

Connecting
Religion
with
Theistic Science

Ian Thompson, Ph.D.
www.ianthompson.org

We need to discuss the manner in which we connect science and theism, or science and religion, or science and God. We have to prepare some groundwork before we can discuss the details of theism because there are many concepts and misconceptions about how this connection can be achieved. It would be useful to form some general ideas by means of which one can generate a proper understanding, in order to name this approach *theistic science*.

April 2015

Naturalism and its Difficulties

Naturalism is the view that everything is natural, or that physical nature (the materialists' intended idea) is everything that there is. This is the implicit view of many who claim to investigate the world "scientifically". Naturalism allows only physical explanations of things: everything has a cause that is physical and so it looks for mechanisms. An example given here is of clockwork, a traditional symbol for a mechanistic explanation.

Furthermore, of course, the idea is not to rely on anything about God. "Naturalists" in trying to form an explanation of religion, for example, will discuss the history of religion, including the coming and going of sects, and all sorts of things, *without* mentioning God. This would be a sort of naturalistic explanation of religion.

But this modern naturalism actually has its difficulties, which tend to get brushed over. First of all, it does not explain the mind: it does not even admit that we *have* minds! It does not say anything about minds. It does not say anything about consciousness. Consciousness is a rather mysterious process to modern naturalism. There is a lot of debate in the literature: some saying consciousness can be reduced to physics or explained in terms of material processes, others that it cannot be reduced, or that it is "emergent" from physics, or various things. And then, even more seriously, there is really no explanation of the origin of life, no explanation of how the first life was produced, nor is there any explanation of why life has detailed informational structure: how DNA is a code for other amino acids and proteins. That fact that there seems to be a design or information built into the basis of life is still a mystery from the naturalistic point of view. Darwin, for example, thought that the living cell was just a bag of protoplasm lacking detailed internal structure. On that basis one might imagine small changes to a bag, or to collections of bags, but we now know that DNA and cell structure are very much more complicated.



But if one asks a scientist about all these things, which have not been explained, they respond that 'We are going to explain it in the future! We have made lots of progress, and in just a few years we are going to explain it.' But scientists have been saying that for a long time. Karl Popper, the philosopher, calls this '*promissory materialism*'. In other words, the materialists *promise* that in the future they will have an explanation. The reply, of course, is that they may have just solved the 'easy' problems, and what David Chalmers calls the 'hard problems' remain. Promissory materialism begs the question 'how long should one wait?' Would it be 50 years before deciding that materialism has failed, or 500 years? In other words, it is impossible to say whether materialism has failed or not if we always rely on the promise that in time science will eventually answer these primary questions.

Making Alternatives to Naturalism

Realizing these shortcomings, would it not be eminently rational to try *alternatives*, and to try them *now*. Now is the time to present new concepts, and further develop ideas about theistic science to connect science and religion, without reducing them (or separating them, either), so one can see what predictions will thence result. This should be carried on *alongside* existing science. It is like 'let a thousand flowers bloom!' We should examine parallel ideas at the same time in a fashion that gives true meaning to the word "rational", to weigh one concept against another.

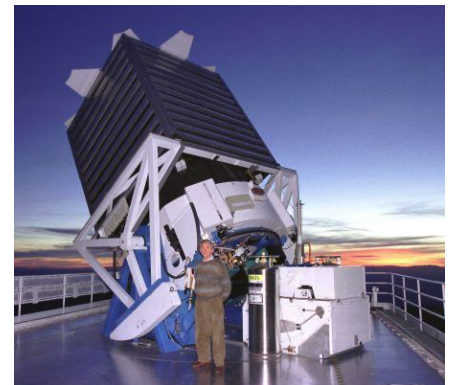
This is the program that I have been developing over the last several decades based on a keen interest in physics, Swedenborg and spiritual life. You will come to see the way I have developed these thoughts in order to combine science and religion that are here presented as an *alternative* to naturalistic science.

