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# Preface

The purpose of this book is to propose the use in theology of a method that has been developed primarily in the field of science. The method itself is described in chapter 1. It is applied to the general subject of inspiration and revelation in chapter 3. Several other applications are discussed in chapters 6, 7, 8-9, and 10, to give the reader some concrete examples of how I believe the method should be used.

However, one does not work on theology in a vacuum. Our age is one in which the possibility of the supernatural is often denied, especially by scientists and intellectuals. Therefore I have felt the need to deal with the question of the supernatural in general (chapter 2), and with the question of the validity of the Bible in particular (chapters 4 and 5), in as fair a way as possible.

Part of what I see as the scientific method is stating the evidence and the inferences one draws from that evidence as clearly as possible, and avoiding trying to settle disputes by appealing to authority, except as that authority can be accepted by both sides of a given issue as based on evidence and inferences therefrom,

and thus scientific itself. The scientific method has no use for authority *per se*. It is to be hoped that responses will be in kind.

I come from a religious background that values the study of nature because it is “God’s second book”, for which I am thankful. I have been interested in the relationship between science and theology at least since I started college with a double major in theology and chemistry. My interest continued to grow as I took courses for a M.A. in religion while getting my M.D. at Loma Linda University. While studying theology, I became convinced that science had something to offer to theology. The most obvious case was that of revelation, where a fundamentalist approach often required denying the existence of apparently minor errors which seemed inconsequential but which also seemed to clearly be errors. On the other hand, a liberal approach seemed to degenerate into “I like it”, with no authority to determine a course of action. The model of a scientific text seemed to avoid the problems with both approaches; the authority of a scientific text is not invalidated with the first error discovered. Thus chapter 3 was born. This required justification of the methodology, and chapter 1 was born. The book just kept growing from there. In fact, if I had not deliberately stopped, it would still be growing.

I am deeply indebted to many people for the ideas in this book. Some of them I have never met, such as C. S. Lewis and Nancey Murphy. Others have stimulated my thinking in discussions, such as James Melancon, Erwin Gane, Jack Provonsha, Dalton Baldwin, Franklin Dailey, and Ed Zinke. Some have also read the manuscript or parts of it and provided helpful suggestions, such as Robert Melashenko, A. Graham Maxwell, David Larson, Robert H. Brown, Ben Clausen, Elaine Kennedy, Bernard Taylor, R. Ervin Taylor, Ruth Edwards, William H. Shea, Glenn Rouse, David Hessinger, Patti Rippon, and Arlene Klooster. I am sure that this list is incomplete and I apologize to those whom I inadvertently omitted. The people on this list are, of course, not responsible for any errors I have made (some of them disagree with major portions of the book). However, I deeply appreciate the contributions they have made. Thanks are due to Farzaneh Alemozaffar for her help in obtaining reference materials, which were sometimes rare and difficult to locate. Thanks are also due to Christina Heinkel, Volker Stieber, and Hanni Bennett for help in translating German. I also wish to express my appreciation to my wife Marla, not only for helpful comments but for going out of her way to give me time

to study and write, without which this book would never have been completed.

Finally, I wish to thank my father, Dr. Ross Giem, to whom this book is dedicated, for his instilling in me at an early age, by both precept and example, the twin ideals of a passion to find truth and a concern for fairness, without which that passion so easily short-circuits. I will be forever grateful to him for this.