

Facing up to Richard Dawkins and the New Atheism

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Richard Dawkins is a leading biologist whose job at Oxford and around the world these days is to help the public understand science better. Popular science writing doesn't come much better than Dawkins' books, starting with *The Selfish Gene* in the 1970s. Dawkins' subject is the way life on earth has changed—how over vast aeons of time, single-celled organisms in the primordial soup have given rise to more complicated multicellular forms of life, and how that life has diversified to fill every niche in the natural environment.

For many of us all this is perfectly obvious and we have no problem reconciling our religious and spiritual vision with the world according to modern science. But many religious people are very anti-science, and very anti-much-else about the modern world, too. In many places, human freedoms that we enjoy are denied in the name of religion, while religious ideology is taught in place of proper science and proper history. Richard Dawkins condemns such bad religion, in company with a great many of the faithful. But his critique of bad religion becomes a critique of all religion, and his scientific vision is used to justify militant atheism, turning science into an all-encompassing ideology leaving no room for religion in general and for Christian faith in particular. This is a highly contentious view and I reject it outright.

But if Dawkins goes way too far in his critique of religion—way beyond where his science can reliably take him—nevertheless I do agree with him on the science. What's more, there's much in his critique of religion that I share—

especially his criticism of religion that remains closed and fearful towards scientific findings. I also think that Dawkins exposes some bad practice in the way we've regularly sought to commend Christian faith — we've used God to account for gaps in our scientific account of the world, but when science advances those gaps are often closed and we don't need to invoke God any more. In short, I think that Dawkins helps us think about God more maturely, by undermining our spiritually immature attempts to use God as an explanation, as a prop for a reassuringly stable view of things. Real Christian faith is edgier than that.

So, in what follows, I'm first going to introduce the science, so we understand where the controversy begins. Then I'm going to set out the way inadequate religion responds to this extraordinary picture revealed by science. Ironically, however, we'll see that in his un-subtle dismissal of all religion, Dawkins most clearly resembles the worst excesses of religion. I then want to ask how good religion integrates modern science, and how we might spiritually and theologically accommodate the story of life's journey that Dawkins so compellingly sets out. Last of all, I'll reflect briefly on how Christians might respond to Dawkins and to his kind more generally — to our many brilliant but insufferably smug opponents. How do we best understand them, and how do we best respond?

Introducing the Science

First of all, let's talk about the science, and the story Dawkins tells of life's journey from the first single cells billions of years ago to the mind-boggling diversity of plants and animals we see around us today, ourselves included. How has all this happened?

Essentially, it's because creatures moving into different environments — on the earth, underground, in the sea, in the air, in hot places, and cold — have all had to either adapt or perish. Occasionally an individual plant or animal proves better at it than the norm, so gaining the edge in survival, passing on this advantage to its descendants. An example: there were light-coloured moths in Victorian England that were invisible against the bark of trees, so predatory birds couldn't see them. The rarer black moths that emerged by the combination of recessive genes in this population of moths were quickly spotted. But when industrial pollution blackened the bark of trees, it was the light-coloured moths that stood out, so they were picked off by the birds. Eventually, the black moths were the ones who survived and reproduced so the population of moths became almost entirely black. In more recent times, environmental improvements have reduced the pollution, and the bark is light again, with the result that this population of moths is once again mostly light coloured. What's true in this example of a population adapting to its environment in a single human lifetime provides an illustration for what's happened with all life, across geological time.

It's a very simple process, really: given enough time, the pressures of survival working on creatures will occasionally favour a random mutation in the gene pool of a species, and in time that species will change, and new species will emerge. This is how creatures in the sea eventually gave rise to random offspring who could survive out of the water, and their offspring in turn began to adapt to all the new opportunities that life on land offered. Eventually the great family of running, swimming and flying lizards called the dinosaurs perished. This gave the bright-eyed little mammals their chance to take over, and today our family of warm-blooded creatures extends from tiny mice to giant sperm whales, each having emerged to best exploit a particular niche market in nature. Somewhere along the way, the primates

and the earliest humans emerged as two forks in the road, and today we humans with our toolmaking brains and hands have transformed the world.