In order to form an alternative science let's look at what science wants or needs to be "scientific". The very first thing is that an alternative view has to produce plausible and convincing explanations because scientists say that they accept 'the best explanations'. This is fairly basic, perhaps. That means that if I have an alternative view, or you have an alternative view about minds and souls and nature and so on, we need to take that theory and make predictions from it, and see if it explains the things that we know about the world and about life. If our alternative views provide a better explanation, then they form a scientific idea.

Overall Views of Observations and of Causes

But it's a bit more complicated than that. Although scientists say that they just follow the best explanation, nevertheless they still have an overall view, a sort of ideological view, about certain general properties of the world.

Furthermore, if you have a telescope and you want to understand what it does, you need a theory about the observation of things. When Galileo talked to the establishment of his time while demonstrating his telescope, all that the learned authorities *knew* was that telescopes and lenses produced distortion. They weren't sure that looking through a strange glass object showed anything that was actually there, rather than as an artifact of the telescope. In order to understand what telescopes show, one needs to have a theory, a practice, and an understanding about the details of telescopes. And one needs to know how to observe. If one observes something that is not comprehended, either one's theory is inadequate or wrong, or it means that one's instruments or powers of observation are deficient. The standard rebuttal to the many strange things which are beyond science is that they are



figments of the imagination, hence the importance of constructing of a theory regarding observation.

The next step is to give an overall theory about how causes operate. If a theory about causes is not mainstream science, then one needs to construct a fully-fledged and effective account about what causes are, and how they operate, so we can talk about them unambiguously. For example, if we want to make '*correspondences*' intrinsic to the idea about how causes operate, then we have to understand certain principles of correspondences, including those which govern their function, if we are to understand this component of causation.

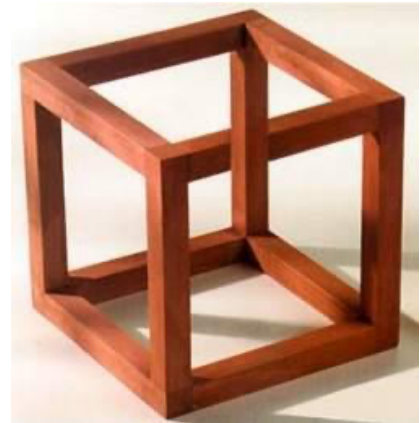
When we look at how scientists think, they very often generate a theory on their own to start with, and then look for evidence to support it. Admittedly that's what I'm doing. A lot of people make assumptions, and look for evidence to support it. I can do that with combining theism and science. Other people can do that with mechanistic or materialistic explanations. The only way to get around this difficulty of multiple starting points is to study the parallel positions simultaneously, allowing people to compare the two explanations. In other words, one should again adopt a pluralistic view about how science should operate. Different overall theories should be allowed. I am not trying to negate the value of existing science, but I am trying to form an alternative, vastly expanded structure. Next to the house of existing science, I am trying to build another house, which we can build up, and see what it's like to live in. If it's nicer to live in, and if it gives a better explanation of scientific things, it would be strong evidence of its superiority. So those are the basic requirements one needs in order to be scientific. An overall theory that explains everything that goes on, at least in a general if not specific way, if correct, would of course be quite powerful and immensely useful.

Starting Theistic Science

Let's think now about how we would go about forming a scientific theory that had theism and God in it. How would you do that? Material science starts from the assumption that there isn't a God, so what can we do? The obvious thing is to start from the assumption or postulate that there *is* a God! If some people are allowed to start by assuming that there is no God, then one can build another building, right next door, that is based on the assumption that there is a God. One can follow that path as an alternative, in a contrast to the naturalistic way.

And then we have to spell out the basic ideas of theism. We have to present them without ambiguity, and in a non-metaphorical way. We have to form ideas that can be understood as literally true. Often, when Christians look at Genesis, they say the first chapter is true, but not literally true. OK! But then what *is* Genesis 1 referring to? That is the question! And if one is to understand what is going on, then one should have an idea about what Genesis 1 is actually referring to.

