Chapter Three

DIALOGUE ON KNOWLEDGE

Are science and religion mutually exclusive or do they have a common ground? How should they relate? Some see their relationship as one of *conflict*. They see the story of science almost always contradicting the story of religion. One version of the conflict category sees religion as trying to restrict science. Popular narratives involve the church versus Galileo and the church versus evolution. Two works that popularized this view are J. W. Darper's *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (1874) and A. D. White's *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (1896).

Another version of the conflict category is *scientism*, an ideology that assumes that science provides all the answers. Scientism, by claiming science has a monopoly on knowledge, relegates religion to myth, to falsehood. The biologist Jacques Monod said, "Objective knowledge is the only authentic source of truth."[1] A variation of this scientific imperialism is not the elimination of religion but the takeover of religion by science. The astronomer Carl Sagan was atheistic but had a scientific religion with answers to the ultimate questions. The ultimate reality was the universe; the ultimate origin was evolution; the origin of sin was our primitive reptilian structure in our brain; and salvation came through knowledge.[2]

Others see no connection between science and religion. They see *independence*. This view states that each exists in its own sphere and that they should keep out of each other's way. This view emphasizes the boundaries of the two methods of knowing. Those in the independence category emphasize that science asks "how?" while religion asks "why?" Steven Jay Gould in *Rocks of Ages:*

Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life (1999) calls this independence *nonoverlapping magisteria* (NOMA). Gould says, "I do not see how science and religion could be unified . . . , but I also do not understand why the two enterprises should experience any conflict. Science tries to document the factual character of the natural world. . . . Religion, on the other hand, operates in the equally important, but utterly different realm of human purposes, meaning, and values."[3] In Gould's analysis, he sees religion violating his NOMA, never scientism violating NOMA.

Still others view the relationship between science and religion as a *dialogue*. Science, in observing and describing nature, raises questions about the origin, rationality, and intelligibility of the universe. Yet, science cannot answer these questions. These types of questions allow for a conversation between science and religion to develop. Finally, some view science and faith as an *integrated* whole. This can take the form of natural theology, theology of nature, or systematic synthesis. Natural theology uses the findings of science to formulate a picture of God.

Proponents of natural theology range from the founders of modern science (Newton and Boyle) to Paley and his watch to the Anthropic Principles of modern cosmology. The theology of nature starts with the tenets of faith which are then rethought in light of scientific findings. A modern proponent of the theology of nature is Arthur Peacocke, an English biochemist and theologian, who says, "Theology needs to be consonant and coherent with, though far from being derived from, scientific perspectives on the world."[4] The proponents of systematic synthesis develop a new metaphysics from the contributions of science and religion. The work of Thomas Aquinas is the classical example of a systematic synthesis. Further discussion of these four ways that science and religion may interact can be found in Ian Barbour's book, *Religion and Science* (1997).[5]

In many cases, when one only sees conflict or independence between science and religion, one is viewing the idealized forms of science and religion. In the idealized form, science is unemotional while religion is emotional; science is rational while religion has leaps of faith. As we saw in chapters 1 and 2, neither science nor religion fit these idealized visions. Science has its faith statements, its love of beauty, and revelatory moments (its "aha" moments) just like religion.

As we saw in chapter 1, the underlying postulate of modern science is that the universe is regular and knowable. A scientist goes about his or her work taking for granted that science will work. For science to work, the universe must be ordered, must be rational, must be lawlike. But these characteristics are not enough; the universe could have all of these characteristics and still be too subtle or complicated for humans to understand. Thus, the scientist must also assume that the universe is intelligible or humans have the mental capabilities to unravel the mysteries of the universe. Taking all of this for granted is an act of faith on the part of the scientist because these postulates cannot be proved by logic.