All this is called evolution by natural selection. It's an idea that became prominent with the English biologist Charles Darwin from the 1850s. Later, thanks to an Austrian monk called Gregor Mendel who bred garden peas and so began the scientific study of genetics, what's been called 'Darwin's dangerous idea' became a simple and powerful theory to account for all the diversity of life that we see. Nowadays, molecular genetics shows us the roots of our own human genetic material in forms of life emerging earlier in the evolutionary process. It turns out that we share a lot of genetic material with insects, more with reptiles, more again with other mammals, and all but 2% of our DNA with our nearest relatives, the chimpanzees. In these ways, the newer discipline of molecular genetics helps us to trace accurately our human family tree. And not just to grandpa, who gave us our blue eyes or our big nose, but right back before our particular family emerged, to the origins of human life in Africa and, before that, to pre-human life—to the age of the dinosaurs and life in the seas. Our genes carry the whole history of life on earth.

Richard Dawkins coins the term the 'selfish gene' to explain the driving force of this impersonal, natural process. The protein molecules called genes replicate themselves in ever new individual creatures. He points out that the selfish gene drives our desire to survive and reproduce, making us care particularly for our children and our siblings (because they share the most genetic material with us). The selfish gene even drives us to be reasonably responsible and moral people, because working together gave pre-historic human communities their best chance in the struggle for survival. Another important part of Dawkins case is that these natural processes are entirely

blind. That is, there's no prior plan being worked out here. Given enough time and enough randomness and enough ill-fitted individual creatures perishing to make room for fitter, stronger, more adaptable ones, we eventually get the whole teeming diversity of creatures that we see. Dawkins shows us how life always finds a way, with his simple Darwinian algorithm. This is undoubtedly powerful and elegant science.

Science and Religion at Enmity?

So far so good, right? Wrong! And here I raise the whole matter of religion in general, and Christian faith in particular. One of the things human beings always do is reflect on the wonder and complexity of the world of which we're a part. All cultures have their own philosophical and speculative tools for understanding and coping with life, most of which we group together under the catch-all title 'religion'. And for most people in history it's religion they've turned to for understanding the origins of our world and life. This was certainly true before science came up with its own powerful account of how things got to be the way they are, and it's still true for a great many people today — many of whom look to the Bible.

Whatever else it does as the emerging faith testimony of a particular people, our Christian Bible tried to provide answers for a pre-scientific world, and it's still looked to for such answers today. There's nothing about evolution in the Bible, however, and until the nineteenth century the Bible's world of animal species fixed from the first week of creation, with a finite list of named human ancestors taking us back to those beginnings, could still seem plausible. But from the nineteenth century we came to see that the world was much more ancient than just 6000 years, say, thanks to new discoveries in geology, while we begun to appreciate that the fossils we'd long been digging up pointed to whole families of creatures that had flourished and perished long ago. With

Charles Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection capping-off these discoveries, the Bible and modern science seemed to be in opposition. What were we to do?

Some Christians resolved this apparent conflict by denying modern science and its view of a closed, self-sustaining natural world altogether. According to them, God pulls all the strings and the so-called laws of nature that modern science reveals are just a veil we humans invent, drawn over the actual details of God's hidden working. John Calvin thought this way in sixteenth-century protestant theology, before we had a sense of nature's laws operating on their own, but so did Karl Barth in twentieth-century theology. This was their way of insisting on God's absolute sovereignty, with nothing else—even the laws of nature—allowed to compete with God. Such insistence on divine sovereignty hatches the view that all things, even bad things, happen for a reason—that every natural occurrence is really God's consciously intentional act.

The most extreme version of such views comes with biblical fundamentalism, which has no place for an independent natural order, or an independent human mind for that matter. The creation science movement is an influential current example. It attempts to fit-together scientific findings about the journey of life with the Bible, insisting that all the different types of creature were really all together on the earth at once, right from the start—some even include the dinosaurs—and that the earth, made and populated in six days according to a literal reading of Genesis, is really only a few thousand years old. According to creationism, all scientific evidence to the contrary is either a misunderstanding or it's a trick of the devil to trip us up in our pride.

Creation science is bad science of course, because scientific method is based on the idea that things have to be understood on their own terms, and not just because the Bible says so. Also, science works all of a piece, so that if the universe is only six thousand years old, then all our theoretical physics, our astronomy, our thermodynamics is wrong, not just our evolutionary biology.

