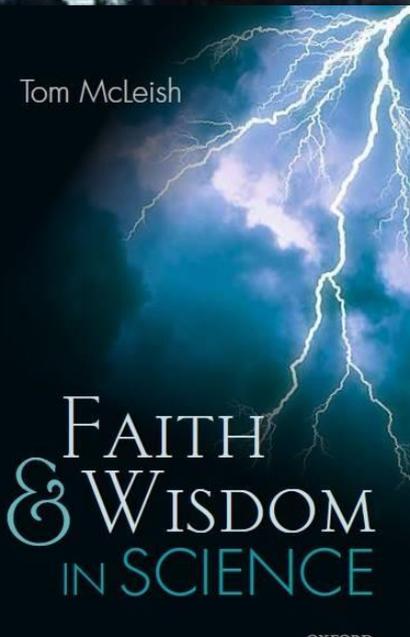


Faith and Wisdom in Science (with Job)



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March 2017



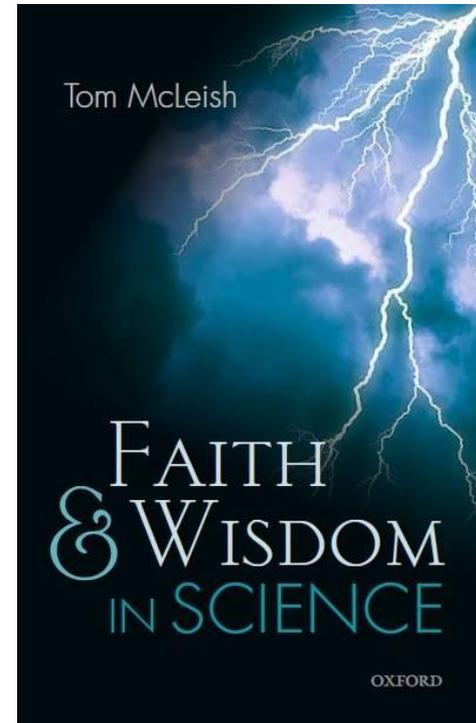
Some Prejudices

- Science needs (desperately) a deep cultural narrative
- **Science the inheritor of a very long human history**
- Current perception that 'Science is Modern' is a harm
 - impoverishes wellbeing
 - paralyses public debate
 - distorts relation of science and religion

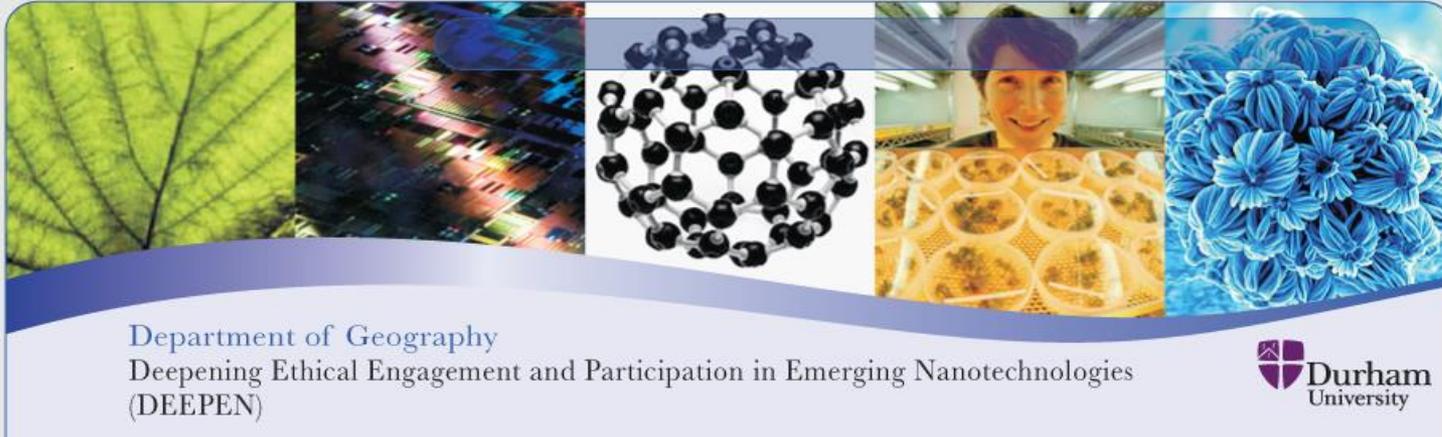


A Manifesto....

