

# **Reason or religious affections — a false dichotomy in divine revelation as a legacy of the early modern construction of divine agency in the world**

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## **Abstract**

The early nineteenth century saw the development of a dichotomy in affirming the notion of divine revelation in the world. On the one hand it was assumed that Christian faith could be supported by reasoned argument based on evidence from the books of nature or scripture or by appeal to the religious affections, the subjective inward sensation of God's action felt in the human heart. On the other hand, it was assumed that if these under serious scrutiny were to become subject to doubt then the Christian faith would be relegated to intellectual limbo. The intellectual tension developed by this dichotomy is evident in the life and work of a number of significant figures in the nineteenth century, but also colours contemporary dialogue between theology and science.

It is argued that this dichotomy is false and came about as a consequence of the understanding of divine agency which developed in early modernity from a combination of late medieval understanding of the divine perfections, the notion of the two books of God's revelation — scripture and nature, and a generic adaptation of Augustine's understanding of anthropology in relation to divine agency inspiration.

It will be suggested that there are other ways forward for dialogue which can avoid what often looms as an impasse in discussion.

## Keywords

Divine self-disclosure, religion, science, Darwin, Huxley, divine agency, divine revelation, religious affections

## Re-examining problematic assumptions in both early modern science and theology about divine self-disclosure

A courtship letter written in November 1838 illustrates a commonly held dichotomy in the nineteenth century that the alternative to basing faith on rational evidence was to be found in the religious sentiments. The young gentleman had expressed doubts about the rational evidence for divine self-disclosure and is answered by his fiancée's appeal to the emotional impact of a particular biblical passage and her confidence that as newlyweds they shared the same sentiments about personal religion. The young man expressing his doubts had been a keen disciple of Paley's *Evidences of the Christian Religion*, even to the point of memorizing large sections of it. The bride-to-be writes:

My reason tells me that honest & conscientious doubts cannot be a sin, but I feel it would be a painful void between us. I thank you from my heart for your openness with me & I should dread the feeling that you were concealing your opinions from the fear of giving me pain. It is perhaps foolish of me to say this much but my own dear Charley we now do belong to each other & I cannot help being open with you. Will you do me a favour? Yes I am sure you will, it is to read our Saviour's farewell discourse to his disciples which begins at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> Chap of John. It is so full of love to them & devotion & every beautiful feeling. It is the part of the New Testament I love best.

Wedgwood 1838

Charley was in fact Charles Darwin and the letter written by his soon to be wife Emma Wedgwood. Emma's was not an anti-rationalist appeal to religious sentiment as shown by her continuing confidence in the outcome of honest and conscientious exploration of doubts, given the limits of human understanding.

It seems to me also that the line of your pursuits may have led you to view chiefly the difficulties on one side, & that you have not had time to consider & study the chain of difficulties on the other, but I believe you do not consider your opinion as formed. May not the habit in scientific pursuits of believing nothing till it is proved, influence your mind too much in other things which cannot be proved in the same way, & which if true are likely to be above our comprehension. I should say also that there is a danger in giving up revelation which does not exist on the other side, that is the fear of ingratitude in casting off what has been done for your benefit as well as for that of all the world & which ought to make you still more careful, perhaps even fearful lest you should not have taken all the pains you could to judge truly. I do not know whether this is arguing as if one side were true & the other false, which I meant to avoid, but I think not. I do not quite agree with

you in what you once said—that luckily there were no doubts as to how one ought to act. I think prayer is an instance to the contrary, in one case it is a positive duty & perhaps not in the other. But I dare say you meant in actions which concern others & then I agree with you almost if not quite.

Wedgwood 1838

The change in Darwin's thinking from his initial Paleyan 'orthodoxy' to his later agnosticism or theism is not a simple process. Charles and Emma demonstrated attitudes typical of the era. Throughout their long marriage, they understood that the choice had to be the contrasting one between rational evidence and religious affection. Charles and Emma read literature together which was meant to inspire their religious affections — long after Darwin's had died with the death of his beloved daughter Annie. While personal tragedy led to his giving up Christianity, he rationalised this step (Ospovat 1981). His explanation shows his investment in the Paleyan description of Christianity, which assumed that revelation, the natural order and providence depend on the perfect agency of an omnipotent God. Darwin's intellectual justification for his prior rejection of traditional Christianity is that his research showed this precondition of perfection in nature to be false. Darwin's religious views never evolved into a definitive position and he was usually reluctant to speak or write of it. In his own notes he identifies the variations and at times the vagueness of his theological thinking.

