

# *Sir John Templeton*



FROM WALL STREET

TO HUMILITY THEOLOGY

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# Contents

Preface / ix

Introduction / 3

## *Part I*



THE BENEFITS OF INVESTING

IN HUMILITY THEOLOGY SCIENCE

### CHAPTER 1 An Investment in Scientific Research for More Spiritual Knowledge / 15

*The human evolutionary pilgrimage • Acceleration of spiritual research  
• Awe at the size and intricacy of the universe • The human ego • The  
humble approach to comprehending more about God • How little we  
know, how eager we are to learn • Benefits from a new field of science,  
humility theology science*

### CHAPTER 2 Research on Spiritual Characteristics / 27

*Testing the laws of the spirit • Universal principles of the spirit • Love  
hoarded dwindles, love given grows • It is better to give than to receive  
• Self-centeredness leads to loneliness • To be forgiven we must first  
forgive • Thanksgiving opens the door to spiritual growth*

### CHAPTER 3 Research in the Sciences / 39

*Applying rigorous methodology to investigate deeper reality • Research  
at the limits of science • Scientists testing theological and philosophical  
questions • Paul Davies on mysticism • Research on purpose in the  
universe • Research on human creativity*

CHAPTER 4 Research on the Role of Spirituality  
in Medicine / 49

*Is religion the forgotten factor in medicine? • Contrasting religious attitudes of patients and health-care providers • Attitudes of medical scientists • Changing the attitudes of medical educators • New research opportunities*

CHAPTER 5 A Call to Humility / 61

*Theology is often resistant to new ideas • Science is providing empirical and scholarly approaches to new ideas • Prizes for papers in humility theology • The Progress in Theology newsletter • Who's Who in Theology and Science*

CHAPTER 6 Discovering the "Laws of Life" / 69

*A high school essay program • Finding direction for life in rural Tennessee • How John Templeton's parents influenced him • The Honor Roll for Character-Building Colleges • Future plans for academic courses emphasizing spiritual "Laws of Life" • Discovering the "Laws of Life"*

CHAPTER 7 Bringing Science and Religion Together  
on Campus / 81

*The gap between science and religion • The openness of scientists • New scientific developments of significance for theology • The Science & Religion Course Program*

## Part II



THE MAKING OF A  
WORLD-CLASS INVESTOR

CHAPTER 8 The Winchester Years / 95

*A trip through Winchester • John's parents and grandparents • Reminiscing with John's brother • A remarkable upbringing • Educational trips • Marriage to Irene Butler • Eight weeks in Europe in a Volkswagen bus • John's mother's spiritual influence*

CHAPTER 9 Reaching Out: Yale, Oxford,  
and Across the World / 109

*Selling magazines to raise money for college • Studying economics at Yale • Attending Oxford as a Rhodes scholar • Founding Templeton College at Oxford years later • A post-graduation around-the-world tour • A brush with death in Palestine • Marriage to Judith Dudley Folk*

CHAPTER 10 The Growth Years / 123

*The early investment years • The principles of thrift and bargain hunting • The typewriter principle • The birth of John's three children • Church and community activities • Dudley's accidental death • Board of Trustees of Princeton Theological Seminary • Young Presidents Organization • The Templeton Growth Fund*

CHAPTER 11 Investing with John Templeton / 135

*The Templeton investment philosophy • The principle of maximum pessimism • The move to the Bahamas • John's commitment to prayer and double tithing • The rise to international prominence • John Galbraith and Mark Holowesko • The sale to Franklin Resources, Inc.*

CHAPTER 12 John Templeton's Spiritual  
Investment Program / 147

*The Templeton Prize • The Templeton Foundation • The Humility Theology Information Center • Honors for Sir John Templeton*

CHAPTER 13 The Future of the Vision / 169

*The staff of the John Templeton Foundation • The advisory board of the Humility Theology Information Center • Main objectives of the John Templeton Foundation • Researching creativity, purpose, the "Laws of Life," and spiritual benefits to health and character building • Academic courses on science and religion • Science and Spiritual Quest programs • Humble Approach Initiative • Meaning of Freedom Program • Extending spirit of humility to all religions • Conclusion*