Of course scientific method involves assumptions, but they're such fruitful assumptions. The fact that natural explanations keep being found for everything makes a literal, fundamentalist view of the Bible seem ever more desperate and contrary. But, of course, I'd argue that being contrary is the real political motive behind creation science — also for a related ideology called intelligent design, which is a kind of 'creation science lite' (that is, creation science in which the religious basis is kept out of sight, pretending that the conclusions come from unbiased science alone, and not from the Bible).

Creationism, like all fundamentalism, is really about asserting the power of the fundamentalist religious group over the power of the modern imagination — over the independent-mindedness of modern people and over the secular freedom of today's societies to go their own way beyond anybody's controlling religious agenda. Like an aggrieved ex-spouse, the fundamentalist is resentful that the culture to which religion was once wedded is now able to get along without it, and is moving on. Religion like this, that wants to be in charge, isn't interested in the sort of mature theological conversation that might bring the Bible and the culture into some sort of mutually fruitful dialogue, so that science might help us understand the Bible and the Bible's vision might help us put science into a broader imaginative context. More of this shortly.

Dawkins is certainly right to criticise fundamentalism, but he's certainly wrong to tar all religion with the fundamentalist brush. Ironically, he's very like a fundamentalist himself in the way he absolutises the scientific method into a quasi-religious crusade. This is the other way to go in the face of a perceived conflict between science and religion—the way of 'scientific fundamentalism' if you like—and we find it among many of today's militant atheists.

Where the religious fundamentalist dismisses science, Dawkins takes the fundamentalist path in reverse, dismissing religion as entirely incompatible with science. His most controversial book, *The God Delusion*, which has sold over a million copies, in many ways resembles a fundamentalist rant, but in this case not a religious one. Dawkins insists that scientific method, which has revealed the wonder of evolution and of so much else about our world, is the only valid type of human inquiry and imagination. We've heard that the biblical fundamentalist sees all questions as essentially religious questions with God as the sole actor in every event and the sole explanation for every outcome—any other view being seen to dishonour God. In the same way, Dawkins insists that nothing worth knowing is inaccessible to scientific investigation and everything humanly worthwhile can be fully accounted for.

It seems to me that this is a battle of methodologies: you show me your Bible and I'll show you my science. Here are two competing priesthoods, rather like the story of Elijah and his contest with the priests of Baal in the first book of Kings, with Dawkins the high priest of science winning hands down over religion. Is this all about power and winning, too, like religious fundamentalism? Dawkins denies this of course, insisting that scientific method is open to examination and disproof, while religious conviction is not

open to testing and hence puts itself beyond criticism. But here Dawkins shows his failure to understand both bad science and good theology.

Latest philosophy of science, which many working scientists ignore at best and despise at worst, views science on par with other areas of human culture, like art and literature and religion. To be sure, science has a powerful method, but that method can only address part of reality. It can tell us why the scattering of light rays from the sun in our atmosphere makes the sky blue, for instance, but it can't account for just how good it feels after days of cloud and rain to open our curtains in the morning to reveal a clear blue sky.

Likewise, scientists like Dawkins insist that theirs is an unbiased and dispassionate discipline, but the history of science tells a different story. It shows how the scientific community clings to outmoded ideas and suspects new developments until the contrary evidence proves overwhelming, with many advances in scientific understanding resisted from within the scientific community itself, not just from outside. The scientific community is political, and structured by power relations, just as religious communities are, and if science does eventually move on in its understanding, then so too do healthy religious communities.

The Church has advanced and reformed and responded with humility to perceived challenges and invitations from God over time, in just the same way that the scientific community has eventually embraced new theories and paradigms of understanding. Dawkins is perhaps at his least scientific here, despising the Church and religion to the extent that he fails to observe it with sufficient scientific rigour. Religion can be bad, and fearful, and political, yes, yet the Old Testament prophets challenged all that, just as Jesus did, and St Paul. The earliest monks challenged it by retreating to the desert from the corruptions of an only loosely-Christianised Empire; the Protestant Reformers

challenged it, and today all the mainstream theologians and Churches that Dawkins refuses to acknowledge challenge the fundamentalist control of religion. Dawkins' obvious hatred of the Church and its claims blinds him to everything that's plainly good in the Church, despite its many faults.

Dawkins is unscientifically-minded in his assessment of religion and, if you will, he's religiously-minded in his uncritical endorsement of science as the only path to truth and the only purely moral human undertaking.

