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## Marty Folsom, “Science as Faith and Faith as Science”

*Face to Face*, vol. 3, ch. 3

Reading Group discussion, Feb 17, 2022

### 1. **Dedication**

1. Academic study. Tell us about your academic connections with the Torrance tradition.

### 2. **Introduction**

1. Calling and vocation. In the Introduction (p. xiii) you describe yourself as a theologian, a former church staff worker, and a marriage and family therapist. You say “my goal is to be more like a specialist in relationships.” How does your vocational arc illustrate putting your commitment to relational theology into practice?

### 3. ***Face to Face* series**

1. In the preface, you describe each of the three books in the *Face to Face* series (p. xii). The first book discussed our disconnection, and the second book focused on reconnection. How would you describe this book as the third volume in the series?

### 4. **Contents.**

1. Describe the flow of the book, in the three parts (note: for summaries of the 10 chapters, see the Introduction).

### 5. **Preface and Part 2 caption**

1. In the preface, you tell us that “believing that the world is the only appropriate object for observation... misses the world of the personal... Personal knowing requires methods appropriate to our personal nature.” (p. x.) This seems consistent with the plea in the caption for Part 2 for “a broader science that engages all of life and enables us to live in relation to all that is around us” (p. 57). Is that pretty close to the overall theme of ch. 3?

### 6. **Your story**

1. Back in the preface, you stated that your “story is a dynamic element of this book” (p. xvii), and ch. 3 begins with some telling anecdotes about your undergraduate courses in science. Tell us about your experiences with science and faith growing up, all the way until your graduate study in theology.

## **7. Chapter 3 introduction**

1. Throughout the chapter, you illustrate a dualism between science and faith in our culture. On p. 60 you refer to a “split in knowing the world,” and you describe how for many “the rise of science meant the end of religion” as if science and religion exist in a zero-sum relation. In this sadly prevalent viewpoint, what are the opposite characteristics of science on the one hand and religion on the other hand that allegedly make them so exclusive and antithetical to one another?
  1. Religion vs. science
  2. Private vs. public
  3. No evidence vs. evidence
  4. speculation vs. facts
  5. Subjective vs. objective
  6. Arbitrary vs. certain knowledge
  7. Divisive vs. Uniting
  8. Anger vs. dispassionate reasoning
2. How does “faith seeking understanding” describe an alternative approach to science and faith that integrates the two? (p. 61)
3. Comment on Einstein’s quote on p. 63?

## **8. Section #1: SCIENCE. p. 64ff**

1. Three myths (p. 64)
  1. Science is impartial and impersonal
  2. Science is final word
  3. Science alone will save us or provide meaning and guidance for life
2. Naming the animals — what does this illustrate? (p. 65)
3. What is science? (p. 65)
  1. Is it helpful to add the qualifier “natural science” so that science can also be used for Scientia in any subject?
  2. What is scientism? (p. 67) Is it linked to reductionism, or nothing-buttery (p. 71)?

## **9. Section #2: FAITH**

1. What is faith? (p. 68)
2. On p. 69, you speak of “head and heart” going together in the same direction, and faith and science as a unity.

## **10. Section #3: SCIENCE AS FAITH**

1. What are the various ways that the natural sciences involve faith?
  1. Belief system
  2. Trust
  3. Preconditions for inquiry

2. Four qualifications on p. 73.
3. No dualism between facts and values (p. 73)

#### **11. Section #4: FAITH AS SCIENCE**

1. What are the various ways that faith contributes to the natural sciences?
  1. Personal: "Faith, with science included, keeps us personal; so-called pure science without faith moves us to the impersonal." (p. 75)
  2. Friendship: John Macmurray quote, p. 76.
  3. Motivation, meaning, value
  4. Applications of science ethical and beneficial
  5. Maintains curiosity, wonder (p. 78)
2. "Faith is refinement of everyday relating" (p. 78)

#### **12. Conclusion**

1. Back to your own journey: Was this chapter an essay you wish someone had given your younger self to read? What difference does it make for you today? Would you like to tell us more about the significance of this chapter for you?