The choice between the religious affections and a Christian faith based in rational evidence was common during the nineteenth century. A survey of books shows a similar frequency of occurrence of the terms 'religious affections' and 'natural theology' related to evidence supported faith.

The questions that make this relevant to a contemporary discussion of the nature of divine self-disclosure include:

- What contributed to the development of this dichotomy?
- What are the continuing issues?
- Is there a way to overcome the dichotomy?

It will be argued that the dichotomy which is still present in contemporary debate to some extent, is actually false. The development of these ideas begins long before the crystallization of the dichotomy in the mid-nineteenth century. It is necessary to suggest how the falsely limited choice between religious affections and reason develops. Then by reexamining assumptions held in common by theologians and scientists it may be possible to find a way forward which avoids the impasse.

The early modern period saw the development of a description of divine agency, which largely uncritically, has been assumed in and has shaped dialogue between theology and science. This description has also been largely assumed in understanding the means of divine self-disclosure to humans. The description assumes a generic 'god' who was often assumed to be a divine being of a class of being that has generic attributes of the type of all-perfect, all-powerful, all-good, all-knowing, etc. albeit, a class that many assumed to contain only one member. Such assumption of a

generic 'god' or Providence helped to avoid tensions between Trinitarians and Deists. The Deist Paley is a good example as his texts became set reading for training for Anglican clergy in Darwin's time. The assumption of such a generic perfect-being implied a particular character to God's actions in the natural order. These assumptions about divine action in nature were also informed by the application of the late-medieval notion of the two-books of God's revelation (both those of Scripture and nature) and a 'de-trinitised' generic understanding of Augustinian anthropology of the soul. The influence of this last factor is largely unexplored.

These assumptions together contribute to a generic metaphysical understanding of divine agency within humans upon which was built the commonly understood doctrine of divine inspiration becoming the arbiter of divine authority in Protestant thought.<sup>1</sup> The notion was that divine self-disclosure could be methodologically described by reference to the attributes of God without reference to the actual God involved. Divine inspiration depended on a particular understanding of this divine agency in human beings. This understanding was integral to early modern understanding of divine self-disclosure.

It begins with Newton who drew a parallel between divine agency by way of *ekstasis*<sup>2</sup> inspiration in the human soul and divine agency in the world. While there was contention over Newton's use of the term 'soul of world', the nature of divine agency in the world was considered spiritual and that this was linked in some way to the existence of the metaphysical human soul.

Inspiration had become, in at least the particular usage amongst Protestants in the seventeenth-century, the guarantee of God's flawless communication/divine self-disclosure to humanity unstained by human frailty, unholiness and limitations. Extended to the natural order, divine agency further guaranteed God's purposes in nature in spite of frailty and flaws. Divine agency developed as an impersonal action of generic God which relied on a particular way of God interacting with a specific Augustinian metaphysical understanding of human anatomy. This carried within it the seeds of later problems. This early modern understanding depends on there being a metaphysical soul which is stood to one side (*ekstasis*) during divine self-disclosure by the Holy Spirit.

In the various debates and developments in theology, in natural theology, natural philosophy renamed science, this description of divine self-disclosure is assumed to be unquestionably foundational to the Christian faith. It is not in dispute in the hotly contested dispute amongst Newton, Clarke and Leibniz. While Huxley's work was considered highly controversial no one faults his taking this description as his assumption. No one included the faith's defenders as well as its critics and the heterodox.

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<sup>1</sup>Usage of the term 'divine inspiration' increases through this period.

<sup>2</sup> The Greek term *ekstasis* (being stood aside) is better transliterated than translated in the connotation laden term English 'ecstatic'.

The understanding of divine agency in the world which developed was that of a generic perfect-being god, who could be – but was not necessarily – identified with the God of Christian tradition. The notion of divine perfections in the world meant: there had to be cause for everything; God must always have a motive for acting and act for the best; and the world is the best of possible worlds. It also followed in this logic that if God had to tinker with design this would indicate that the design was less than perfect. This could not be and so species could not be mutable. All things, all creatures, it was thought and widely accepted, had been perfectly created to suit their environments so that no divine adjustment was needed. These ideas found standard expression in Paley's *Evidences of Christianity* and *Natural Theology* (Paley 1843). Paley's works emerge from the post Newtonian theological deist discourses and the natural theology movement. Darwin initially enthusiastically embraced Paley's description of Christian faith, but later explicitly disowned Paley and became agnostic about the faith.

