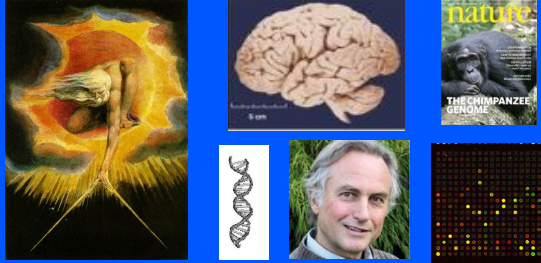


# Science and Faith



1

## ROAD MAP

- Four Models that people use to relate science to faith.
- How we relate the Bible to modern science.
- PAUSE for questions and discussion.
- Two Hot Potatoes in the current science and faith discussion.
- More questions and discussion.

2

## A. The Conflict Model



3

## A. The Conflict Model

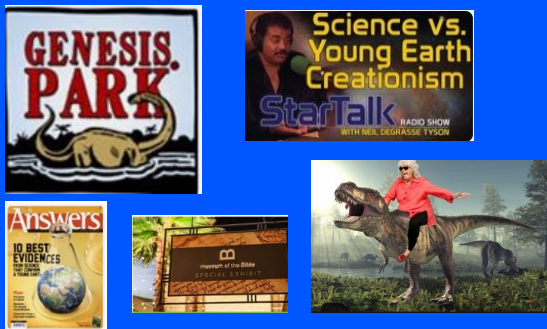


"I pay religions the compliment of regarding them as scientific theories and....I see God as a competing explanation for facts about the universe and life".

Richard Dawkins (Oxford), 1995

4

## A. The Conflict Model – Young Earth Creationism



5

## Scientism contributes to the Conflict Model

- The idea that the natural sciences – such as physics, chemistry, biology etc– provide the only form of reliable knowledge.

Paper 22

Understanding Science, Scientism and Religion

Ian H Hutchinson



[www.faraday.cam.ac.uk](http://www.faraday.cam.ac.uk)

6

## MODEL B: The Separation Model

SCIENCE

Non-Overlapping Magisteria

RELIGION

"The magisterium of science covers the empirical realm: what is the universe made of (fact) and why does it work this way (theory). The magisterium of religion extends over questions of ultimate meaning and moral value"

Stephen Jay Gould



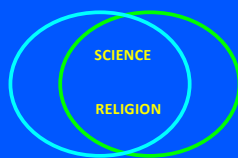
7

## Criticisms of the Separation Model

1. The constant traffic of ideas between science and faith over the centuries does not support the idea that these human activities live in quite separate realms.
2. Although it is true that science and religion are asking distinct questions about reality, nevertheless it is the same reality that is being addressed in both cases [and scientific discoveries point many scientists, such as the cosmologist Paul Davies, towards religious questions].
3. Christian scientists only have one brain and believe in the Lordship of Christ over every aspect of life.

8

## MODEL C: The Fusion Model[s]



"Scientific and religious knowledge basically belong to the same domain" For example:

\* When the Bible is treated like a scientific textbook

9

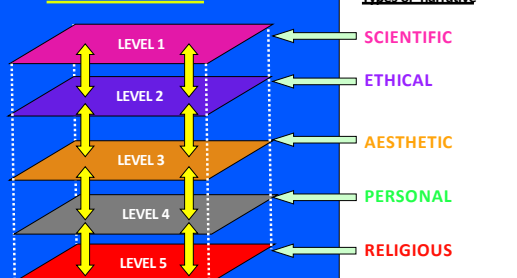
## Model D: An Integrated Complementarity



10

The need for many different types of complementary explanation to do justice to complex phenomena

### THE 'BOOK OF LIFE'



Why is there a universe anyway? What breathes fire into the equations?  
Does life have any purpose in an ultimate sense? How ought I to live my life? Does God exist?