Another consequence of this is that no paradoxes should be allowed. Some philosophers are very keen on paradoxes, and here is an example of a visual paradox. It is a box which is paradoxical in three dimensions. We cannot, in reality, have this paradoxical design in three dimensions! By paradox in general, I mean two things which appear to contradict each other. For example, some philosophies and some religions say that 'we are God' but 'we are distinct from God' at the same time. That is an obvious paradox: holding two things that appear to contradict each other if they are held at the same time. Because it is not explained whether (or not) this means there is a real contradiction, we should ideally *avoid* all paradoxes so as to be above suspicion. That is because it is well known (from the logical point of view) that if one allows two things to really contradict each other at the same time, then one can prove *anything*. This is a general feature of an inconsistent system, rendering it useless. So one wants, at all costs, to keep logical consistency. I therefore emphasize quite strongly the rational consistency of the ideas that we are trying to present.



Avoiding Reductionism

Here is another juncture where we must decide how to proceed. Instead of saying that 'minds are nothing but brains', or that 'souls are nothing but minds', or that 'God is nothing but an idea in our mind', the cosmos, or everything that there is, let's avoid these *reductionist* or 'nothing but' explanations. We need to have a proper account of how there could be, for example, minds, and how they are related to brains, how they are connected, but not equivalent. They are distinct but are causally connected: one can affect the other, and the other can in return, affect the first. This must be possible without demolishing one or the other. For if we do not actually have minds, then we don't think, we don't have ideas, and we don't have feelings. It is, therefore, a serious problem to deny that there are minds!

Lastly, to make science theistic, one wants to make predictions, and comparisons using experiments. One would say that if these predictions are confirmed, then it is evidence in support of theistic science. That is the general principle of doing science. One will see, as progress is made, whether the starting point is confirmed or not.

Overlapping Magisteria

I say that theism has empirical effects. It makes predictions about what happens in the world, and these happenings can be observed. An opposing view is called the Non-overlapping Magisteria view (NOMA) of evolutionary scientist Stephen J Gould. This is a popular, albeit somewhat hollow, concept. Another way of putting it is that 'Science tells us *how* things happen, and Faith or Religion tells us *why*'. It is a common way that many people use to divide science from religion, and it has some advantages. It protects science from religion. If one wants a theism, or a religion, or an idea about God that does not in turn

feel threatened by science, then one way of removing that threat is to simply say that they are not connected with each other.

But this Non-overlapping Magisteria view has some serious defects. For example, if we are to know God, then God must be able to influence us, now, in the present moment. And if God is to be involved with the world, as most religions say that God *is* involved, then God must make a difference. One can argue, as materialists do, that God cannot make a difference if the world has evolved without any causal connection to Him whatsoever. Why would one need God in that case, they ask, if one has a complete explanation without God?

Thus, if we are to have some understanding, or knowledge, or even perception of God, there must be some Divine influence. And furthermore, religion and theism *do* talk about *how* things arise, and not just *why* things are. For instance, one can talk about human nature and one can discuss whether we have souls or minds. While these things are disputed by mainstream science, if theism gives us true insights into them then one will gain a far more complete understanding of creation. Likewise one might get a better understanding of psychology, and preferably spiritual psychology as well. And, furthermore, we accept that, in religious history, revelations have occurred. Prophets said that God spoke to them, and they, in turn, told us what God revealed to them. Consider too the dramatic example of the incarnation. Someone appeared and claimed to be God, and asserted that He and God are one. There would obviously be serious influences of God on the world if these things were true.

Theism claims, therefore, that there are overlaps between the spiritual and the natural world. And if one is to understand these overlaps properly, it is necessary to think critically about what religion is, on one side, and what science is on the other. And we have to think of them in such a way that they can be combined, without collapsing into one, because there are some differences as well as connections.

Objections to Theistic Science

If I were to present these ideas to a scientific group, there would be some standard, rather predictable responses. There are some scientific objections to theism, the first being, that if God were allowed as an explanation in science, then 'anything goes', that, no matter what happens, one could say 'God did it'. The explanation of 'God did it' could be used, they suspect, for any event whatsoever. God, in this case, is thought of as some person with a free will outside reality, someone who is not bound by any of the natural laws. To them, this would be an overwhelmingly disruptive thought and it would be taken to interfere with everything that scientists do. If that were to be the case then nothing could form any rules or patterns, or regular or irregular activities. Comprehensible or incomprehensible things could equally well be explained by God, they would think. If God were making miracles happen all the time, then nothing would make sense: one could not engage in science like this.

