

Introduction To Philosophy

It is a vast sea of ideas, ponderings, and theories that comprises the science of natural reason known as philosophy. Within its waters, one can find seemingly every possible view concerning every possible matter. It is to a few of these views under the broad category of *God and the world* that will be discussed. The most common worldviews have been chosen: naturalism, pantheism, and theism.

Naturalism is a worldview without God. It has no need of such an element. This is because naturalism maintains that all that exists does so by purely “naturalistic” means. This would involve processes that are inherent in the things themselves. For this reason, macro-evolutionary thought is dominant in naturalism, as is a cataclysmic beginning of the cosmos. With its elimination of the supernatural and exaltation of science, naturalism is a safe haven for the atheist and moral outlaw.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, we find pantheism. While naturalism snickers, There is no God, pantheism quietly responds, All is God... God is all. To the pantheist, there is no distinction between God and the world. God can be found as everything—a rose or a cigarette butt, the laugh of a child or the snarl of a murderer. Given such examples, it is understandable why pantheism also incorporates non-dualistic tenets. That is, separations such as good and evil, right and wrong, black and white do not exist in God and, therefore, do not exist at all. They are simply products of ignorance. The pantheistic worldview is the foundation of many religious sects such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and New Age.

In sharp contrast to both naturalism and pantheism stands theism. Teaching that there is a personal God that is both creator and sustainer of all that exists, makes it a distinct worldview. Distinct from naturalism in that it affirms the existence of God and the dependence of all that exists upon that God. And, distinct from pantheism by its teaching that God is transcendent from his creation. Therefore, theism steadfastly declares, God is! But he is not the rose, or the cigarette, or the laugh, or the snarl. He is totally other. Any confusion of this principle and theism ceases to be theism.

It is obvious that for the Christian, theism is the only worldview that correctly articulates Christianity. To be sure, there have been those who have adopted naturalistic nuances to explain the mystery of origins; but in so doing they have become theistic evolutionists—a strange mixture of compromise and faith. And, to be sure, there have been those who have adopted pantheistic postulates in a lust for esoteric experiences; but in so doing they have become mystics—exchanging the authority of scripture for warm fuzzies. As a follower of God’s Word, it is clear to me that deviations from theism (Christian theism particularly) bring negative consequences. For the naturalist reaps only hopelessness from the certainty of death. While the pantheistic Hindu believes everything is sacred and, therefore, cannot feed his starving children though he own a hundred head of cattle. It is the Christian alone that dwells in the safety of right knowledge. For there are many types of knowledge, but not all find their source in God. And it is precisely this wherein the danger lies.