The Romantic poets were convinced that scientists were cold-hearted and incapable of seeing beauty. As William Blake said,

> Art is the Tree of Life;
> Science is the Tree of Death.[6]

Or William Wordsworth:

> Sweet is the lore which nature brings:
> Our meddling intellect
> Misshapes the beauteous forms of things
> We murder to dissect.[7]

Or Johann Wolfgang von Goethe:

> Unless you feel it, you will never achieve it.
> If it doesn't flow from your soul . . .
> Your listener will not believe it . . .
> Gray and ashen . . . is every science,
> And only the golden tree of life is green.[8]

Yet scientists are awed by the beauty of nature, by the vastness and grandeur of space. The scientist Charles Misner, speaking of Einstein, said: "I do see the design of the universe as essentially a religious question, that is one should have some kind of respect and awe for the whole business. Its very magnificence should not be taken for granted. In fact that is why I think Einstein had so little use for organized religion, although he strikes me basically as a very religious man. Einstein must have looked at what the Christian preachers said about God and felt that they were blaspheming. He had seen much more majesty than they had ever imagined, and they were just not talking about the real thing."[9]

As we saw in chapter 1, the physicist Paul Dirac postulated that a beautiful theory was the correct theory. This agrees with the

Romantic poet John Keats, who wrote, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty."[10]

Two examples of revelatory or "aha" moments come from the work of Archimedes and Fleming who lived about two thousand years apart. Archimedes (287–212 B.C.) was the famous Greek mathematician who spent most of his life in Syracuse, Sicily. He was asked by the king to determine how much gold was in the king's crown without destroying the crown. Or had the goldsmith been honest? Not having all the instruments of a modern laboratory, Archimedes, at first, saw no solution to this request. He retired to his bath to think. As he entered his drawn bath, he noticed that the water level rose as his body sank into the bath. At that instant, he had a revelatory moment, an "aha" moment, an insight. Archimedes realized that the amount of water displaced depends upon the amount of material entering the water. Thus, gold should displace a different amount of water from a mixture of gold and some base metal. He arose from his bath and ran naked through the streets shouting "Eureka" or "I have found it." He quickly confirmed his theory and determined that the goldsmith had been dishonest. Think of all the previous times Archimedes had entered his drawn bath without having this insight, or all the people since who have displaced water in a bathtub without having this insight.

Alexander Fleming (1881–1955) was a British bacteriologist who received his medical degree in 1906. During World War I, Fleming was assigned the task of finding antibacterial substances for the war effort. He was unsuccessful, but did in 1921 discover lysozyme, an ingredient of tears, which had some antibacterial properties but which was not clinically useful. In 1928, Fleming became professor of bacteriology at St. Mary's Hospital at the University of London. He began a research project on *Staphylococcus* bacteria, which cause boils.

In 1928, Fleming prepared a series of *Staphylococcus* slides and then left for a week of vacation. Returning from vacation, Fleming was overwhelmed by what he found. His lab assistant had quit and Fleming now had a lab full of week-old slides to analyze and clean. After examining a slide, Fleming tossed it into a tray of lysol solution to disinfect the slide. The tray was shallow, and soon slides were stacked high enough to be above the lysol solution. One day when a colleague dropped by, Fleming immediately began complaining about all the work he was having to do. To emphasize his

plight, he removed a slide from the top of the lysol tray. At that moment, Fleming noticed something on the slide which he had not seen before. The slide had been contaminated by a green mold. During this capricious second look, Fleming noticed that no bacteria was growing around the mold. The inspiration struck him; maybe he had at last found an effective antibacterial agent! The mold was identified as *Penicillium notatum* and Fleming named its active ingredient penicillin.

Fleming was knighted in 1944 and shared the 1948 Nobel Prize in medicine with Ernst Boris Chain and Howard Walter Florey, who were able to mass produce and clinically test penicillin. The *Penicillium* mold is very common, occurring on decaying fruit and ripening cheese. In fact, a very productive strain of *Penicillium* was found on a cantaloupe in Peoria, Illinois. Since *Penicillium* is so common, more than likely many bacteria cultural plates had been contaminated with *Penicillium* before Fleming's time. Yet Fleming had the inspiration while others did not.[11]

Both Archimedes and Fleming responded in a new way to the unexpected. They saw an everyday event in a new light. This response cannot be taught. The best one can hope for is a prepared mind that will be inspired by the unexpected.

