread belief that good, rigorous scientists leave religious beliefs at the door. Lennox captures this sentiment, and counters it succinctly and fairly. He reflects upon his upbringing in Northern Ireland and his education at the University of Cambridge, imparting wisdom and endearing himself to the reader by his gentle manner.

As a mathematician and philosopher, Lennox is adept at exposing assumptions, applying logic, and providing contextual historical analysis. He demonstrates that the Scientific Revolution originated from Western Europe and was heavily influenced by Christianity. He argues that atheism is at odds with science. Modern scientists can be fantastic investigators but poor philosophers, and so may make unsubstantiated claims beyond their remit. The claim that science does not require faith, but religion does, is doubly wrong. Firstly, science does require a degree of faith: there are basic assumptions which the scientist must make to practice science – one being the belief that the universe is

fundamentally intelligible. This implies an ordered universe, and you cannot justifiably believe this whilst believing the universe came about by chance, diametrically opposed to order. Secondly, Lennox explains that faith is not blind but always evidence-based, quoting John 20:30-31 which reminds us of the evidence-based narrative of John's gospel.

What I love most about Lennox's work is his unashamed attitude in referencing the Bible. Writing about such a topic could easily be philosophical and ambiguous with regards to the specifics of Christianity; yet the book is suffused with biblical teaching. Lennox writes in a balanced way, avoiding over- or misquoting scripture, but expertly applying it, and with an invitation for the reader to come to Christ at the end.

This book is brilliantly pitched to people of all persuasions. For the Christian, it provides encouragement that Christianity is not anti-science, but rather provides the beautiful metanarrative that science longs for, giving us confidence to proclaim Christ within the scientific community. Lennox addresses the non-Christian reader in the penultimate chapter, drawing upon an anecdote where he unintentionally engages two international lawyers in a conversation about the gospel. Lennox attributes this encounter to divine providence and reflects that perhaps, by divine providence, his book could end up in the hands of a non-believer. Why not read it, then pass it to a friend? You never know how God might work through it! ■