11

## The Fallacy of Nothing buttery.....

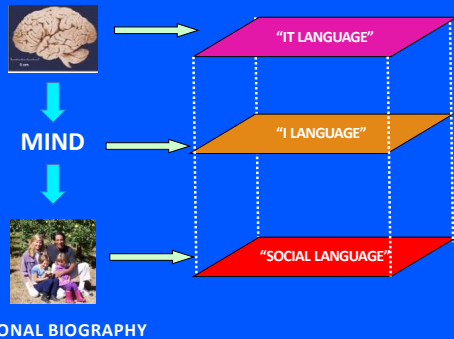


"The Astonishing Hypothesis is that 'You', your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behaviour of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules".

Francis Crick, *The Astonishing Hypothesis*

12

### Brain and mind provide a good illustration of the complementarity model



PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY

13

### The key difference between two types of reductionism

**METHODOLOGICAL REDUCTIONISM:** a valid and highly successful strategy in scientific research. If you want to find out how something works – take it to bits!

**ONTOLOGICAL REDUCTIONISM = 'nothing buttery':** the idea that once the components of an entity have been described, that's all there is.



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### What do scientists do?

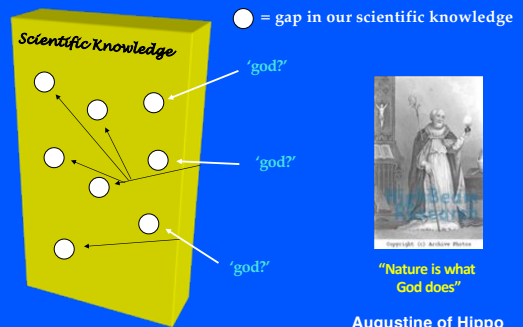
**GOD**

EVERYTHING THAT EXISTS  
THE SECONDARY CAUSES WHEREBY THEY EXIST

SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION

15

### god-of-the-gaps?



"Nature is what God does"  
Augustine of Hippo

16



Isaac Newton



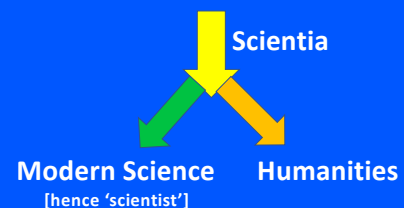
Trinity College, Cambridge

Newton: "What is the relationship between science and religion?"

Answer: "What does that mean? Do you mean *Scientia*?"

17

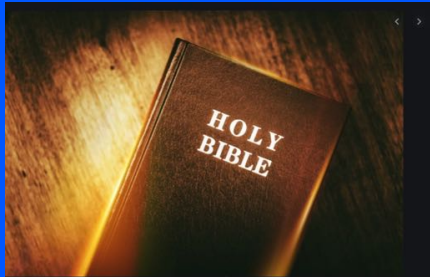
### The parting of the Ways in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century



Revd. William Whewell, Master of Trinity College, invented the Word 'scientist' in 1834.

18

The Bible contains *Scientia*, not modern science



19

## CONCORDISM



20

### Concordism – Relating Science to the Bible

- Type 1 Concordism refers to the attempt to extract scientific information from Biblical passages.
- Type 2 Concordism makes no attempt to extract science from Biblical passages, but instead seeks to interpret texts in the light of modern science e.g. for Genesis 1, there are gap theories, day-age theories etc.
- Type 3 Concordism. We construct our theological knowledge based on the Bible and then we see how our theology might have a conversation or relate in some way to scientific knowledge.

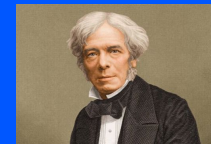
21

### Communicating Concordism Type by Our Own Exegetical Preaching

- It's wonderful if we can incorporate science in some positive ways into our preaching.
- But also expounding the theology of Scripture without giving the impression that it's revealed to provide us with modern scientific knowledge



Robert Boyle



Michael Faraday

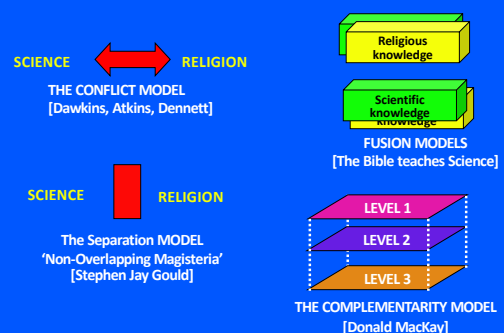
22

## PAUSE

- Knowing your congregations as you do, what would you say is the dominant kind of model about relating science and faith that you think they have?