We believe that the dialogue and integration categories are the appropriate modes for relating science and religion. This belief comes not only from the similarities between science and religion but also from a belief that there is a wholeness to truth. As Pope John Paul II says, "Truth cannot contradict truth."[12] Ted Peters, professor of systematic theology at Pacific Lutheran Seminary, states this belief as "There is but one reality. So sooner or later we will become dissatisfied with consigning our differences to separate ghettos of knowledge."[13] We further believe that both science and religion have much to gain from interacting with each other. Einstein stated this belief as "Science without religion is lame and religion without science is blind."[14] John Paul II said, "Science can purify religion from error and superstition; religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes. Each can draw the other into a wider world, a world in which both can flourish. . . . We need each other to be what we must be, what we are called to be."[15]

What should be the nature of the dialogue and integration relationships between science and religion? For many this relationship would involve proofs like that of natural theology. For example, as

we shall see in chapter 4, the current understanding of Big Bang cosmology is formulated in terms of a beginning of the universe. Should this be presented as proof of Genesis? As the followers of Thomas Aquinas found in the seventeenth century, it is risky to prove one's theology with the findings of science. Science is continuously refining its understanding of nature. Sometimes this understanding changes quickly; the Phlogiston Theory was around for only about ninety years. Sometimes this understanding changes slowly; Aristotelian (earth-centered) cosmology had been accepted for two thousand years. If one's theology is being "proved" by a finding of science, what happens to the validity of your theology when this finding of science is modified or discarded? The followers of Thomas Aquinas had this problem with the science of Copernicus and Galileo, which not only replaced their Aristotelian science but seemed to undercut their theology. Thus, proofs of religious concepts are not a productive dialogue mode.

If we do not favor conflict, independence, or dialogue that proves, then what is left for the relationship between science and religion? One possibility involves the concepts of consonance and dissonance. Consonance comes from the work of Ernan McMullin, professor of history and philosophy of science program at the University of Notre Dame.[16] Other theologians have incorporated consonance into their work: Ted Peters, professor of systematic theology at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary;[17] Ian Barbour, Bean professor of science, technology, and society at Carleton College;[18] and Willem B. Drees, member of the Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Science, Society, and Religion of the Free University of Amsterdam.[19] Consonance involves looking for areas of correspondence or connection between the scientific and theological understanding of nature. Robert John Russell, professor of theology and science at Graduate Theological Union and director of the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, includes not only consonance but also dissonance in his work. As Russell says, "I first identify a general philosophical theme common to both fields, and see how each field shapes its meaning by its particular context. Through this first step a certain degree of consonance may be reached, though never total univocacy. Indeed, every relationship will contain both supportive and contradictory subclaims that shape the kind of consonance—or dissonance—between the two explicit positions being compared in theology and science. Thus

dissonance, too, plays a positive role since it indicates the need for change in at least one of the fields."[20]

As an example of consonance/dissonance, let us consider Big Bang cosmology and creation by God. These themes will be covered in detail in chapters 4 and 5. Current cosmology is consonant with theology, in regard to the past, with the concepts of beginning and contingency of the world. Current cosmology is dissonant with theology, in regard to the future, in that cosmology projects an open universe existing forever, while biblical theology promises a new creation. Russell believes learning occurs by considering how the consonance of one part of a theory is being challenged by the dissonance of another aspect. We will continue the consonance/dissonance theme in future dialogue chapters.

Religion and Models

Religion uses models, just as science does. People use models in theology to talk about God, but God also uses models throughout the Bible to speak of himself. Scripture uses models to help finite human minds have a glimpse of the infinite God. Biblical models use ideas and images with which people have some experience to explain what God is like, how God relates to the physical order, and how God relates to people in particular.

The Bible refers to God as a king, judge, father, husband, shepherd, vine dresser, refiner's fire, shield, and a host of other metaphors. These models might be called *functional models* because they represent how God functions or relates to the world. Because models explain one thing by referring to another thing, the model only hints at an aspect of what is being explained. The thing being explained is never actually the same as the model used for comparison. God is like an ancient king of the Middle East in that he has the power to make and enforce laws, he has the power of life and death over his subjects, and he has no rival authority within his kingdom. Yet God employs the image of King to tell Israel that they will never be happy with a human king. Kings are vain tyrants who fail at justice and abuse the people. God is not like a king (1 Sam. 8:1–22).