## Preface



This book chronicles the life of a man of extraordinary vision. John Templeton set the pace on Wall Street with an astounding record of mutual fund achievement, and also startled his contemporaries with his keen insights about market forces and his optimism about the growth of the economy. But John Templeton has made the real goal of his life the elaboration of a new concept of spiritual progress. While recognizing and appreciating the great religious insights of the past, he envisions a new era of spiritual discovery that may rival the astounding physical discoveries of the past few centuries brought to us through science.

It was an honor to be asked to write John's biography, and, in doing so, I have relied heavily upon our fifteen-year association. During this time we have written two books together, *The God Who Would Be Known* and *Is God the Only Reality?* and I have assisted him in the editing of a number of others. I was also privileged to be a charter member of the John Templeton Foundation board of trustees, along with Sir John, Lady Irene, their son Jack Templeton, and Scottish theologian Thomas Torrance.

In order to work on this book over the past two years, I have been fortunate enough to have had relief from some of my administrative duties with the two major Templeton Foundation projects I direct through Gordon College. Professors Jack Haas and Harold Heie have provided tremendous

help with the Science & Religion Course Program and Patsy Ames has been indispensable as managing editor of *Progress in Theology*, the humility theology newsletter that I have edited for the Foundation for the past five years. I am also grateful for the day-to-day support and wisdom provided by my administrative assistant, Rebecca Keefe, and my secretary, Alyson Lindsay. Above all I am grateful to my wife, Betty, whose critique, encouragement, and word processing skills have made this book a reality.

Robert L. Herrmann

## *Introduction*



Sir John Marks Templeton celebrated his eightieth birthday with a great gathering of family and friends on November 29, 1992 at the Union League of Philadelphia. I was privileged to be there and to give the invocation, though I am not a “man of the cloth” but only a biochemist who happens to be a Christian and co-author with Sir John of two of his many books. Writing the biography of a man with so many accomplishments is a truly daunting task, and whenever I forget how enormous the assignment, I just think back to that joyous night in Philadelphia. The list of attendees would easily pass for a random excerpt from *Who’s Who in America* and *Who’s Who in the World*. The variety of accents emphasized the global nature of Sir John’s relationships: Jewel Templeton, brother Harvey Templeton’s effervescent wife with the delightful twang of the Tennessee mountains; the British Sir Sigmund Sternberg from London; Irish-born Reverend Wilbert Forker, administrator of the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion; Mena Griffiths, Sir John’s private secretary of twenty-five years in Nassau, Bahamas; and Wyoming State Senator Gail Zimmerman, spouse of daughter Anne Templeton Zimmerman, to name a few.

At the time of this writing, Sir John is nearing his eighty-fifth birthday, yet it is the considered opinion of many of his friends that he remains one of the youngest, most

forward-thinking, incisive, and progressive investors of the twentieth century. That may seem an odd description for a man who left the world of stocks and bonds in 1992, selling his \$25 billion group of Templeton Funds to Franklin Resources, Inc., but the truth is that Sir John has another investment program under way, one that he hopes will rival the staggering \$10 billion per week the world now invests in scientific research. It is an investment in the spiritual development of human beings! As Sir John expresses it, "The enormous impact of scientific discovery on our physical lives and on our beginnings of an understanding of our place in the universe can show us how to achieve rapid progress in obtaining spiritual information, including information about the Unlimited Creative Spirit, in which we live and move and have our being." The benefits, he believes, would be staggering. As he said in a recent lecture at Templeton College, Oxford University,

Unfortunately, too often people focus on the negatives and lose sight of the multitude of blessings that surround us and the limitless potential that exists for the future. The beneficial effects of religion on our attitudes, our motivations, our interactions with people, our goals, and our basic well-being can be of immeasurable value.