We want start replying to this objection by saying that God is not some arbitrary and capricious old man who does what he likes without rhyme or reason. It is clear, when one gets a better understanding of religion, that there is a certain constancy and *reliability* about God, which, while perhaps not in accord with everyone's views, is critical to understanding the true nature of reality. In fact, as the religions and the churches gain a better understanding of God, the more he does *not* look like a capricious old man.

If one allows for a scientific theism, one observes that the previous reasons for opposing theism in science arise from misunderstandings about the nature of God. That is why one has to make it clear what the foundation of our theism is, and explain it in a simple rational way: without contradiction and without paradox. This is necessary to avoid misunderstandings and to be sufficiently comprehensive to enable acceptance by the scientifically sceptical mind. I believe that, with the help of Swedenborg, there are some basic ideas that can be useful to achieve these ends.

There are considerable regularities in the world, and one should be able to explain the source and nature and reasons for these regularities. Proceeding along these lines we can say that the source of regularities might be the constant and eternal nature of the love and wisdom of God. One can see that that would be the beginning of an explanation within theistic science as to why there are regularities in the world. But we then have to explain lots more about how the love and wisdom of God operate, and what in fact are the regularities that result.

The sun is a good metaphor or simile for the constancy of God. Lots of religions use the metaphor of a shining star or the sun. God isn't a sun, but the sun is a source of light and heat that is *similar* (we propose) to love and wisdom.

Questions to be answered

A common question is, "how there can be a *personal* god?" Lots of science-minded people don't understand how there can *possibly* be a personal god. And then there is the question of whether the world is made up of *one* substance (monistically), or *two* (which is dualism), or are there *many levels*? You will have heard discussions of 'planes of existence', or 'multiple dimensions', but are those real, or just metaphors to help our imagining?

Once we have answered these basic questions, we can then get on to "what is the connection between the mind and the body?" Once we have 'fully existing' minds and brains, and once we have multiple levels (or planes, or whatever you call them), we then have to discuss how they are related. Obviously, when one generates a mental intention to move one's hand in one's mind, one can move one's hand, indeed then one's ideas can influence the physical world. The question is: how is that possible? And when one observes things, the physical world in turn affects what one thinks: that obviously happens, somehow.

Then there is a rather more general question, about the *history* of all of these things. How did these physical and biological and mental structures come into existence? We also can discuss the history and the growth of the individual person: what happens when one is born and grows up as a child. When children develop, they learn many things at many different stages, and they get better at some things, and still other things change and differ. And then there is the question of the *evolutionary* coming into existence of life. What do these novel principles say about the production of new species, or the development of new processes and new kinds of organs and bodies? There is also the question of how the *world* itself came into existence at the very beginning. We think of it as the Big Bang. Genesis has another story, so we have to think about what God was doing in “the beginning”. In making Theistic Science I want to combine science and theism in a coherent, convincing and rational way. If we are going to do that, then both of them have to be changed slightly from the way that they are quite often understood.

Scientists, in general, believe that all causes are physical. Some even *define* as physical all causes of physical things! But if we are to understand theism, and how God interacts with the world, then we have to realize that some causes are *not* physical, or are *beyond* the physical. They can still be scientific, as long as we have a clear idea about what these causes are. So it is a question of developing ideas that enable us to understand what non-physical causes might be, and how they may still have physical effects.

And then, as well as science changing, religion has to adapt slightly because the principles of theism or religion I am using necessitate a God of unselfish love. We will see later what other Divine attributes might be included or excluded. Perhaps you think this is obvious, but not everyone shares these insights.

Where to begin theism?

The *traditional* way of understanding theism in philosophy is to say that

God is an (or the) ‘eternal omnipotent omniscient being who sustains the existence of world’.

This is the traditional way of defining God, or thinking of God, within theism. But the trouble is that this view and these attributes do *not* have specific consequences for the way that minds, mental things and spiritual things operate and how they connect to physical reality. What sort of principles or laws should we then expect?

