

CHAPTER 2

WORLDVIEWS AND SCIENCE

SCIENTISTS OF FAITH

Johannes Kepler, 1571-1630

(Astronomer who discovered that planetary orbits are elliptical.)

Those [laws which govern the material world] are within the grasp of the human mind. God wanted us to recognize them by creating us after his own image so that we could share in his own thoughts . . . and, if piety allows us to say so, our understanding is in this respect of the same kind as the divine, at least as far as we are able to grasp something of it [the divine] in our mortal life.

—*Letter to Johannes George herwart von Hohenburg, 9/10 April 1599, Gesammelte Werke, 13:309, letter no. 117, lines 174-9;*
English translation in *Johannes Kepler Baumgardt, Life and Letters*, 50.

Isaac Newton, 1643-1727

(Physicist who discovered laws of motion and the law of gravity.)

This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being. . . . This Being governs all things, not as the soul of the world, but as Lord over all; and on account of His dominion He is to be called Lord God.

—*In Principia Mathematica*, Book 3 (1687); cited in *Newton's Philosophy of Nature: Selections from His Writings*;
H.S. Thayer, Editor; Hafner Library of Classics, New York, 1953.

Michael Faraday, 1791-1867

(Physicist who made advances in electricity and magnetism and invented the electric generator.)

God has been pleased to work in his material creation by laws. The Creator governs his material works by definite laws resulting from the forces impressed on matter. [The] beauty of electricity . . . [is] that it is under law.

—www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/faraday/Faraday.php

Donald MacKay, 1922-1987

(Physicist and neuroscientist who studied information theory and brain organization.)

[In this chapter] we have . . . [taken the] mandate for the scientific enterprise from the biblical view of our world and its dependence on God. Contrary to widely propagated belief, we have found nothing but encouragement to build up experimentally based knowledge into a theoretically integrated explanatory framework [i.e. to do science]. . . . Of “irreconcilable contradiction” we have found no trace.

—Donald MacKay, *Science, Chance, and Providence*, 1978.

Alan Sandage, 1926-

(Cosmologist who studied the expansion of the universe, became a Christian at age 60.)

I find it quite improbable that such order came out of chaos. There has to be some organizing principle. God, to me, is the explanation of the miracle of existence, why there is something instead of nothing.

—J. N. Willford, “Sizing up the Cosmos: An Astronomer’s Quest,” *New York Times*, March 12, 1991.