Surely both bad religion and bad science need condemning — Dawkins rightly points to the horrors committed in the name of religion, but he refuses to admit the violence that arrogant atheism entails, with its entirely closed and unaccountable world view. Look what happens to science when it's shorn of any broader context of meaning and moral purpose, rendered entirely instrumental and detached from any religious vision of the worth of the human person. This leads to a range of identifiable abuses, from the medical experiments of the Nazis, for instance, to the worst excesses of environmental abuse and unjustifiable cruelty in animal experimentation. Look, too, at the anti-religious mania of Stalin's purges — for every free-thinker punished by bad religion, there was a priest or a nun murdered in Stalin's Gulag. Dawkins says that you can't blame atheism for such atrocities committed by atheist regimes. But if he's right, then neither can you blame religion *per se* for the faults of some religious groups and individuals. Rather, human arrogance is to blame, and that can be found equally in the world of science and atheism as it can in the world of religion. So if good science is healthily self-critical, as Dawkins rightly points out, then so is good religion, as he seems scarcely able to comprehend, let alone admit.

Scientific and Christian?

Let's now consider how we might move beyond the alleged incompatibility of science and religion. Dawkins is not impressed by the fact that many scientists are religious, holding together their commitment to evolutionary biology, for instance, with their profound sense that God is nevertheless creating the world through evolutionary means. In other words, he rejects any third option, beyond the fundamentalism of religion, which allows no challenge or insight from science, and also beyond the fundamentalism of his own scientific understanding, which insists on a closed world of scientific explanation leaving no room for God. I want to point to this third, non-fundamentalist way for us to go, beyond these two options to which Dawkins' imagination is confined.

First, let me say what won't work, and Richard Dawkins helps us see this all the more clearly. What won't work any more is using God as a scientific explanation. Isaac Newton in the seventeenth century had discovered universal gravitation and the mathematics of planetary motion, but he couldn't work out why the orbits of planets didn't decay. So Newton suggested that God used angels to keep the planets in their stable orbits. But, before long, the French mathematician Laplace improved on Newton's explanation, providing a purely scientific account of stable planetary orbits. Napoleon supposedly asked Laplace where God was in this new, self-contained celestial mechanics, to which Laplace supposedly replied, 'I have no need of that hypothesis'. This little story provides a salutary warning. If God is used to fill a gap in our scientific explanation of nature, what happens to our God when scientific understanding advances to fill that gap?

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, an English Archdeacon called William Paley produced a classic argument in his book *Natural Theology*. He

said that if you found a watch while walking on the heath, you wouldn't imagine it had just taken form there by purely natural means. Rather, you'd rightly suppose that a watchmaker had crafted it. In the same way, the natural world (much beloved of English parson naturalists) must be the detailed creation of a designer God. This so-called argument from design has a venerable history, and many Christians still argue for belief in God based on the sheer improbability of life's wonderful complexity. But Dawkins knows how genetic mutation plus natural selection plus enough time can produce all we see by purely blind and random processes, with each new stage building fortuitously on what went before. In books with titles like *The Blind Watchmaker* and *Climbing Mount Improbable*, Dawkins shows that the complexity of life is built up by stages. Eventually, by trial and error, and feedback from the environment, the blindfolded partygoer succeeds in pinning the tail on the donkey, just as the Easter egg-hunting children finally discover the whole stash. There's no map, however. There's just exploration of the environment by trial and error over time, much as over time we find all the buried mineral deposits, building up the map as we go.

Nowadays there are more sophisticated versions of the argument from design. The so-called 'strong anthropic principle' is based on our recent discovery that the fundamental building blocks of matter and energy in our universe have to be just as they are for the universe to be able to support life, and human life—without the speed of light, the mass of the electron and the exact balance of forces in the atomic nucleus being just as they are, for instance, to many decimal points of accuracy, our universe wouldn't have got going. The 'Big Bang' might have petered out in a fraction of a second, or the universe mightn't have advanced beyond hydrogen and maybe helium, let alone the carbon and all the heavier elements made in collapsing stars that provide the base matter for organic life. And on the macro level, if our Earth

wasn't just the right distance from the sun for the temperature to be favourable, and if Earth's axis wasn't tilted just right for there to be proper seasons, then there'd be no human life.