We might assume that we have minds, souls, or both. It is obvious to many that if there were an omnipotent God as above, then he could give us minds to think, and souls, and bodies to do things with. But it does not really tell us *what* our minds are like, or *what* our bodies are like, or why there is a physical world, in fact. Why could not God just have created us as complete, fully developed humans all at once, for example? So I would suggest, rather, that we want not just a God of the philosophers, an eternal, omnipotent,

omni-being, but we want something more, a God of living. We want something to do with life, and love. So I use a different way of defining who God is. It is still a theistic view:

God is that person who is a necessary being, who is unselfish love itself, wisdom itself, and (in fact) life itself.

It is these 'itself's or '*per se*' or 'aseity' which we are regarding as essential features of God and Divinity. This God enlivens our world. God did not just create and sustain it, but enlivens it even now. The idea of God as a person is not necessarily present in the first traditional definition above of God. Most people think that it is, but *how* do they have a good idea of a person from that starting point?

In order to understand personhood, it helps if we understand what *we* are. A full understanding of God as a person requires (at least!) knowing in what way we are persons, and the connection between all these. So there is much more to understand about God, and more to understand about what people are, especially as to their having mental and spiritual life.

An important ingredient of divinity is the 'unselfish'. We will find out later what sort of predictions we would make on the basis of this unselfishness. It has indeed specific consequences for way the world is organized. (To give a preview: the opposite selfishness would require a pantheistic world rather than a theistic world.) So one can still have a bright shining light, if one wants to use that image, but there is necessarily a Divine Human Being as the source of the light.

This is just a reorientation of how to start theism. It's different from the traditional philosophical way of starting theism, but it is closer to what I think we need in order to make predictions about the world. And I think that if you asked most people, they would agree that it is the same God that one ordinarily speaks of. This second starting point, based on God's completely unselfish nature, is a more specific identification of what we need. Then, if we are going to look at the ideas of what this living theism *contains*, we find several main principles. Let me list the main ones.

Five Theistic Principles

The first principle is that **God is Love**. Later I will might give a justification of this is in terms of Christianity, but most people recognize that God is love. It is an unselfish love, as stated, and that means that it cannot love only itself. It could not love itself *at all*, if we take an 'radically complete' view of unselfishness.

The second thing is that **God is Wisdom**, as well as love. There is knowledge in God as well as desire. When love and wisdom act, actions are produced that make things happen.

And then, if one looks in a bit more detail, we say that **God is Life Itself**. This is also based on religion. I think most people who have an understanding of religion will agree that God is the source of life. It is the source of all our dispositions and life to think and to will and to act and to do things.

The fourth principle is that **Everything in the world is a kind of image of God**. Which means that all minds, all mental objects, even every physical thing, from a finger to a sun to a galaxy to a ... beetle, is an image of God in some way. Everything is different, but they are all in some way an image of God. And, in particular, an image as all of these three aspects: the love, wisdom and life that comes from God. Everything is living in the sense that it has powers to act and do things, and so we need to understand how each object in the world, living or nonliving, physical or mental or spiritual, *can* do things. I want to see how, in theism, the being, power and form of everything comes from God.

And a fifth summary principle is that **our life from God, deriving from Divine Power, is a life that in a very fundamental way depends on us**. In other words, it is like the way the sun in the solar system shines on everyone. Sunlight comes to the earth in uniform intensity, but the earth rotates, so we have days and nights. Because *we* vary, the reception of the solar light varies, while the sun itself is constant. This 'depending on us' means that the light which we receive from the source depends on our abilities to receive that light, to retain life, and to act from it.

These are starting principles that we can use in order to understand *how* all these things happen. This understanding is what we want in theistic science: understanding of all the steps involved.

This set of principles was first suggested by Emanuel Swedenborg in his book *Divine Love and Wisdom* in 1763, but I think they are still just as useful. These principles have more predictive power than to say that God is omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal. There is a lot of debate about what 'omnipotence' means. Does it mean anything logically possible? Does it mean everything good? Does it mean everything that is not contradictory to the nature of God? You cannot actually produce many firm *consequences* of God being omnipotent. One would naively expect God to act a lot more often than he appears to do, and people would complain that God is acting or not acting in given situations.