- “Science/Religion debate” is the wrong place to look for the Science/Religion debate
- Read *Job* rather than *Genesis* for Biblical sources
- Think about chaos and statistical mechanics
- From “Theology *and* Science” to Theology *of* Science.
- Reappraisal of Science culturally, anthropologically, theologically.
- The church can embrace Science



Narrative Clues (1)



Department of Geography

Deepening Ethical Engagement and Participation in Emerging Nanotechnologies
(DEEPEN)



• Underlying narratives in European publics on science:

- Be careful for what you wish for
- Opening Pandora's Box
- Messing with Nature
- Kept in the Dark

J.-P. De Puy:

- Desire
 - Evil
 - Sacred
 - Alienation
 - Exploitation
- The rich get richer and the poor get poorer

Narrative Clues (2)

G Steiner: “*Only art can go some way towards making accessible, towards waking into some measure of communicability, the sheer inhuman otherness of matter...*”

Real Presences

Narrative Clues (3): What's in a name?

“Science”

- *scio* – ‘I know’

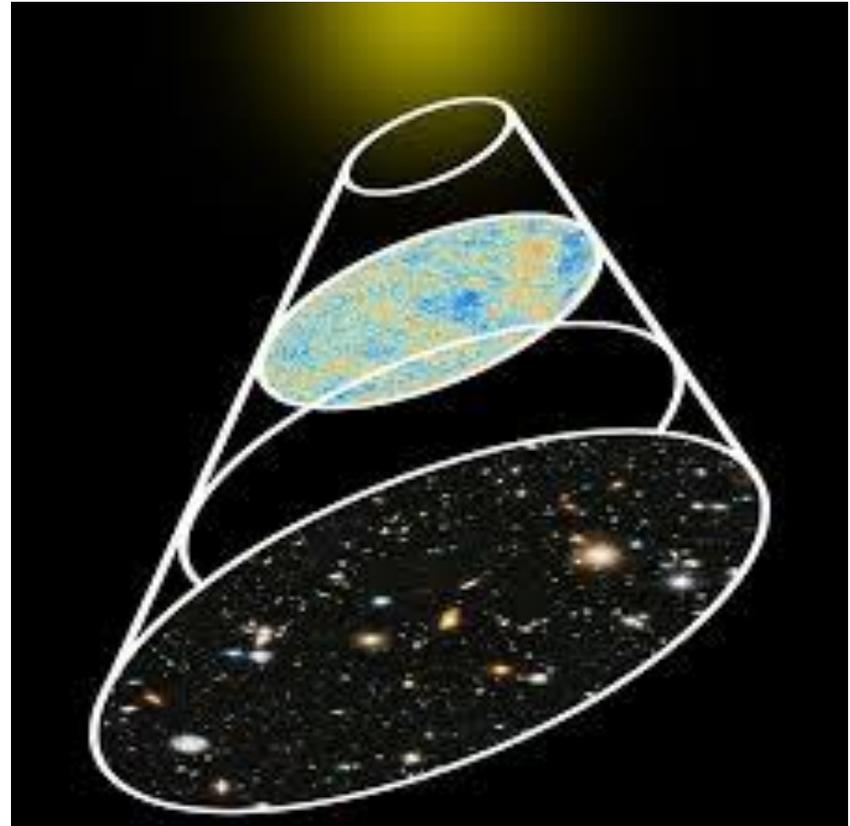
“Natural Philosophy”

– *philo-sophia* – ‘I love wisdom’

The Bible and ...*Science?* ... or .. *A relational engagement with Creation?*

Creation Stories:

- Prov 8
- Psalm 19
- Psalm 33
- Psalm 104
- Isaiah 40
- Isaiah 45
- Jeremiah 10
- Hosea 2
- John 1
- ...



The Bible and ...*The Birth of Wisdom*

Proverbs 8: Curiosity and Creation

*The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old;
I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began.*

When there were no oceans, I was given birth,

when there were no springs abounding with water,

before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth,

before he made the earth or its fields, or any of the dust of the world.

*I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the
face of the deep,*

*when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the
deep,*

*when he gave the sea its boundary so that the waters would not overstep his
command,*

and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.

Then I was the craftsman at his side.

*I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing in his presence,
rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind.*

The Bible and ...*Science?* ... or .. *Wisdom in reconciling the physical world?*

Job 38-40

Questions, questions...



Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea?.....

Where is the way to the abode of light?....

..From whose womb comes the ice?...

.. Do you know the laws of the heavens?

And can you apply them to the earth?

Job structure

Clines: “the most intense book theologically and intellectually of the Old Testament”

- Prologue
 - Introductory narrative
 - Speech cycle 1 (Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar)
 - Speech cycle 2
 - Speech cycle 3 (with Elihu)
 - Hymn to Wisdom (ch 28)
 - cycle 3 - Elihu)
 - The Lord’s Answer (ch 38-40)
 - Closing Narrative

Book of Job's structure of nature

- Prologue
 - Introductory narrative
 - Speech cycle 1 Earth, winds, stones, sea
 - Speech cycle 2 Plants, animals, vines, milk
 - Speech cycle 3 Heavens, moon, stars,

A Nature-Trail through Job...

The fire of God fell from heaven and burned the flocks and the servants”

...

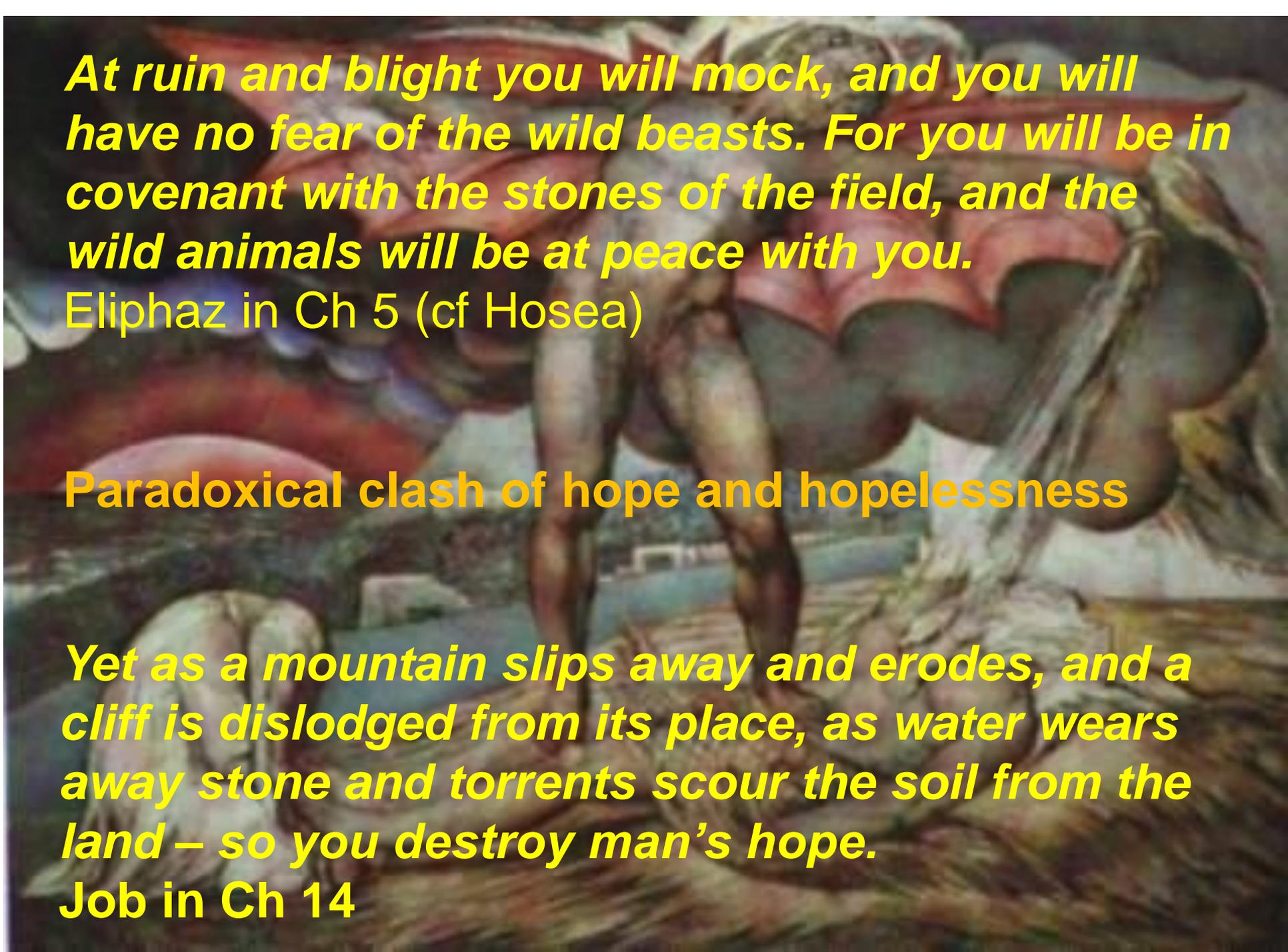
... suddenly a mighty wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house...”