Sir John believes the limitless potential of religion needs to be unlocked. The traditional religions have brought us wonderful and powerful insights and a legacy in sacred art and music, but in recent centuries they have produced little that could be called progress in spiritual information. One solution, he believes, lies in the application of the scientific method, so familiar to us in this age, to the cause of progress in religion. The billions spent on medical research—largely concerned with our physical and mental well-being—have brought us many miraculous cures and greatly increased longevity. Deaths from diseases like tuberculosis, typhoid



fever, diphtheria, syphilis, pneumonia, polio, and cholera are now only a tiny fraction of what they were fifty years ago. Infant mortality has dropped sharply and longevity has increased greatly. Indeed, it has been estimated that 65 percent of all the people who ever lived beyond age sixty-five are alive today.

Furthermore, the impact that scientific research has had on our health shows every promise of intensifying, for it is estimated that 50 percent of all that is known in medicine has been discovered in just the last fifteen years and 90 percent in the present century.

By contrast, the traditional religions have been largely backward-looking, and the newer mystical religious movements of our day are often superstitious and unscientific. What may be needed, John Templeton says, is a new dynamic, empirical, scientific approach to investigation of spiritual phenomena carried out by those trained in the scientific approach and aware of the complexities of scientific interpretation. Furthermore, many of the current discoveries in fields like physics, cosmology, molecular biology, and neural science strongly suggest questions of a philosophical and theological nature, pointing to a great potential in these areas for new spiritual understanding and research. The power of science has been awesome, but even science seems to point beyond itself to a deeper, spiritual meaning!

There is fascination and even a hint of irony in the fact that John Templeton has made progress in religion the great goal of his life. For even though he was raised in a home where religion was taken quite seriously he often expressed the conviction that his gifts did not lie in the Christian ministry. Instead, because of a habit of thrift and the appreciation for a good investment—strong influences from both his parents—he trained in economics at Yale and law at Oxford and became a part of the then new field of investment counseling. Actually, Sir John chose investing in part with the idea that he

might make a financial contribution to progress in Christian ministry. And indeed, that intention has been realized on the grand scale for the benefit of a large number of church organizations, the most notable being Princeton Theological Seminary, where he served for many years as chairman of the board. As head of the financial committee he helped multiply the school's endowment one hundred-fold. And John Templeton is now claiming new ground in the field of philanthropy. For his approach goes beyond the mere "do-goodism" of ordinary philanthropy to express a deep sense of stewardship, a commitment to use the rewards of his gift as an investor to promote the moral and spiritual progress of mankind. What better *ministry* could one have?!

But one might ask if the goal of progress in religion is really attainable. Sir John's answer is to point again at the remarkable progress in so many areas of our lives. Recently, at a lecture in Oxford, he said that we live in a period of prosperity never seen before in world history. In America, the gross national product is thirty times what it was just fifty years ago. The average hourly wage of a factory worker has increased in real terms by over 65 percent. Today, America has more than 3.5 million families with assets over 1 million dollars and worldwide there are over 400 billionaires. He went on to say,

If you look further back to when Adam Smith wrote his great book called *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* you will see that 85 percent of the world's population had to work in agriculture just to produce enough food. Today, less than 4 percent work on farms in America and they produce great surpluses. Dire predictions that farming output would be unable to meet the needs of a rapidly expanding population failed to account for the incredible productivity gains that have occurred. In the last thirty years, improvements in crop varieties, pesticides, and fertilizers have helped *triple* agricultural productivity. This has saved the clearing of forests equal in area roughly to the size of North America, which additional acreage would have been needed for

increased food supply. New methods such as high yield and no-till farming hold promise for continued improvements around the world.

Since the time of Adam Smith's writing, the yearly production of goods and services has increased *one hundred-fold*. In fact, more than half the goods produced in history have been produced just in the latest two hundred years. Before Adam Smith, there were fewer than one thousand corporations on earth. Today, corporations are being created at the rate of *two thousand* in the U.S. every business day. Underlying this growth is the increasing acceptance of the importance of *free* trade and *enterprise* within and among nations. The trend toward greater free market economics accelerated in the early 1980s as the number of privatizations began to outpace nationalizations. Privatizations of state-owned enterprises around the world have soared from less than \$10 billion in 1985 to more than \$300 billion in 1992 as the failures of socialism have grown increasingly obvious and unbearable.