An unresolvable tension in the dialogue developed between theology and the newly professional discipline of science in the second half of the nineteenth century. Both orthodox and deist assumed that nature had to reflect the divine perfect-being and also that a precondition of the Christian faith was the existence of the metaphysical soul. Unexpectedly, the reading of the book of nature to deeper layers, both figuratively and literally, by the new sciences such as geology, palaeontology, biology and botany showed that nature was not 'perfect' as all had anticipated.

The extent of the flaw in this assumption is highlighted when the Paleyan harmonious blessed natural order is rejected by Darwin as he developed his theory. Darwin becomes an example of a scientist who found himself in a quandary regarding the Christian faith as he proved its 'precondition' false. 'Darwin's Bulldog' Huxley went further, writing at length firstly on paleontology and biology and later philosophy and theology. In addressing theology, Huxley explicitly took apart assumptions and elements of the early modern understanding of divine agency and in particular its Augustinian description of inspiration and rejected them. This can be traced in his critique of sensation as described by Newton and the ancients. He then refuted the reliability of divine inspiration by referring to inspiration as he had observed it in Pacific Islander culture. He came finally to a decisively indefinite position on faith matters – logically he was neither able to confirm nor reject faith – he coined the neologism 'agnostic' to describe this position. He was unable to confirm faith by reason and unable to conclusively comment on religious affections scientifically.

In criticizing theories of sensation Huxley demonstrated by dissection and with reference to the supposed functions of the soul, that the soul, if it exists as understood, must be corporeal and have physical extension throughout the body (Brennan 2014). Huxley lamented,

In truth, the theory of sensation, except in one point, is, at the present moment, very much where Hartley, led by a hint of Sir Isaac Newton's, left it.

Huxley 1879

The Newtonian description of sensation was a generic revision of that of Augustine's and the ancients, which assumed that God's action in self-communication to the human soul involved the soul's *ekstasis*. That is, that the human soul was somehow stood to one side.

By the end of the nineteenth-century, the connection of senses and the ability of the mind to direct muscular movement had become no longer the mystery ascribable to the metaphysical or spiritual interaction of the soul in the sensorium that they were for Newton and Augustine. *Ekstasis*, as previously understood, would in this newly discovered network of nerves, effectively require a displacement of the physical brain or at least a total temporary rewiring (Huxley 1879). As Huxley pointed out such a rewiring of nerves is clearly impossible. Thus *ekstasis* in Augustinian terms is also impossible. How could the action of the Holy Spirit's inspiring work in humans and thereby revelation necessarily require *ekstasis*? Something is wrong. Either the soul does not exist as Huxley suggested but could not prove, or God does not work by the Holy Spirit, or the explanation of the agency of the Holy Spirit is inadequate, as are descriptions of divine self-disclosure which depend on them.

Huxley shares the perception common in his time that inspiration which came by divine agency ought to be infallible. He shared the preconception but did not believe it. In his provocative 'The evolution of theology', he tackles the question of inspiration directly. At first, he traces a deprecating version of biblical history citing unusual accounts of inspiration in the Old Testament to establish a justification for a simplified and standardized method of analysis. He then relates these to phenomena he had observed elsewhere. His assumption is that if some manner of direct divine or spiritual communication exists, then it must be a common human faculty. Applying a scientific methodology to the sacred text, he assumed, generic study by comparison is possible.

Huxley's assumptions included a questionable but consistent etymological distinction between 'Jahveh' singular and 'Elohim' plural as the distinction between God and spirits. He attempted to draw common patterns in the inspiration of the witch of Endor, Samuel, and the kings Saul and David (Huxley 1886 p.303). At this point in his argument, he is content to reduce the processes to some common elements upon which he can draw parallels. What he did not accept in any way, however, were the traditional Christian interpretations of the events. Later, he was to describe all inspiration as merely a psychological oddity. The pivotal argument in the 'Evolution of Theology' is made by relating his construct of inspiration by *Elohim* 'possession' to his experience of Islander religion in the Torres Straits while travelling with the *Rattlesnake* in 1848.