In their human or physical form, the models for describing God have flaws. Women who have been abused by wicked fathers recoil from the thought that God is a father. From their experience of fathers, a father is a very bad thing to be. This problem occurs whenever a model is identified as a one-to-one copy of what is

being explained. The model in general, when enough examples of the model are considered, provides a suggestion of what is being explained. Any personal experience or observation of a single possible example of the model can distort its meaning. God is like a father of the ancient Middle East in that he provides shelter, food, and protection for his family.

When the Bible uses a human or physical example to serve as a model for God, it does so in a way that corresponds to Plato's distinction between Ideals and Images. God represents the ideal, perfect King, Judge, Father, Husband, Shepherd, or any other model described. God represents the standard by which all the models are judged. Because people are made in the image of God, a king has some shadowy aspect that suggests something of how God governs the universe, but it is a tawdry image. Unfortunately, people usually approach models from the perspective of Aristotle in which the physical example or Substance points to the eternal and perfect Form. The approach of Aristotle suggests that whatever is present in the Substance will be present in even greater number in the Form. If a human father is bad, then God will be very bad.

All models of God break down at the human experience of the shadow. The human king, like pharaoh, is but a shadow of what God is like. When people identify God completely and exhaustively with the model, then the model has broken down and forms of idolatry tend to result. The most familiar expression of idolatry occurs when people deify an aspect of God's creativity or particular manifestation of power, such as the sun, the moon, the oceans, the seasons, or the storms. Particular physical places take on a sacred character because a particular spiritual experience took place there. The human preference for the particular veils the actual experience with God.

Among Christians a curious functional idolatry occurs as a result of a preference for one model of God over another model. The preference will often include the rejection of one or more other models of God. Whereas the ancients built their idolatries around observable phenomena, modern people have tended to build their idolatries around the attributes of God. The attributes represent another kind of model than the functional model. The *attributive model* represents a particular attribute or characteristic of God. Such attributes include holiness, justice, love, righteousness, mercy, patience, jealousy, and wrath (see Fig. 3.1). Some people prefer the

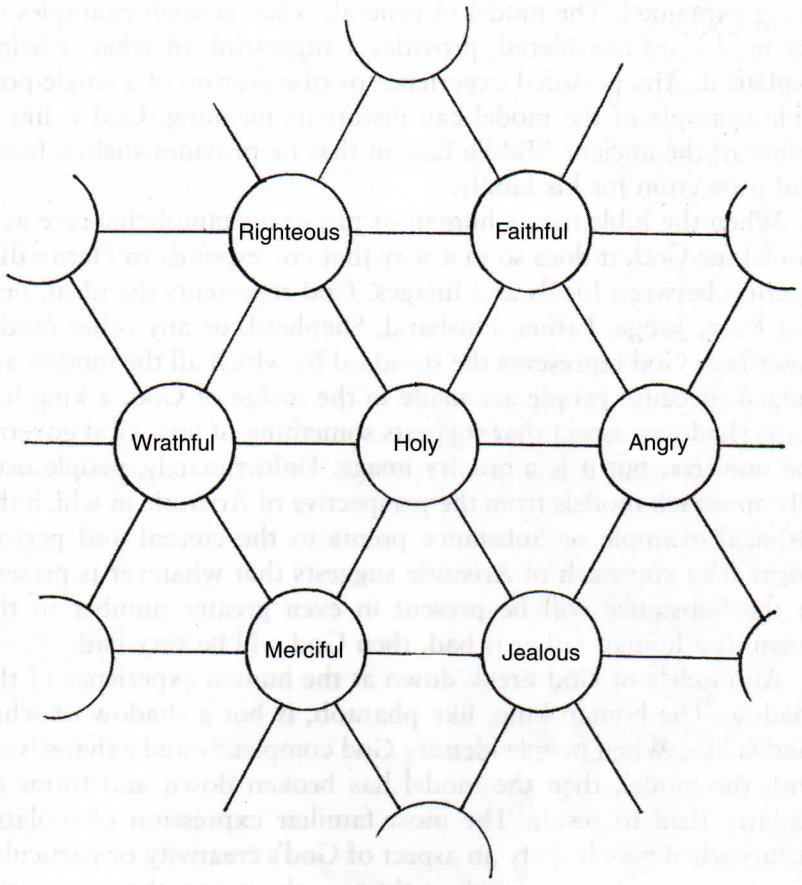

Fig. 3.1. The Attributive Model of God.

attribute of holiness while others prefer the attribute of love. Without due care and attention, people may create God in their own imagination by selecting some attributes and excluding others.