The trend toward greater capitalism unleashes tremendous potential for efficiency gains and greater wealth potential. So does the shift away from regulation and autarchy toward free trade. World *exports* today in real dollar terms are more than *eleven times* what they were just forty years ago. Numerous institutions have arisen to protect the principles that have fostered this dramatic growth and to spread the preconditions necessary for ongoing free trade throughout the world. Consider this: Just fifty years ago, there was no General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, no Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, no United Nations, no World Bank, no Organization of American States, no International Monetary Fund, no European Economic Community, and no North American Free Trade Agreement.

The *new* International Monetary Fund revisions also indicate that the world output is growing *faster* that we had realized—over 20 percent faster in fact. Standards of living in some of the developing countries are rising 8 percent yearly on average. As income levels rise, so will consumer spending, creating new opportunities not only for local businesses but also for companies in industrialized countries, which will find

massive new marketplaces opening up for their products. In India, for example, the middle class is estimated to be equal in size to more than the entire population of the United Kingdom and is growing at a rate of 20 percent a year.

Sir John also tells us that technologically, we have seen incredible progress. Fiber optics allows for transmission of eight thousand conversations as compared with forty-eight on the old copper wire. In 1940 there were no VCRs, no computers, no photocopiers, no compact discs, no microprocessors, no man-made satellites, no fax machines, no modems, no answering machines, no Internet. More than half the books ever written were written since 1940 and more than twenty-five times as much is spent on research and development. There are also four times as many scientists and engineers.

More than half the discoveries in natural science have been made during the twentieth century. Authors John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene, writing in *Megatrends 2000*, told us that the amount of information available is doubling every two and a half years. At that rate, there will be one thousand times as much information available in the next twenty-five years. In 1950, 17 percent of the American population worked in information-related occupations. In 1982 this number had risen to 65 percent. The significance of this continuing information explosion cannot be overemphasized. Sir John says:

Perhaps the most significant implication this information revolution holds for the future stems from its seemingly infinite nature. Our economic prosperity is no longer primarily a function of *limited natural* resources but is becoming progressively more heavily dependent on the self-perpetuating, *limitless* body of knowledge. This bodes well for a continuation and acceleration of the underlying trend toward prosperity that has blessed mankind in this century. . . . The more we are able to take advantage of the information explosion around us, the more we are able to liberate our minds from routine tasks and to cultivate high degrees of analytical thinking, the greater the prosperity with which we will be rewarded.

These momentous developments in the world economy and in technology lead Sir John to the conviction that we may be poised for a similar revolution in spiritual knowledge. Progress in additional new spiritual information is not only possible, but given these examples of advancement in our physical and intellectual lives, progress is the logical development for our spiritual nature as creatures of the Unlimited Creative Spirit.

The main barrier to our full flowering as spiritual beings, Sir John says, is human egotism. It has been our great sin as God's creatures to assume far more knowledge than we actually possess. Indeed, our successes in the worlds of economics and technology can easily give rise to a Promethean attitude, in which we are unteachable and self-satisfied. But the scientific approach, which has made all of this wondrous development possible, has, especially in this past generation, brought us to a place of acute awareness of how infinitesimal we are in the cosmic scheme of things. The end result, John Templeton says, should be a feeling of humility toward the Creator and an eagerness to learn. This awareness, this searching experience directed toward the God of the universe, he has called "humility theology."

So convinced is Sir John of the necessity for this humility toward God that he has built a major focus of his goal of progress in religion around this idea. He has also organized a Humility Theology Information Center within the Tennessee-based John Templeton Foundation, first organized in 1987, and brought together a distinguished group of scientists and theologians to form an advisory board. It is this organization to which Sir John looks for advice and for participation in programs he is developing to promote progress in religion. Descriptions of some of these programs will form some of the later chapters in this book. They include programs to stimulate the teaching of university courses in science and religion, worldwide lecture programs organized around the concept of humility theology, and prizes for

articles on humility theology published in science and religion journals.