[Job was] grievous sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

Job afflicted by nature without and within ... and responds with a ‘creation narrative’

Would that the curses of days had laid a spell on it, those skilled at rousing Leviathan!

*...Would that the stars of its dawn had been darkened ...
and never seen the eyelids of the morning!*

A painting depicting a man in a red and white robe standing in a landscape of ruins. The man is looking towards the viewer. In the foreground, there is a large, dark, rectangular stone block. The background shows a city in ruins, with buildings and a large, reddish structure. The overall scene is one of desolation and decay.

At ruin and blight you will mock, and you will have no fear of the wild beasts. For you will be in covenant with the stones of the field, and the wild animals will be at peace with you.

Eliphaz in Ch 5 (cf Hosea)

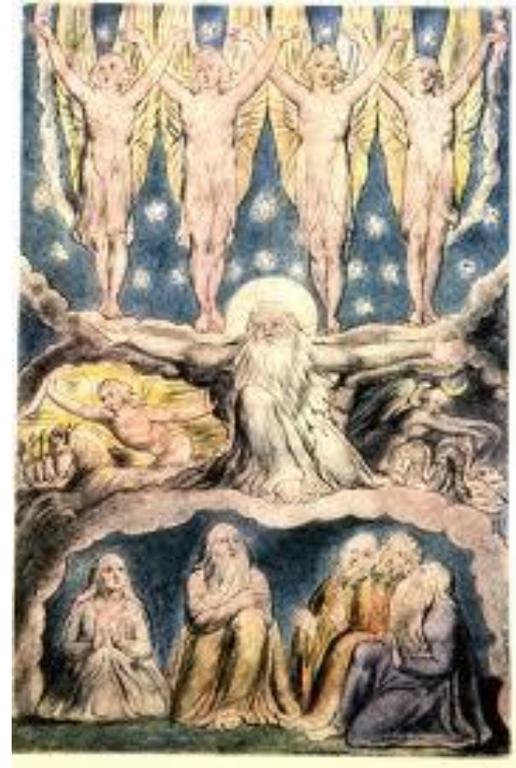
Paradoxical clash of hope and hopelessness

Yet as a mountain slips away and erodes, and a cliff is dislodged from its place, as water wears away stone and torrents scour the soil from the land – so you destroy man's hope.

Job in Ch 14

3rd Cycle climax and cosmology

Is not God in the height of the heavens? Does he not look down on the topmost stars, high as they are? Yet you say, "What does God know? Can he see through thick clouds to govern? Thick clouds veil him, and he cannot see as he goes his way on the vault of heaven!" Eliphaz Ch22



*He it is who stretched out the North over chaos, and suspended the earth from nothing.
He wrapped up the waters in his clouds, but the clouds did not burst under their weight.
He covered the sight of his throne; he spread his cloud over it.
He drew a circle upon the face of the waters, as the boundary between light and darkness. Bildad Ch 26*

The Bible and ...*Science?* ... or .. *Wisdom for nature?*

The Book of Job

Surely there is a mine for silver, and a place where gold is refined.

Iron is taken from the soil, rock that will be poured out as copper.

An end is put to darkness, and to the furthest bound they seek the ore in gloom and deep darkness. A foreign race cuts the shafts; forgotten by travelers, far away from humans they dangle and sway. That earth from which food comes forth is underneath changed as if by fire. Its rocks are the source of lapis, with its flecks of gold.

Hymn to Wisdom – Ch 28



But God understands the way to it; it is he who knows its place.

For he looked to the ends of the earth, and beheld everything under the heavens,

So as to assign a weight to the wind, and determine the waters by measure,

The Lord's 'Answer' is also to the Hymn to Wisdom

Have you journeyed down to the springs of the sea, or walked about in the remotest parts of the abyss?

Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the door-keepers of death's darkness?