23

### Four basic models for relating science and religion



24

## Two Hot Potatoes



25

## Hot Potato No 1: Coronavirus Vaccination



26

## Science, faith and vaccination

- Jesus said "Love your neighbour as you love yourself" [Mark 12:31].
- The best way to prevent variants is by not providing them with a host – in other words ourselves.
- Compared to the dangers of suffering or actually dying from Covid-19, the risks involved in having the vaccine are tiny.

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## The example of Edward Jenner, discoverer of vaccines [1749 – 1823]

In his time, on average 400,000 people died from smallpox every year, and of those who survived, one-third went blind



"The whole creation is the work of God's hands. It cannot manage itself. Man cannot manage it, therefore, God is the manager".

[From a letter to his friend Thomas Proun]

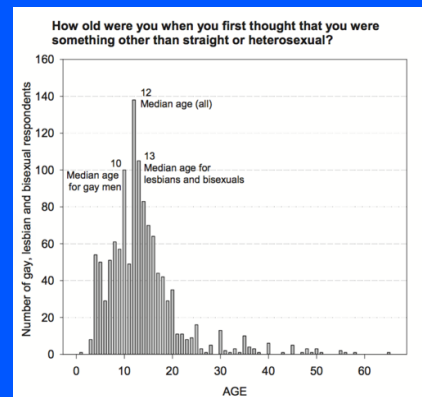
Christian and son of an Anglican clergyman

28

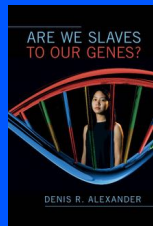
## Hot Potato No 2: Same Sex Attraction

Scientifically we do not currently understand in any kind of complete way why some children – the great majority – grow up to be attracted to those of the opposite sex – whereas a minority are attracted to those of the same sex.

29



30



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University  
Press, 2020  
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At the Faraday Shop  
[www.faraday.cam.ac.uk](http://www.faraday.cam.ac.uk)

#### CHAPTER TEN

Chapter Ten is based on a paper by Whiteway and Alexander published in *Science & Christian Belief* that you can get free on the web by going to [www.scienceandchristianbelief.org](http://www.scienceandchristianbelief.org). [Search for "Whiteway"].

31

## Same Sex Attraction has a positive heritability

- Heritability refers to the proportion of variance of a particular trait in a given population that can be ascribed to genetic variation in that population.
- The heritability of Same Sex Attraction ranges from around 15-50% depending on the study.
- Therefore genetic variation has something to do with the development of Same Sex Attraction during puberty.

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## What variant genes might be involved in Same Sex Attraction?

- Science journal, 2019, a study based on half a million people, of whom 4.1% of males and 2.8% of females reported ever having had sex with someone of the same sex.
- Just five genetic variants were identified in this study that correlated with those who self-identified as being homosexual.
- Taken together they contributed less than 1% to the overall variance in this population.

33

## Two equal and opposite errors when seeking to apply such findings.

- Up the liberal end: "Oh, if SSA has biological causes, then we should just bless Christian couples of the same sex, have same sex marriages, and so forth – because it's clearly not their fault".
- Up the ultra-conservative end: "Same Sex Attraction is a Choice".

34

## We should beware of the so-called naturalistic fallacy

- Scottish philosopher David Hume: You cannot logically make the shift from 'is' statements to 'ought' statements; however much you may describe that something is the case, such statements provide no justification for the claim that such ought to be the case.
- The argument was taken further by the Cambridge philosopher G.E. Moore in his *Principia Ethica* (1903) who maintained that all attempts to justify moral claims by reference to descriptions of the physical world were doomed to failure.

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## QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

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