This scene made an impression upon me which is not yet effaced. It left no question on my mind of the sincerity of the strange ghost theory of these savages, and of the influence which their belief has on their practical life.

Huxley 1886 p. 318

He then expands the parallel to pre-Christian Tongan religion quoting Mariner's work.

Moreover, the *Atuas*<sup>3</sup> were believed to visit particular persons, – their own priests in the case of the higher gods, but apparently anybody in that of the lower, – and to inspire them by a process which was conceived to involve the actual residence of the god, for the time being, in the person inspired, who was thus rendered capable of prophesying. For the Tongan, therefore, inspiration indubitably was possession.

Huxley 1886 p. 324

Huxley's purpose was to point out the similarity between these and the Old Testament accounts as he has interpreted them. Firstly, he identifies possession and then the notion of indwelling:

As soon as they are all seated the priest is considered as inspired, the god being supposed to exist within him from that moment.

Huxley 1886 p. 325

Having drawn a parallel, Huxley refutes infallibility and then proposes a natural explanation. As the accounts are similar but the resulting 'revelations' are incompatible, therefore no 'revelation' can be reliably true. In his twice published essay 'Witness to the Miraculous' he explicitly stated this rejection of revelation in favour of reason. He daringly goes as far as to say that dependence on the miraculous for proof of religion goes counter to the intent of the original writers.

'This is the work of the Lord', steeped in supernaturalism and glorying in blind faith, is the mental antipodes of the philosopher, founded in naturalism and a fanatic for evidence, to whom these affirmations inevitably suggest the previous question: 'How do you know that the Lord saith it?' 'How do you know that the Lord doeth it?' and who is compelled to demand that rational ground for belief, without which, to the man of science, assent is merely an immoral pretence. And it is this rational ground of belief which the writers of the Gospels, no less than Paul, and Eginhard, and Fox, so little dream of offering that they would regard the demand for it as a kind of blasphemy.

Huxley 1887, 1889

Huxley concluded that divine self-disclosure required a metaphysical soul that probably did not exist, could not have any special authority and depended on interpretive methods which were scientifically unsound. Huxley's motivation for explaining away inspiration was to find an alternative ground for ethics. The miraculous could not be used as a justification for ethics as much as it could not be used to justify God's existence. Huxley was aware of a need to interpret Scripture and nature in a manner different to the four-fold method of the Middle Ages in which allegory played an important part. However, in doing so, he also rejected the two-books metaphor. How could either the bible or nature be considered books of revelation when there could be no authoritative inspiration upon which the two-books notion is so firmly based?

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<sup>3</sup> *Atua* is Tongan for spirit.

## Moving forward

A parallel had been drawn between divine agency in humans as described in *ekstasis* inspiration and divine agency in the world complimenting early eighteenth-century understandings of the notion of the two-books and divine perfections. The validity of this understanding of divine agency in the world was understood to depend on divine perfection being reflected in the laws and design of nature. This was thought to mean that: there was a cause for everything; God acts with a motive and acts for the best; and the world was the best of possible worlds and demonstrated God's purposes. Also, this perfection in nature was put in place by God without error just as the agency of God's inspiration achieved perfect divine self-disclosure in Scripture. Darwin laid aside each aspect of purposeful perfected divine action in nature. Huxley further attacked the internal logic of the Augustinian inspiration by discounting both the existence of the soul and the authority of revelation by inspiration. The question remains, why does Christianity persist? Is it merely cultural inertia or is it that somehow perfect divine action in the world and the existence of the soul following the logic of this form of divine agency do not occupy the foundational role in Christian faith which its defenders and critics assumed it did? It will be argued that it is possible to overcome Darwin and Huxley's objections and the dichotomy between basing the Christian faith on rational evidence or religious affections. This can be achieved using a new description of divine agency which is grounded in who God has revealed God's self to be.

Nonetheless, divine agency is only one element in much larger discussions which are often clouded by three false myths. Apparently it seems, progress can only be made by either revising theology or limiting God's perfection or rejecting the faith. These three misleading notions are, that Darwinian theory trumped all opposition, that science 'defeated' religion, and that all opposition to Darwin has been non-scientific. These myths have contributed to the pessimism Bowler expressed in wondering if expecting the underlying issues to ever be resolved may be futile. These misleading notions have been used to support wider ideological agendas.