This selectivity has formed a feature of modernity which delights in the fragmentation of knowledge by the specialization of disciplines. The fragmentation loses sight of the relationship between justice and mercy, holiness and jealousy, love and wrath. The attributive models do not merely refer to the functions of people as kings and judges; they refer to the character of people. The functional models contain flaws because of the character of people. Inevitably people confuse the human expression of these character traits with the character of God. This confusion results in a warped

picture of God. The picture does not fail because the model is not true as a model, but because of the human distortion of the model.

The Bible builds upon dozens of models of different kinds which work in relationship with one another to give a fuller view of God. Rather than free-standing ideas that work in isolation from one another, the models of God found in the Bible operate in tension with one another. They balance one another and qualify the human distortions brought when a single model receives undue emphasis. The attributive models of God relate to one another like a giant geodesic dome. The giant white geodesic dome at the Epcot Center holds itself up by the pressure and tension of the different geometric shapes pressing and pulling on each other.

This same tension and triangulation appears in the *relational model* of God. The relational or personal model of God involves how God relates personally to people. Within the Christian faith this model is referred to doctrinally as the *Trinity* (see Fig. 3.2). The Trinity refers to the relationship of God to himself and to people as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This model tends to break down when people associate the Father only as God while viewing the Son and the Holy Spirit as relatives of God. The model also breaks down when people view the three separately as divine beings. The first breakdown represents unitarianism, while the second breakdown represents polytheism. The Trinity, however, is a single model of God in which all three persons are aspects of the one God.

Finally, the *ontological model* refers to the basic being or nature of God. Every religion will usually have some form of ontological model which describes what kind of God or gods or divine force exists. In Zen Buddhism, the unconscious divine is all that really exists. In some forms of Hinduism, everything is an aspect of the divine which also manifests itself as particular gods. For Jews and Christians, God expressed the ontological model in declaring his name to Moses: I AM THAT I AM (Exod. 3:14 KJV) (see Fig 3.3). God is one and distinct from nature. The basic faith affirmation of Judaism comes from the ontological model: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deut. 6:4). Islam similarly focuses its faith on this ontological model found among the monotheistic religions: There is one God, and Mohammed is his prophet. Functional polytheism or idolatry occur when one makes an ontological model out of any of the functions, attributes, or persons of God.

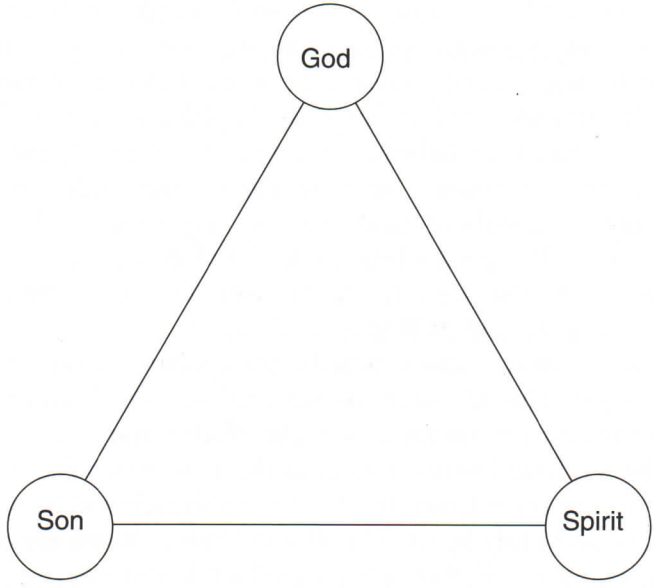

Fig. 3.2. The Relational Model of God—the Trinity.

Something to Prove?

Science and religion do not so much prove each other as they mutually inform or support each other. They provide a consistent picture of an ordered universe when they provide the kind of knowledge each is suited to provide. When science tries to make spiritual judgments and religion attempts to make scientific declaration, however, they have stepped out of their realm of knowledge.

