

The Editor
The Times
2nd September 2010

Dear Sir,

I was puzzled by the head-line in The Times today ('Hawking: God did not create Universe' 2nd Sep). The 'god' that Stephen Hawking is trying to debunk is not the creator God of the Abrahamic faiths who really is the ultimate explanation for why there is something rather than nothing, the upholder of all that exists – past, present and future. Hawking's god is a god-of-the-gaps used to plug present gaps in our scientific knowledge. All members of the Abrahamic faiths are 'atheists' with respect to that god.

Hawking illustrates this point well when he writes that "It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the Universe going". Of course not, for the traditional understanding of God (as in Augustine, for example) is that 'creation' is about all that exists, whenever it exists and wherever it exists. Science provides us with a wonderful narrative as to how this may happen, but theology addresses the meaning of the narrative.

When Hawking writes about 'creation from nothing' he does not really mean 'nothing'. This is apparent from his comment that "Because there is a law such as gravity, the Universe can and will create itself from nothing". Gravity and the other laws of nature are not "nothing" as Hawking claims – they are simply scientific ways of referring to something. It is precisely the theist's point that God is the ultimate source of all "somethings" – which certainly include the laws of physics.

Yours sincerely,

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