Have you gazed on the furthest expanse of the underworld?

Say if you know its extent!

Who cuts a channel for the torrent of rain, a path for the thunderbolt, to bring rain on a land uninhabited, on the unpeopled desert, to satisfy a waste and desolate land, making the thirsty ground sprout with grass?

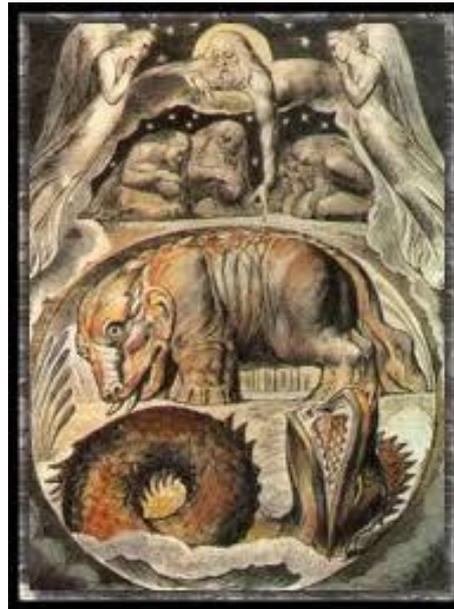
A challenge to simplistic encoding of morality in nature

Can you lift your voice to the clouds, and make a flood of waters answer you?

Can you send lightning bolts on their way, and have them report to you, 'Ready!'?

Six perspectives on creation in Job

- Enshrining retributive moral law
- Eternal Mystery
- Book of Nature
- Uncontrolled chaos
- Object of worship
- Way to wisdom



J.-P. De Puy:

- Exploitation
- Alienation
- Sacred
- Evil
- Desire

New Testament continuity of relational Creation-Wisdom.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ – new creation;
The old has gone, the new has come!
All this is from God, who reconciled himself through
Christ and gave us the **ministry of reconciliation**:
That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ*

2Cor v17

J. Dunn on Romans 8 “All Creation groans...”:

“There is an out-of-sortness, a disjointedness about the created order which makes it a suitable habitation for man at odds with his creator.”

A Theology of Science:

Science is the

- **participative,**
- **relational,**
- **co-creative**

**Work within the Kingdom of God of healing
the fallen relationship of humans with
nature.**

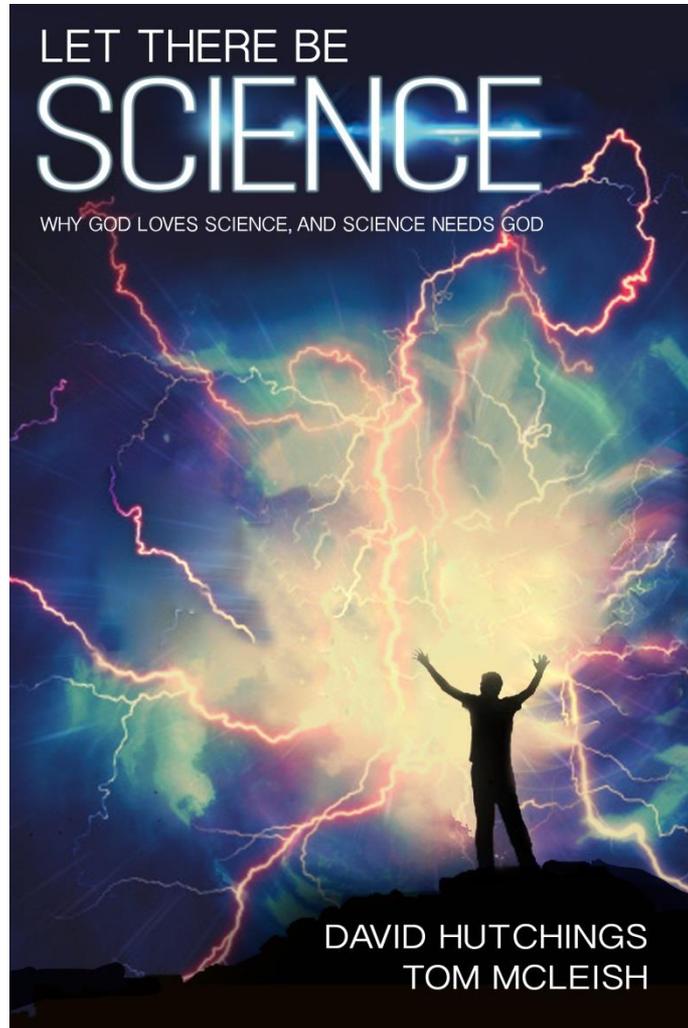
A Theology of Science: Characteristics

- Long history of relationship between human and non-human
- High view of human aptitude to re-imagine nature
- Dual structure: Wisdom and Knowledge
- Engaging with nature is ambiguous and painful
- Balance of order and chaos
- Centrality of the Creative Question
- The role and work of love