Throughout the modern period religious skeptics demanded some empirical proof for the existence of God. The demand itself has a degree of illogic built into it, since empiricism concerns knowledge from sensory experience of the physical world. As a nonphysical being, God cannot be known through means that observe the physical. The demand assumes that empiricism represents the ultimate determination of truth. Yet empiricism itself is full of problems as religious thinkers pointed out throughout the

Fig. 3.3. The Ontological Model of God.

modern period. The skeptic may ask for a different form of knowledge than revelation to verify the existence of God, yet empiricism does not provide such external verification of many of the major life experiences that people take for granted. Empiricism often relies on correlation between different ways of knowing rather than on actual verification between ways of knowing.

I know I am eating ice cream through the correlation of several empirical experiences. It is cold. It tastes sweet with some flavored nuances. It has a certain soft but thick consistency. I have never noticed a particular sound. It has an aroma, but I am rarely conscious of it unless it gets warm. While these different sensory experiences provide different kinds of information that I process and conclude I am eating ice cream, none of these empirical experiences verifies any of the other. Flavor does not verify temperature. Aroma does not verify sound. The variety of empirical and rational

experiences normally provides a correlation of experiences which we interpret, instead of providing a verification of experiences.

The skeptic makes the mistake of assuming that all truth may be verified because some truth can be verified. This assumption veils the radical difference between different kinds of empirical knowledge. Sound reveals something dramatically different from flavor, and the problems of measuring these two forms of knowledge are quite different. The radically different domains of knowledge represented by the senses disappear as the mind draws the correlations together. The spiritual domain makes the connection between isolated and distinct physical experiences. The mind provides people with continuity among all the isolated empirical experiences of life. The spiritual realm brings wholeness and integration to the fragmentary nature of physical existence.

Fragmentation and Specialization

During the modern period the fragmentation and disintegration of human experience have moved forward through the tendency toward specialization. This tendency toward specialization occurs freely in the academic world where people are accused of learning more and more about less and less. The university divides itself into broad divisions such as the humanities, the sciences, the arts, and the vocations. Each of these broad divisions is divided into disciplines. The humanities may be divided into philosophy, literature, history, languages, and religion. Each of these disciplines may be divided into fields. History may be divided into such fields as modern, medieval, and ancient. It might also be divided by continent: Asian, African, South American. It might also be divided by topics, including the history of science, church history, sports history, military history, economic history. Within each field a person may specialize. Within church history, an area of specialization might be the English Puritans.

Each specialization develops its own special vocabulary and special methodology. It becomes increasingly focused on itself and disengaged from other specializations or disciplines. The university and its academic disciplines have fragmented in the modern period as the academy has lost sight of the spiritual basis for the integration of knowledge and the essential interdisciplinary nature of human existence.

Having lost the basis for integration, people have begun to discover that empiricism by itself does not lead to the certainty once imagined by the religious skeptic. This fragmentation of knowledge, however, can occur in any culture. It has occurred in the ancient world in more than one culture. Plato and Aristotle represent a dramatic, mutually exclusive approach to knowledge. Plato's system chooses spiritual knowledge at the expense of physical knowledge. Aristotle's system reverses the priority by choosing physical knowledge over spiritual knowledge. Buddhism denies the physical while Confucianism focuses on the physical.

Pharisees and Sadducees

First-century Judaism was divided along similar lines. The division was represented by two distinct religious parties, the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The Sadducees were identified with the temple; the Pharisees with the synagogue. The Sadducees focused attention on the present and had a concrete worldview. They believed that people received their rewards and punishments in this physical life. Religious observance concentrated on the ceremonial laws associated with the sacrificial system and the priesthood. The Sadducees did not believe in resurrection or life after death. They did not accept the books of the prophets as authoritative Scripture. They only accepted the first five books of the Bible as sent from God. They believed God revealed himself in history through signs and wonders like the plagues of Egypt rather than through the prophets.

The Pharisees, on the other hand, had a strong focus on the spiritual world, including angels and demons. They believed in a future resurrection and judgment. According to the judgment, people would receive either reward or punishment. They believed that God sent the prophets as his messengers and that their messages had been vindicated by the destruction of Israel and Judah. They also believed many prophecies remained to be fulfilled. Religious observance concentrated on the reading of the Law, the Prophets, and the Wisdom books and the application of the law to life. Though their theological understanding was quite different, the Pharisees had an orientation to knowledge similar to Plato, while the Sadducees had an orientation similar to Aristotle. Both groups came into conflict with Jesus, who affirmed both the physical and the spiritual orientations.