Another exciting initiative involves high school students in Sir John's own Franklin County, Tennessee. Essay contests begun there several years ago offer prizes for essays on a student's own choice of moral or spiritual principles to live by. The most recent competition involved over eight hundred entries, and winners were recognized at a country club banquet, in newspaper articles, and with cash prizes of as much as two thousand dollars. The Foundation is involved in a large expansion of this program to communities worldwide. Other programs include an in-depth study of spiritual factors in health and a program for medical schools to encourage the teaching of courses integrating medical science and religion.

The forerunner of these many new initiatives by the Humility Theology Information Center is the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, a program John Templeton began with an award to Mother Teresa of Calcutta in 1973. The prize has been awarded every year since then, the amount of the prize being always slightly larger than the various Nobel Prizes, to signify Sir John's feeling that progress in religion is the most important goal of all.

All of these activities are a source of great personal joy and expectation for John Templeton. One could sense his excitement and pleasure at a recent meeting of the advisory board when he said to the some thirty-five board members and Foundation staff assembled at Unity Village, Missouri, "I want to tell you what great enthusiasm I feel for what we are doing and I hope you too are full of enthusiasm and joy."

He is clearly quite optimistic about these plans and about this group of advisors and staff members, which is not surprising given that optimism has been a hallmark of John Templeton since early childhood. This attitude developed partly because of a remarkable sense of self-assurance, and partly because of a belief that his mother, as a devoted follower of the Unity School of Christianity, had instilled in him

very early in his life. She taught him that God wanted our material prosperity and provided for us an inner strength and wisdom, a kind of divine spark, which would enable us to prosper materially as a natural consequence of intelligent planning and spiritual preparation, especially as we seek to help and love everyone.

John Templeton has followed the principle of opening every board meeting of his Global Fund meetings—as well as any other meetings where he was in charge—with prayer, thanking God for multiple blessings and opportunities. I recall one special occasion, in 1984, when my wife and I attended the dedication of Templeton College in Oxford, England. The audience was a prestigious one, and those on the platform included the minister of education of the United Kingdom and the chancellor of Oxford University—complete with his starched Elizabethan collar—and various other school officials and community dignitaries. At the end, Sir John made his address, dedicating the college to the memory of his parents and then concluding with an expression of deep thankfulness to God for the many blessings that had been poured out upon everyone attending, but especially for the blessing of his own parents and his associates in the development of the college. I recall the look of surprise on the faces of many of the academics as God was acknowledged, and I was proud that John had shown his appreciation for the true source of Templeton College or any other institution put together with human hands but ultimately an expression of the Creator's love and generosity.

For John Templeton, optimism and gratitude go hand in hand. During an interview on the Canadian Television program *Cross Currents*, he said of his philanthropy that he did not inherit his wealth, but that at the time of his marriage to Judith Folk, they began a pattern of saving in which they pledged half of their income to the church and investment. This led to a game of bargain-hunting, budget control, and careful investment, which provided the foundation for his

wealth. Coupled with this lifestyle of thrift and saving was a desire he had been given from early childhood to help others, and he suggested that this willingness to be helpful and useful was actually a source of optimism, just as optimism was a basis for being helpful and useful. As he said, "The two go hand in hand." And then he added some thoughts about gratitude:

Thanksgiving and gratitude will revolutionize your life. If you wake up every day and think of five new things that you are overwhelmingly grateful for, your day will go better, people will like you better, you'll be more successful. Try it! A girl said to me once, "I can't think of anything to *be* thankful for." So I said, "Just stop breathing for three minutes and you'll be very thankful you can breathe again."

Optimism and thankfulness have certainly characterized John Templeton's career, but they have always been accompanied by serious attention to in-depth study and thorough preparation. "Is it cost-effective?" is one of his favorite responses.