Initially, there were a number of reservations expressed about Darwinism by scientists as well as theologians regarding its structure, applicability and logic. James Moore highlights the range of differing opinions and reservations raised as people responded both theologically and scientifically to Darwin (Moore 1979 pp. 193–298). These criticisms were not restricted to academic discussion. An example of a popularist criticism was this ditty in *Punch* which alleges Darwinism is mere speculation not science at all.

'Hypotheses non fingo',  
Sir Isaac Newton said.  
And that was true, by Jingo!  
As proof demonstrated.  
But Mr. Darwin's speculation  
Is of another sort.  
'Tis one which demonstration  
In no wise doth support.

Bowler describes past attempts to reach resolution:

There have been three major episodes in the twentieth-century when interest in the possibility of constructing a reconciliation between science and religion has flared. The first occurred in the early decades of the century and forms the theme of this book. The second wave ... began in the aftermath of World War II and lasted into the 1960's. The third seems to have arisen quite recently... The tensions of the Victorian era have thus been sustained throughout the twentieth-century, each episode of challenge being followed by one of attempted reconciliation.

Bowler 1983 p. 4

Natural selection had competition as a mechanism for change. Bowler has identified four broadly competing evolutionary theories in scientific discussions after the turn of the twentieth-century. The first was Darwinism or natural selection. The second was theistic evolution in which God ordains species change (a logical heir of Sedgwick and Owen). The third was a kind of neo-Lamarckism derived from the late nineteenth-century theory in which characteristics acquired during life are passed onto a creature's offspring. The fourth, orthogenesis described progressive development of species by forces originating within the organisms (Bowler 1983). Each of these competing theories has enjoyed varying degrees of success and support from the beginning of the twentieth-century to the present day. The December 1997 *Quarterly Review of Biology* contained a series of articles on evolution and theology which represent a number of these four theories.

While unresolved underlying issues between theology and science remain, it is likely that patterns of argument like these examples will be repeated. At the turn of the twenty-first-century, Baker noted that some responses to Darwinian theoretical problems were a return to a form of Paleyanism (Baker 2002). Theological responses to Darwinism have varied considerably, and dialogue has never reached conclusion. Bowler points out that in the generations since Darwin, there have been repeated patterns of inconclusive discussion between theology and science as interest has waxed and waned from generation to generation. Indeed, some of the aspects and trends in the current dialogue between theology and science bear more than passing resemblance to other dialogues in the early twentieth century. I argue that such resolution is possible for one issue, divine agency, whose development has been shown to be linked with the early modern understanding of the divine perfections. Perfection, the existence of the soul, and divine self-disclosure through the *ekstasis* of this soul, had come to be included among the assumed preconditions of the Christian faith. Darwin and Huxley found these 'assumptions' wanting and used these assumptions among others as reasons for rejecting traditional Christianity.

### **A logical fallacy**

There is a formal logical fallacy at work that can be highlighted at the root of the 'impasse' between theology and science related to divine self-disclosure. It is *affirming the consequent* (Warburton 1993). In this case

the situation is complicated by being developed in a number of stages. The first consequent illogically affirmed according to the gentlemen clerics and theologians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who studied natural philosophy was:

If God acts, God acts perfectly.

As God made the world therefore it must be perfect.

Because the world is perfect this proves God acts.

The second consequent affirmed is in similar vein and relates directly to scriptural interpretation and thereby to inspiration. Darwin and his colleagues show that the natural world is not a pristine fixed ideal perfection. The conclusion is negated like this: The world is not perfect; therefore, God does not act. Thus, inspiration leading to revelation is not valid, because God does not act. Thus, the whole Christian faith must either be rejected or radically revised.

This train of logic is a fallacy. The negation can only stand if the base assumption is the only valid description, that divine agency must be or can only be by God's perfect action and that such action in humans (and possibly in the world) must be through the *ekstasis* of the soul. Neither the consequent conclusion nor its negation necessarily follows from this particular sequence of steps if an alternative description of divine agency and thereby divine self-disclosure is possible. That is, specifically, if God can act in humans and the world without necessarily being described as reflecting perfect-being theology and that God can act in humans without assuming that they must have an Augustinian metaphysical soul.