Consequences for us

1. There are no pre-determined histories or boundaries for science and technology – but theocentric
2. Our thought-relationship with nature is therapeutic
3. The Two Cultures – a healing of the academy?
4. New underlying narratives in public debate
5. A mutual task for inter-faith dialogue
6. Science and media – more engaged and thoughtful
7. The church can celebrate the humanity of science

The message for school pupils



- The message of *Faith and Wisdom in Science* told through stories
- Co-author Dave Hutchings experienced York-based physics teacher and teacher trainer
- Goal: you do not have to make a *choice* between Christian faith and science.
- Hears from: *Star Trek's* Mr. Spock, Monty Python's Black Knight, levitating frogs, and more....

Concluding Remarks

- Science is at the heart of and part of a Christian worldview
- The roots of science are very old and part of the “healing” story of the Bible
- Removing the false opposition of Science and Faith is going to be important. They are “of” each other.
- Strong call to leadership and voice



(1) An open participation in shaping nature: no pre-ordained boundaries

A question from Bruno Latour:

Everything happens as if modernists were unable to reconcile their idea of Science and Nature—... with the alternative reality that the connections of science and technologies are more pressing everyday, ..., requiring even more intervention, more assemblies, more scrutiny, more stewardship....

“The real question is to have the same type of patience and energy as God the Creator Himself”

David Bookless (Arocha):

Not anthropocentric, nor geocentric, but theocentric environmentalism (*Cambridge Papers* 2014)

(2) Science-Therapy?

- Playfulness
- Think 'love of wisdom of natural things' not 'science'
- To go 'ooo', or not to go 'ooo'?
- Citizen science
- The desire of the suffering



(3) Reconciling the Two Cultures?

Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:
We know her roof, her texture; she is given
In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will clip an angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine
Unweave a rainbow.

(3) Reconciling the Two Cultures?

G Steiner: *“Only art can go some way towards making accessible, towards waking into some measure of communicability, the sheer inhuman otherness of matter...”*

Real Presences

G K Chesterton: *“Art consists in limitation. The most beautiful part of every picture is the frame”*

Creativity with Constraint...?

(4) Consequences for public discourse

- There are no pre-determined histories or boundaries
- Intellectual relationship with nature is therapeutic
- New underlying narratives need to play
- Religious communities can celebrate the deep
humanity of science

Bruno Latour

Everything happens as if modernists were unable to reconcile their idea of Science and Nature—which, remember, according to their narrative, is supposed to be farther and farther removed, as time passes, from law, subjectivity, politics and religion—with the alternative reality that the connections of science and technologies are more pressing everyday, more confusing, requiring even more intervention, more assemblies, more scrutiny, more stewardship.

(5) A mutual task for inter-faith dialogue

- Muslims, Christians and Jews read Aristotle together and launched modern science



Robert Grosseteste
Bishop of Lincoln
1235-1253

Formam primam corporalem, quam quidam corporeitatem vocant, lucem esse arbitror. Lux enim per se in omnem partem se ipsam diffundit, ita ut a puncto lucis sphaera lucis quamvis magna subito generetur, nisi obsistat umbrosum. Corporeitas vero est, quam de necessitate consequitur extensio materiae secundum tres dimensiones, cum tamen utraque, corporeitas scilicet et materia, sit substantia in se ipsa simplex, omni carens dimensione ...

Interfaith dialogue on science in history?

13th Century Science

- Re-conquest of Aristotle
- Arabic Translation
 - Averroes
- ‘Natural’ Science and Scientific Method
- God’s Creation
- Reason and Rationality
- An Ordered Universe
- Observation



Aristotle: *Opera Logica*

Institute of
Medieval and
Renaissance Studies



The Church and Science?