All this is true, of course, and our wonder at these mind-boggling facts of physical science helps explain why so many scientists are open to religious feeling. But the strong anthropic principle doesn't work as a *proof* for the existence of God. Remember, there's no map available in advance. The universe built itself up over time, with each stage making the next stage possible. If these fundamental constants of physics were different, any universe that emerged and proved stable enough would take a different direction from our universe and, if life emerged in it, that life would evolve quite differently from life on Earth. It's one thing to discern a pattern in events with hindsight, but that doesn't mean a detailed plan was being worked out from the beginning. Humans have evolved because it was possible in this sort of universe, not because this sort of universe was set up from the beginning so humans could evolve in it.

So if we're to believe in God today, it won't be because of what we learn from physics and biology. They may contribute to the sense of wonder that's at the heart of a religious temperament, but our faith is based on more than that—on an overall sense of God. It's based on our experience of finding an unaccountable power at work in our hearts to guide and reorient our lives, with the greatest miracles always being those of personal change. It's based on a sense of forgiveness and transformation of life beyond the paralysis and shame so typical of human moral experience. For Christians, it's also based on how the story of Jesus Christ and the Bible as a whole so powerfully illuminates our experience of living, so that faith essentially becomes self-authenticating.

Even a relative conservative like the recently canonised nineteenth-century theologian John Henry Newman rejected Archdeacon Paley's version of the argument from design, acknowledging that people of faith don't arrive at their conviction by any sort of proof based on nature. So Richard Dawkins, in effectively demolishing the argument from design, leaves intact the basis of faith. Faith in God certainly respects the facts of life, including those of science, but faith isn't the product of a chain of right reasoning. Coming to faith is like falling in love, which can't be reduced to a compelling list of someone's attributes, as if you could specify exactly, in advance, the appearance, habits and qualities of the person you'll fall in love with. The frequently-married Dawkins certainly understands falling in love, but not I suggest the related set of dynamics whereby all sorts of people are grasped by the conviction of God's reality and fall in love with God.

God's Action in the World

If we do believe in God as creator of the universe and still at work within it, through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, yet if we also believe that Richard Dawkins has got the science more or less right, as I do, so that the universe makes itself, then how do we hold these convictions together? I think there are essentially two ways.

One way is to see God as a kind of parent who sets up the household and mostly leaves the children to do their own thing—because it's good for them to learn and explore on their own, making them grow into more confident, competent adults. But occasionally this God steps in when it's important to do so—preventing a kitchen accident here, or introducing a new opportunity there, to protect the children and to guide them towards worthwhile possibilities. All parents understand this finely-tuned program of remote

supervision with occasional intervention, and this is how many Christians imagine God at work in Dawkins' universe. Life evolves naturally, but occasionally God steps in and helps the next stage of life to emerge. Maybe all it took was for God to help a particular creature make a particular advantageous discovery—a new food source, perhaps—for what God knew to be the next big thing in evolution to kick off. In the same way, within the more familiar timescale and events of our own lifetimes, many people believe that God intervenes to guide and protect us—putting the right people along our path in life, for instance, also guarding us from harm.

Some theologians speculate that God might be directing things from within the closed weave of our most sophisticated scientific understanding, so that at a level too small to see, too subtle to measure, God makes all these sorts of things happen. The outcomes that occur with statistical randomness according to quantum mechanics, for instance, may cloak the hidden action of God, just as the sort of global effects that chaos theory explores might allow God to be tweaking the weather system as a whole, say, in order that our prayers for rain might be answered.

All this is certainly conceivable. But there's a downside to this approach. Part of it we've seen already. As far as we know, life evolves and finds ways to greater complexity without need for such special interventions. Also, people of faith come to internalise the presence of their divine parent, so in time we learn the spiritual discernment that doesn't need God to be explicitly guiding our steps or opening doors for us. We experience God allowing us genuine choices and helping us deal with the stuff that happens, enabling us to learn and grow through it all, rather than directing our lives to a particular outcome in a more or less hands-on way. There are two other problems with the intervening God. One involves the so-called 'problem of evil'. If God

intervenes to help and guide, then why not more interventions to restrain more of life's great evils, both natural and human? This is a question Dawkins and other atheists have long been asking, and rightly. Another problem with an intervening God is that such a God becomes an outsider to God's own world. Modern science has done such a good job explaining things that all this God can do is intervene in the game from the sidelines.