I argue that it is indeed possible to describe divine agency and hence revelation in a way which neither ties it to perfection nor depends on an outmoded metaphysics. The way is by a proposed incarnational description which begins with considering the pneumatological nature of divine agency within the person of Christ as its basis.

### **An alternative description of divine self-disclosure based in Christ's reception of the Holy Spirit in his preserved humanity**

The existence of the human soul as a metaphysical spiritual element of the human being has been an apparent mainstay of the Christian faith. Worryingly for this premise, neurobiological studies have located many attributes previously considered spiritual and hence metaphysical within the biochemistry of the brain (Russell et al. 1999, Master and Churchland 1997). Green, Murphy and others argue that there are alternatives to a metaphysical soul. Murphy argues that Christians should understand the soul in physicalist and non-reductionist terms. If the neuro-science is correct and the soul cannot be not metaphysical then many theological descriptions will need serious revision or possibly even abandonment. It could be asked whether there may be a way to describe the soul which answers the challenge of neurobiology and anatomy. Rather than pose a 'soul-of-the-gaps', could divine self-communication to humans be described in a manner which operates independently of a metaphysical soul?

What is at stake is whether divine communication to humans can actually occur as intimately and personally as Christian theology has contended. If such communication is predicated on God's contact with a metaphysical soul and there proves to be no such entity, then God can only be known by indirect means. Consequently, traditional Christian faith would stand or fall with the health of that premise.

In debating whether the soul might be metaphysical or non-metaphysical it is useful to remember Barth's comments on theology's interaction with cosmology. That is that the Christian doctrine of creation '[c]annot itself become a world-view'... '[c]annot base itself on any world-view' ... 'cannot guarantee any world-view' (Barth CD III/1 pp. 341–342). Theology 'expects no material and direct help from any world-view, ancient, modern or future' (Barth CD III/1 p. 7). Theology, Barth concludes, must stand aloof, able to give considered opposition even to those aspects of cosmology [and anthropology] whose language must be borrowed in order to make an intelligible statement of the faith in a particular time and place. To fail to do this is to risk theology ceasing to be about faith. Even where:

we think we detect an absolute union of faith with this or that world-view, we are not really dealing with faith at all, but with a partial deviation from faith such as is always possible in the life of the Church and of individuals.

Barth CD III/1 p. 9

Theological anthropology and in particular that element related to the soul, in whatever form that description might take in the process of making use of the changed (and no doubt better) contemporary worldviews, should be neither bound to nor rely on them entirely.

If it is accepted that divine self-disclosure occurs then we might argue that divine self-disclosure derives from the manner of Christ's union with the Holy Spirit as an event or datum. This does not depend on how we might explain how that works.

1. Divine agency in the world and humans depends on God's choice to act and is not conditioned *a priori* by any property of humanity or feature of the human condition;
2. Ongoing divine agency in humans is shaped by and derives from Christ's continuing reception of the Holy Spirit in his *enhyposstatic* humanity without assuming a particular relationship or distinction between the human soul or spirit and the physical;
3. Describing divine agency depends solely on theological terminology appropriate to description of the central mystery of the incarnation rather than on terminology first found in philosophical, scientific or medical ideas.
4. Applied to revelation this agency does not automatically require *ekstasis* of the human soul by the Holy Spirit;
5. Inspiration by such agency does not guarantee that perfected human action is automatically a result.

Various models or anthropologies might be suggested. This makes the understanding of divine self-disclosure independent of what must now be considered obsolete anthropology. Grounding the theological description of divine agency in pneumatology and Christology may help to resolve the nineteenth century dichotomy, that the Christian faith must be based on either perfect divine revelation or personal religious affections. This dichotomy developed in relation to the failing fortunes of the assumptions and logic of divine agency in the world drawn non-christologically from early modern understanding of inspiration, the divine perfections and the two-books. However, this proposed incarnational divine agency will only make the dichotomy false if it is theologically coherent and plausible while simultaneously resolving or avoiding known difficulties. I argue that this is the case thus opening the possibility of renewal of aspects of the dialogue between theology and science where this issue has been a stumbling block.

A productive way forward in the dialogue between theology and science may be to continue carefully to establish whether impasses in particular debates are actually the result of false dichotomies arising from assumptions which should be actively questioned and reexamined.

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