As we look to his many new investment programs for the encouragement of spiritual progress, we recall the stupendous results of his careful preparation and persevering optimism in the past. Those of us working with him in these new endeavors are learning the lessons that have been so productive for him throughout the past years. After all, who can question the effectiveness of the Templeton Growth Fund? An investment of \$10,000 in the fund in November of 1954 was worth \$3 million forty-three years later if dividends were reinvested. And, as Sir John points out, that was a gain in material benefits. Who can estimate the gain on an investment in the largely untapped spiritual potential of mankind? John Templeton believes it could dwarf even that global fund in its fruitfulness!



## *An Investment in Scientific Research for More Spiritual Knowledge*



In the view of John Templeton, progress in spiritual information is not only possible, but may be a consequence of God's creative role in our evolutionary history. Ours is a fascinating pilgrimage, starting slowly with the crude awakenings in our early ancestors, who sometimes buried their dead with food and implements for a next world, following through the flourishing of Druids and Mayans and Egyptians, who left to their gods their curious monuments and exquisite pyramids, then on to the great mystics of India and the Middle East who left us the Vedas, the Holy Bible, and the Koran as well as majestic cathedrals and temples. And now, it would seem that our fascination with the meaning of our existence grows deeper and more powerful, a perhaps surprising phenomenon in a scientific age where some thought science would have explained away religion.

The prior periods of human evolutionary history emphasized our physical and intellectual development; brain size more than doubled in contrast to earlier species and we learned to walk upright and use our hands skillfully. The exquisitely painted caves of Europe are evidence of just how skilled our ancestors were! And the current rate of acceleration of our intellectual development is phenomenal. Technologically, as Sir John told us in his 1995 Templeton College lecture, our progress is astounding. In the past

fifty years we have written as many books as were written in all of previous human history, and over half of the discoveries in the sciences have been made in our century.

Sir John sees our rate of spiritual development as only now beginning to accelerate, just as there were periods of gradual growth followed by rapid development in the physical and intellectual periods over the two hundred thousand years of our history as a species. However, the rapid changes currently occurring in the intellectual phase, especially in the sciences, have introduced for Sir John a radically new vision of our place in the cosmos and set the stage for a giant leap forward in our spiritual understanding, a second Renaissance.

Many of these recent discoveries in fields such as physics, cosmology, neural science, and evolutionary biology have been so mind-boggling that they have changed the very way we think of ourselves and of our place in the universe. Certainly they have brought many of the practitioners—the scientists themselves—to a state of wonderment and humility, and provoked their serious consideration of philosophical and theological questions.

In an earlier book, *The God Who Would Be Known*, Sir John and I talked about the spirituality of humankind.

Humanity's fascination with a spiritual dimension, a hidden sphere of power, an underlying ordering principle that lies unseen behind everyday events as well as gigantic happenings, has grown and taken on new importance in the ensuing centuries. Science has given us knowledge of the fundamental structure of matter in terms of a plethora of subatomic particles, and knowledge of processes of biology in terms of molecular mechanisms. But each new explanation seems to open up deeper questions, as though we still see only the outline of things and explain our observations by means of models that only approximate the truth. Indeed, many in science now see the limitations of scientific description and do not presume that scientific descriptions are ultimate truth. For some there is

the added conviction that the Creator is revealing himself through science, so that the results of science serve as signs pointing to a larger Reality.<sup>1</sup>

Among the scientific discoveries displaying this philosophic, searching character we would include the current evidence for the Big Bang, a gigantic explosion which appears to have generated our cosmos as well as both time and space some 15 billion years ago. The products of this grand synthesis, star systems of enormous proportions, number in the hundreds of billions. The numbers are so large that there is no simple analogy to help our minds to take it in. Someone has said that the number of stars is roughly equivalent to all the grains of sand on all the beaches in the world! Timothy Ferris has addressed the question of size in his book, *Coming of Age in the Milky Way*. He says:

And yet the more we know about the universe, the more we come to see how little we know. When the cosmos was thought to be but a tidy garden, with the sky its ceiling and earth its floor and its history coextensive with that of the human family tree, it was still possible to imagine that we might one day comprehend it in both plan and detail. That illusion can no longer be sustained. We might eventually obtain some sort of bedrock understanding of cosmic structure, but we will never understand the universe in detail; it is just too big and varied for that. If we possessed an atlas of our galaxy that devoted but a single page to each star system in the Milky Way (so that the sun and all its planets were crammed on one page), that atlas would run to more than ten million volumes of ten thousand pages each. It would take a library the size of Harvard's to house the atlas, and merely to flip through it, at the rate of a page per second, would require over ten thousand years. Add the details of planetary cartography, potential extraterrestrial biology, the subtleties of scientific principles involved, and the historical dimensions of change, and it becomes clear that we are never going to learn more than a tiny fraction of the story of our galaxy alone—and there are

a hundred billion more galaxies. As the physician Lewis Thomas writes, "The greatest of all the accomplishments of twentieth-century science has been the discovery of human ignorance."<sup>2</sup>

This humbling realization is only one of the most recent occurrences. If we move from astronomy to physics, we are confronted with such things as the strange behavior of the elementary particles of matter, which sometimes display the character of particles and sometimes behave instead like waves. Then, too, there appears to be a built-in limitation in the accuracy of our observation of these elementary particles, a phenomenon Werner Heisenberg called the uncertainty principle. The upshot of this measurement limitation is that we cannot know simultaneously both the position and the momentum of such particles; if we know where the particle is, we don't know where it's going, and if we know where it's going, we don't know where it is!

Sir John anticipated much of what we see now as the significance of these and many other strange and wondrous observations from the sciences. In his earlier book, *The Humble Approach*, written in 1981, he spoke of this new revelation of God from the "vast unseen."

Some people think supernatural events, such as miracles, are needed to prove God's existence. But natural processes and the laws of nature may be merely methods designed by God for His continuing creative purposes. When new laws are discovered by human scientists, do they not merely discover a little more of God?

Each of us every day is swimming in an ocean of unseen miracles. For example, each living cell is a miracle; and the human body is a vast colony of over a hundred billion cells. The miracle of this body includes both our ability to recognize it as well as our inability ever to exhaust the true significance of it. As Albert Einstein said, "The most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible." That the universe exhibits order, not chaos, suggests the futility of trying to fathom the nature of matter without investigating the

unseen spirit behind it. Each time new laws are discovered by scientists, however, we learn a little more about God and the ways He continually maintains and is building His creation.

A mythical observer from another universe, who might have witnessed the spectacular Big Bang when the universe was created about eighteen billion years ago, would have seen after the first year only a vast blackness with thin clouds of stars and other fragments flying apart. But we, who observe from the surface of our small planet earth, see a totally different picture. We see a drama of evolution and progress on the surface of our earth, which is truly amazing and miraculous. And this progress is speeding up faster and faster and faster. By an unbelievable miracle, billions of humans, each of whom is a colony of billions of atoms, have suddenly covered the face of the earth. Most amazing of all is the fact that the unseen minds of these humans are accumulating knowledge in explosive proportions—knowledge of themselves, the universe, of their Creator. Could we ever make an observer from another universe believe this unseen explosion of human knowledge really exists? Would we believe that these new invisible minds are themselves participating creators in the ongoing drama of evolutionary creation?<sup>3</sup>

These, then, are the kinds of scientific data that convince John Templeton that we are on the threshold of great discoveries of spiritual information. But, as we said in the Introduction, he does not believe the leap forward will occur without a change in the hearts of the inquirers.

Sir John feels that a great barrier to our full flowering as spiritual beings is human egotism. Admittedly, there is much to be proud of, and our science and technology has brought us wondrous and often needful things, but we have forgotten the source. We assume far more knowledge and ability than we possess. We have forgotten Lewis Thomas's conclusion that this is the Age of Ignorance. And what we are *most* ignorant of is the Creator. It is humility toward the Creator that Sir John is concerned about!

