Seeing Is Believing?

Richard G. Howe, Ph.D.
Southern Evangelical Seminary

I. For Many, Seeing Is Believing.
"Unlike some of his theological colleagues, Bishop Montefiore is not afraid to state that the question of whether God exists is a definite question of fact." [The Blind Watchmaker, 37-38]

"The presence or absence of a creative super-intelligence is unequivocally a scientific question, even if it is not in practice—or not yet—a decided one." [The God Delusion, 59-59]
"Philosophical naturalism undertakes the responsibility for elaborating a comprehensive and coherent worldview based on experience, reason, and science, and for defending science’s exclusive right to explore and theorize about all of reality."

*The Need for Naturalism in a Scientific Age* http://www.centerforinquiry.net/blogs/entry/the_need_for_naturalism_in_a_scientific_age/, emphasis added.
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II. The Bible on Empiricism

A. The Old Testament
1. The story of Isaac's blessing (Gen. 27)
2. God's wonders before the nation (Deut. 29)

B. The New Testament
1. Luke 1
3. Acts 26:26
4. 1 John 1
II. The Bible on Empiricism

B. The New Testament

5. A number of people saw, heard, and touched the risen Jesus including

   (1) Mary Magdalene (John 20:10-18)
   (2) Mary and other women (Matt. 28:1-10)
   (3) Peter (1 Cor. 15:5)
   (4) the two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)
   (5) the ten disciples (Luke 24:36-49)
   (6) the eleven disciples (John 20:24-31)
   (7) five hundred brethren (1 Cor. 15:6)
   (8) James (1 Cor. 15:7)
   (9) Paul (Acts 9:1-9)

III. Concerns about Empiricism?

A. To Be Sure ...

1. Our sensory faculties are not omniscient.
2. Our sensory faculties are not infallible.
3. Our sensory faculties are affected by the Fall.
III. Concerns about Empiricism?

B. You hear concerns like:

1. Empiricism can't give you logic.
2. Empiricism can't give you morality.
3. Empiricism can't give you the things of God.
4. Empiricism can't justify induction.
5. Empiricism shows that deduction is nothing more than a circular argument.
6. Empiricism is just another way of saying that science is the only way to truth.

C. The responses by such Christians usually are in one of two forms.

1. They concede that our senses are too unreliable and, thus, some sort of Presuppositionalism is required.
2. They argue that what is needed is some sort of "balanced" apologetic in terms of which the methods of empiricism are supplemented by elements of Rationalism or Intuitionism.
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III. Concerns about Empiricism?
   D. Some mistakenly think that Special Revelation (the Scriptures) are somehow given by God as a remedy to the failings of our senses.

IV. My Response: Classical vs. Modern Empiricism

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IV. Attacks on Empiricism
   A. Plato
   B. Descartes
   C. Postmodernism
   D. Hinduism
   E. Occultism
   F. Popular Media
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IV. Attacks on Empiricism

A. Plato

B. Descartes
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IV. Attacks on Empiricism

C. Postmodernism

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Jacques Derrida
1930-2004
"The senses are only the bearers of a message which they are incapable of reading, for only the intellect can decipher it."

[Etienne Gilson, Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), 199. While in context Gilson was referring to the act of existing, I believe this point can be extended to other metaphysical aspects of things.]
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IV. Attacks on Empiricism

D. Hinduism
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A. C. Baktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

IV. Attacks on Empiricism

E. Occultism
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IV. Attacks on Empiricism

F. Popular Media
V. Conclusion

A. God has created us as humans to be able to know the physical world through our senses.

B. It is no wonder that the enemy would not want us to trust our senses since:
   1. It is by them that we see that the heavens declare the handiwork of God. (Ps. 19:1)
   2. It is by them that the invisible attributes of God are clearly seen by the things that are made. (Rom. 1:20)
   3. It is by them that the Christian is able to "make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence." (1 Pet. 3:15)