How does a person move from the thought processes and biases of one sphere of knowledge to another so that both areas inform and relate to each other in a constructive way? Are two distinct spheres of knowledge mutually exclusive and independent of one another? The academic disciplines represent different spheres of knowledge which are legitimate for what they describe. Intellectual chauvinism regularly occurs in the academy when one discipline perceives itself to be more legitimate than the others. Something of this same dynamic may occur between science and religion from both sides. As has been illustrated from the example of the other disciplines, however, the problem does not lie with either science or religion as realms of knowledge. The problem lies with the philosophical or cultural prejudices of those who set science and religion against each other.

Mind and brain carry on a dialogue in understanding of the everyday as well as the spiritual. The mind apprehends the physical world through the senses and apprehends the spiritual world through faith.

I have amblyopia. What results is crippled vision. I do not have the same capacity for apprehending the world as those who have two good eyes, but I can apprehend the world of vision. It is a slightly distorted world, but the world is still there. Others perceive it better than I do. Some people have a stronger faith and perceive the spiritual realm more clearly than I do. They have a clearer vision of God than I. Some people are blind and cannot see the physical world of light. A subjectivist view of reality would conclude that the world is not there. The correlation of the other senses, however, suggests that it is there. The other senses cannot prove the existence of light, but they give evidence of it.

The Problem of Interpretation

Science and religion share a sticky problem. Both disciplines must interpret the very thing with which they are concerned. Science interprets the physical world, while religion interprets the spiritual world. The interpretation is never the thing itself. The interpretation represents what a person or group of people say about the thing.

The Falls of the Ohio are a vast outcropping of limestone formed of marine fossils. Geologists and paleontologists study the Falls to interpret them. The most current interpretation represents

the prevailing theory to account for them. The Falls are the thing itself while the theory is an interpretation of the thing.

The Bible is a vast account of the activity and purpose of God that accumulated over a period of centuries. Hebrew and Greek scholars, preachers, and theologians study the Bible to interpret it. The interpretations given represent theology, or thought about God. The Bible is the thing itself, while theology is an interpretation of the Bible. The Bible is revelation from God, while theology is human thought about God.

Historically in the West, science has spoken dogmatically about the physical world and religion has spoken dogmatically about the spiritual world. Both had an unshakable confidence in their interpretations as the truth. The interpretation became the truth rather than the thing itself being the truth. The problem of this mind-set grows over time as one scientific theory replaces another scientific theory to become the new truth. Among theologians the old theology gives way to the new theology which presents itself as the real truth after all. One may declare that science has a greater claim to truth than religion, but one must then make a case for which science: the science of 1620, 1730, or 1870? One may declare that theology has a greater claim to truth than science, but one must then make a case for which theology: Calvinism, Arminianism, Thomism, or Dispensationalism?

The rock-solid certainty of modernity has given way to the foundationless uncertainty of postmodernity. Scientists have begun to doubt the objective reality of the physical world as they have grown to doubt the validity of their own observations. Theologians have begun to doubt the objective content of faith as the Bible is viewed increasingly as a subjective collection of culturally captive stories. For both science and religion, the absence of certainty has more to do with broad cultural forces than with the objectivity of physical reality or biblical revelation.

The interpretation that claims absolute certainty and the interpretation that dismisses objective truth have more to do with the forces at work within culture than with nature and the Bible. Both approaches have an underlying arrogance about them. The first view claims that I have the truth; therefore, you do not. The second view claims that I do not have the truth; therefore, you do not either! The first claims too much, while the second does not claim enough.

In terms of what can be known, this book affirms the objective existence of a physical world which may be known, though we may misunderstand and misinterpret our observations of our world. This book also affirms the existence of a Creator who is responsible for the physical universe of which people are a part. Because the Creator is personal, God has the capacity to communicate. The Bible represents the communication of God to people, although God has communicated much more than the Bible contains, as the Bible itself affirms.