Those five principles, we claim, are common to the theistic religions: which are Judaism, Christianity and Islam. If we just look for the support for these principles in Christianity:

1. God is Love: "God is Love" is stated in 1 John 4:8
2. God being Wisdom, the source of all wisdom : "the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding" Proverbs 2:6
3. That God is Life Itself: stated rather specifically: "the Father has life in himself" in John 5:26.

4. Image of God is traditional in Judaism, in Genesis: “God created man in his own image” Genesis 1:27. So I am actually generalizing that: *everything* is an image of God but in a reduced way. Man might be the best image of God (a good man or a good woman might be), but everything – animals, plants, minerals – all have *some* similarities with us.
5. Our life is from God: “The free gift of God is eternal life” Romans 6:23

These principles are not stated exactly in the Bible as I have written them here, but I believe these five form a good basis for understanding the principles that lie behind and support the Christian religion. They can then be used to predict what religious life should follow, the nature of theism and God, and how God is related to the world.

I want to understand these things in detail: the basic principles, since I am a physicist! I want to understand in the same general way that if one has a quantum theory and one writes down the principles of quantum theory, then one can use them to make predictions and apply them to specific cases. Theistic science may be less mathematical, but it is full of intricate details waiting to be discovered. What I am doing here is using some ideas from Emanuel Swedenborg, and extracting what I think of as a minimal set in order to carry on and answer questions about the world.

I said earlier, that if we were to take these ideas of theistic science, which is combining science and religion, then there is a little adjusting of religion needed, and a little bit of adjustment of science as well. Let me say again what these adjustments are, and hope that they are not too difficult for you.

Adjusting Religion

I have said this several times: God is a being composed entirely of Love, and, moreover, a completely unselfish love. The consequence of that is that anger, jealousy, exclusiveness and selfishness are completely foreign to God. You may think that is obvious, but God is often portrayed as angry or jealous! And if you read the Bible, you will find places where the ‘wrath of God’ is doing terrible things, and hence people say, the Biblical God is angry. Sometimes. Depending on what you do. So, we have to have an explanation of why the Biblical God appeared to be angry. If we are to follow through the proposal that I am making, then we have to have an explanation of why, in historical times, God appeared to be angry and jealous. As I said, it is *our* variations that lead to God having varying appearances to us. This leads to questions about spiritual psychology. In particular, the theory we need is for how, when we are angry, God *appears* to be angry with us. I am sure you know, if you have children, that if the children are angry with the parents, then their parents appear to the children to be angry. There is a sort of mirror. When one looks through the haze or a window of one’s own feelings, one often sees those of other beings. It is not particularly difficult psychology, but we have to examine that, and see whether it applies to the way that God appears to humans throughout history. That’s a matter of adjusting religion.

Adjusting Science

We then have a need for adjusting science. We have to consider that there are causes beyond the physical. We have to allow physical processes to depend on our individual minds, or even on the transcendent mind of God. In other words, there has to be a way of mental and spiritual and Divine things affecting what the world is. I said at the beginning that there has to be *some* influence, otherwise we would not *know* about these things. But there has to be a so-to-speak law-like way – a reasonable and rational and logical way – in which these influences occur.

More to the point in science, one should *not* refuse to consider evidence of such things happening, because of a denial in advance of such dependence. Some people say in advance that ‘I am a naturalist’ or ‘I am a physicalist’, so that it is *impossible* for these things to happen. They say, for example, that ‘there is no evidence for life after death!’ But, if you look at the last 150 years of the Society for Psychical Research, there are lots of near-death studies, and all sorts of things, you find an *enormous* amount of evidence for the continuing existence of life after death. But, one says there is no evidence. One *refuses to look* at the evidence, because, as I said earlier on, one has to have an overall theory about what evidence is acceptable. Therefore, if one is stuck in a physical bubble and says that ‘only evidence which I approve as reasonable will be considered as evidence’, then one must try an alternative. I am trying to present an alternative way – an alternative rational, logical way – of seeing how religion might operate. There might, for example, be life after death in a reasonable and logical way, in a way that make sense without being vindictive, without God punishing people (a God of love would never punish people). As an example of evidence we have the experiments with Zener cards, with which ESP has been detected many times over the last century. So science should not be frightened of novel ideas.