A better account of God's action in the world involves a small but significant shift of imaginative perspective. Instead of being an outsider to a closed world of scientific law — instead of a gremlin who invades nature's system from the outside, like a computer virus — what if we imagined God as immanent within the processes of nature? What if our transcendent God of awe and majesty, beyond nature and history, is also the immanent principle of all nature and history, so that God inhabits God's own creation, providing life with its broad impulse toward adapting? If so, God's way with the world can be seen in the way a viable physical universe has created the conditions for life bit by bit, and also in the way life has adapted, with the selfish gene seen to be God's instrument of life's emergence within the closed weave of natural causality — though without specifying the details in advance.

In the same way that I can lift, throw or run within the limits of my body's physical capacities, so God can be imagined at work 'inside' natural causality, as the broad spirit of life — but also bringing particular outcomes when God wishes, though only by acting entirely within nature's 'free processes' (as John Polkinghorne calls them) and humans' own free will. Thus all miracles are really natural events in which God's action and natural processes are indistinguishable. In the same way, when God guides and leads us humans, we experience ourselves at the same time choosing and acting entirely freely, without compulsion. It's not that we're the glove puppet and God is the

hand—it's more intimate and personal than that. It's most like the way the salutary influence of a wise guide works through us as we freely choose the wise course of action which they'd have recommended. Or it's like the intimacy of life partners, having lived and fitted together so much that they regularly think and speak as one.

Dawkins, like many atheists, would ask at this point, 'if you say "God makes the world make itself", isn't this just a poetic but strictly unnecessary way of saying "the world makes itself"'? In other words, Dawkins would say that it's not necessary to postulate the unnecessary existence of God to underpin imaginatively our dynamic cosmos, on the basis of a range of human feelings that he insists can be naturally accounted for. Why propose God as a simplifying explanation of life's complexity when by invoking God you make the whole thing impossibly more complicated?

This is a good question, and it'd be a knockdown argument if we were using God as a scientific explanation. But I don't think we are. I think that while we acknowledge with Dawkins the power of purely natural explanations, nevertheless we know that there's an unprovable, strictly unnecessary but nevertheless compelling claim that's mediated through our human experience and through the Christian story. Our God can't be used as a theory—we sense that that would be taking our God's name in vain. Nevertheless, we can indicate by modest analogy the way our God's action could be imagined throughout the natural world, also within our own hearts and minds, as the deepest principle of the world's life and our life, blessing and guiding us in accord with the capacities of nature and human psychology. In other words, we can imagine how God works in Dawkins' universe, so that we do violence neither to our science or our faith, without being able to prove a thing. But, you know what? That doesn't matter much to us.

Who's Afraid of Richard Dawkins?

Last of all, how do we best respond to Dawkins' hostility toward religion in general and Christianity in particular? Let me offer a couple of thoughts here.

First of all, I think that fundamentalism is basically a pastoral problem, including Dawkins' belligerent 'scientific fundamentalism'. Many militantly contrary positions often tell us more about the personal and emotional issues of the protagonist than they do about the matter in question. So I answer fundamentalists not by theological argument, which never works, but by Christian presence and witness, hoping that if they don't meet God in my arguments, God might meet them in my actions.

As for more specifically intellectual and theological responses, there is of course the ancient Christian craft of apologetics. I've been doing some of it in this discussion, trying to show how Christian faith can escape the sceptic's net. But while apologetics can help the wavering, it doesn't seem to help the hard-headed sceptics themselves. Their minds are made up. So while I certainly believe that apologetics—the giving of a reasoned case for Christian belief—is an important part of faith and mission, nevertheless I acknowledge its limitations. I believe the old-fashioned response to unbelief, of commending repentance and amendment of life, is equally important. There just are people who need to be told that their minds are closed to the truth, and that they're keeping God at bay. Some, indeed, are enemies of God, and they need to hear that.

Jesus counsels us in such situations to refrain from casting our pearls before swine. Jesus never fretted over those who sought to bandy words with him, never bending over backwards to convince the contemptuous. He gave it to

them straight, advising his followers to shake the dust off their feet when hard-heartedness greeted their proclamation. Unfortunately, there is a religious hard-heartedness that both Jesus and Richard Dawkins have recognised and opposed. But there is also an atheistic hard-heartedness that hides behind scientific method. We've seen how science and faith can be imagined together. Richard Dawkins understands little of this, however, and cares less.

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