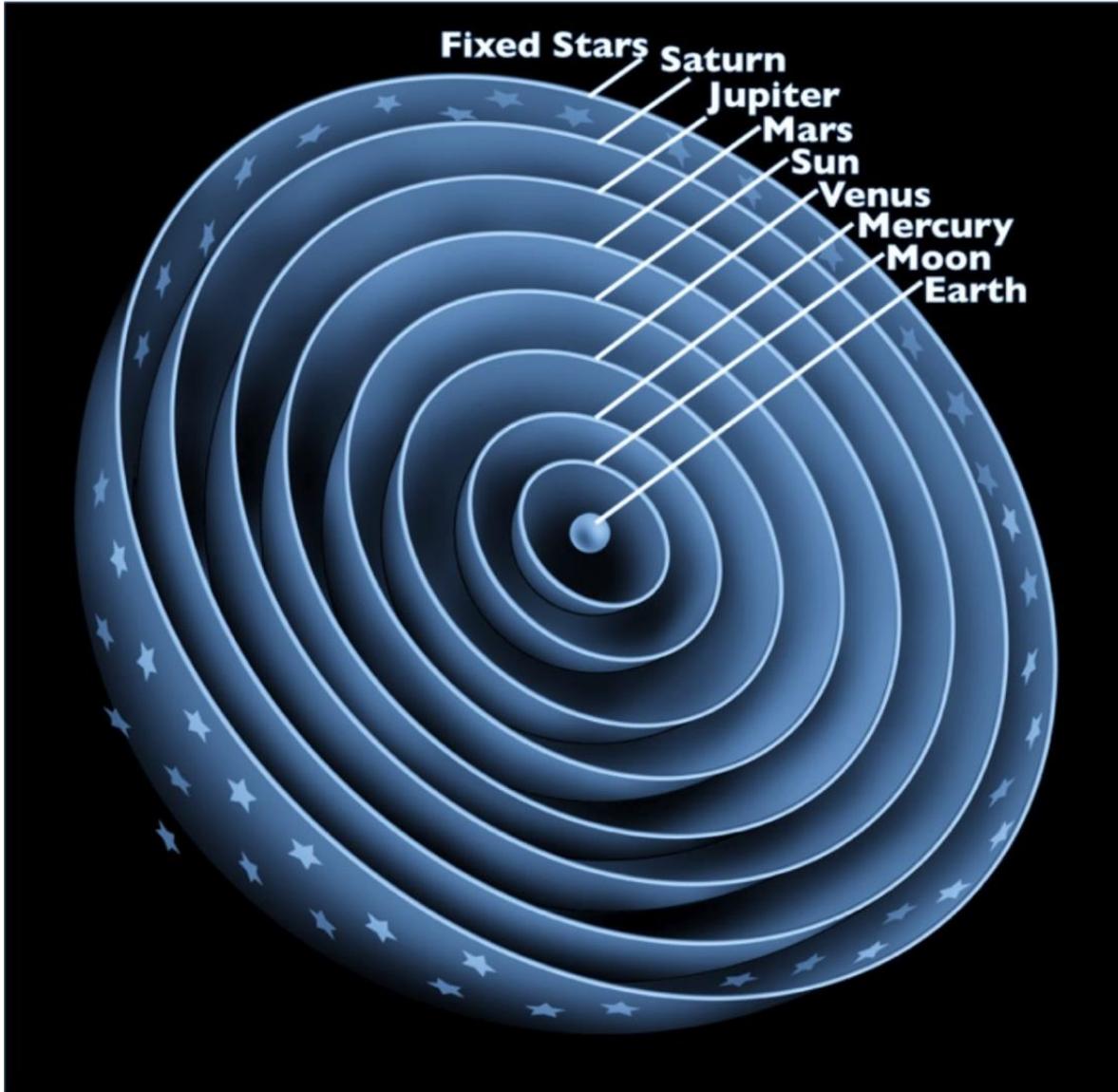
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A Medieval Big Bang Cosmogony

Robert
Grosseteste



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(6) The Church can celebrate science

- Scientists in Congregations initiative
- Pray for our scientists and science students
- Church-run science festivals
- Science apologetics in mission
- Scientific literacy in church policy statements
- Work, preach, think and worship around science as a God-given *gift (or 'talent')*
- Speak strongly and lovingly against the heresy of creationism.



(7) Science and the Media

- Identify and expose the narratives
- Work with media to create more critical engagement
- Why is science not more like music?
- Work for *more* interest without confrontation, not *less*.