Some of the scientists – parapsychologists – say they just want to generate more evidence in order to *prove* that there is ESP, or whatever. But this kind of ‘proof’ never really works, because you can always find flaws. You can always dig for little loopholes in the proof, so it is more a matter of the ‘balance of evidence’ and the ‘balance of probabilities’ rather than proof.

New ways of looking at causation

We need to reexamine our basic ideas about ‘substance’ and ‘form’. For a theistic science needs ideas about substance and form that are applicable to all processes: physical, mental or spiritual. I want some general ideas that can be applied to all of these things. In this I am following Aristotle, but not Aquinas.

And then one needs to develop the concept of ‘multiple levels’. One might think of them as ‘dimensions’ or ‘planes’, but I want to develop a more specific idea: an unambiguous, literal, non-metaphorical way of understanding multiple levels. I am going to use some examples from physics and psychology, so there will be a little bit of physics introduced. If you can remember about forces and acceleration, that might help. And I am going to use what I call

the general principles of 'Generation' and 'Selection'. I will claim that these principles can be used to connect physical things and mental things. Up to now, physicists have an idea about what physics is, and mental things just seem to be foreign in a very strange way. But if they have no clear idea about the connections between them, then they have no general principles to produce the connections. I will show, there is a concept of 'discrete degrees' that will be extremely useful for these issues.

Proving God?

The reader may in the end wonder what claims or predictions I can make to justify the 'extraordinary claims' to be made about God. Will I have produced 'extraordinary evidence' to prove these demanding claims? One answer is that the determination of what is 'extraordinary' relative to 'normal' is itself theory-laden: it depends on our previous theoretical suppositions. Many of the claims of modern science, for instance that material objects may possess consciousness and intentionality, are themselves equally extraordinary and so should require extraordinary evidence and not merely promissory notes that 'one day in the future' science will explain how this is possible.

I am not ever going to logically prove the basic features of theism that are needed for theistic science. There are in fact many attempts in other places to prove the existence and attributes of God from what we know and maybe from what we already know outside of religion, but that is not my approach. I do not argue in a natural theology from nature and science to God. Instead, I start from God. Indeed, I propose to start science *from* God and theism. Deductive arguments from God can be rigorous and firm.

Perhaps you may consider that this theistic science can later provide retroactive evidence for God: just as a successful string theory would provide evidence for the existence of strings. This will then be an inductive argument from observations to principles. Like all inductive arguments, this transition from evidence to God is not an absolute proof, since alternative explanations might be discovered later that could appear to be effective. In the meantime, we will pursue theistic science to see what it looks like.

Dr Ian J. Thompson is currently employed as a Nuclear Physicist in the Nuclear Theory and Modeling Group at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, USA, having until 2006 been Professor of Physics at the University of Surrey, UK.

His professional research deals with coupled-channels and few-body models for nuclear structure and reactions, especially concerning halo nuclei. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Physics in the U.K. He has published over 201 articles in refereed journals, supervised 9 Ph.D. research students, written a nuclear physics textbook *Nuclear Reactions for Astrophysics*, and has contributed the chapter on Coulomb Functions to a new NIST Handbook of Mathematical Functions.

His research in philosophy, psychology and theology is of equal duration in years, and has produced 6 refereed papers, 2 book chapters, and one book previous to *Starting Science From God*.

Disclaimer: This book is not supported or authorized by any of the organizations or institutions at which he is employed and/or with which he is affiliated, and does not represent any position or policy of those institutions.

Further Information

Theistic Science at www.theisticscience.org

Ian Thompson's book
"Starting Science From God" at www.beginningtheisticscience.com

Ian Thompson's personal website at www.ianthompson.org

This article:
<http://www.theisticscience.org/Connecting.html>