In *The Humble Approach*, Sir John writes of a new approach to understanding more about God. His method

consists of a broad, sweeping examination of our sources of theological knowledge from the various religions and from modern sources in the sciences, followed by proposals for research for spiritual progress. The essential ingredient for success, he says, is a humble approach.

The word humility is used here to mean admission that God infinitely exceeds anything anyone has ever said of Him; and that He is infinitely beyond human comprehension and understanding. A prime purpose of this book is to help us become more humble and thereby reduce the stumbling blocks placed in our paths toward heaven by our own egos. If the word heaven means eternal peace and joy, then we can observe that some persons have more of it already than others. Have you observed that these are generally persons who have reduced their egos, those who desire to give rather than to get? The Holy Spirit seems to enter when invited and to dwell with those who try to surrender to Him their hearts and minds. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20 KJB). As men grow older and wiser, they often grow in humility.

The humble approach has much in common with but is not the same as natural theology, process theology, or empirical theology, whose horizons are all too narrow. They often attempt to give a comprehensive or systematic picture of God in keeping with human observations. But the humble approach teaches that man can discover and comprehend only a few of the infinite aspects of God's nature, never enough to form a comprehensive theology. The humble approach may be a science still in its infancy, but it seeks to develop a way of knowing God appropriate to His greatness and our littleness. The humble approach is a search which looks forward, not backward and which expects to grow and learn from its mistakes.

All of nature reveals something of the Creator. That golden age of creation is reached as the Creator reveals Himself more and more to the minds of men. Man cannot learn all about God, the Creator, by studying nature because nature is only a contingent and partial manifestation of God. Hence

natural theology, which seeks to learn about God through nature, is limited. Recently a new concept of theology, called the theology of science, was born. It denotes the way in which natural scientists are meditating about the Creator on the grounds of their observations of the astronomic and subatomic domains, but also on the grounds of investigations into living organisms and their evolution, and such invisible realities as the human mind.

Experimental theology can reveal only a very little about God. It begins with a few simple forms of inquiry, subject to little disagreement, and proceeds to probe more deeply in thousands of other ways. Spiritual realities are not quantifiable of course, but there may be aspects of spiritual life that can be demonstrated experimentally one by one even though there be hundreds of failures for each success. This approach is similar to that of experimental medicine.

As with experimental theology, the humble approach implies that there is a growing body of knowledge and an evolving theology not limited to any one nation or cultural area. The truly humble should be so open-minded that they welcome religious views from any place in the universe that is peopled with intelligent life. Seekers following the humble approach are never so xenophobic that they reject ideas from other nations, religions, or eras. Because the humble approach to theology is ongoing and constantly evolving, it may never become obsolete.

When learning about God, a worldwide approach is much too small. Even a universe-wide approach is much too small. The "picture" 99 percent of people have of God is too small. Have you heard anyone say, "God is a part of life"? Would it not be wiser to say of humanity that it is only an infinitesimal speck of all that has its being in and through God? Our own ego can make us think that we are the center rather than merely one tiny temporal outward manifestation of a vast universe of being, which subsists in the eternal and infinite reality that is God. Have you heard the words, "the realm of the Spirit"? Is there any other realm? Humanity on this little earth may be an aspect of all that is upheld by the Spirit, but the Spirit is not an "aspect" of humanity. To say that God is a

“part” or an “aspect” of life is as blind as for a man, standing on a shore looking at a wave, to say, “The ocean is an aspect of that wave.”<sup>4</sup>

Sir John anticipated much of what is happening and needs to take place today in the theological world, just as his investment strategies of the Templeton Investment Funds era showed a keen sense of analysis and a willingness to speculate responsibly but in the broadest international context. In the true spirit of humility, he calls for a strategy, which has served so well for the sciences but is so foreign in theology, of examining every possibility with a willingness to accept truth wherever it is found, and to continually test and re-examine what has been passed down from before and what has been accepted in the present.

Admittedly, this is a tall order for theology, which operates from the standpoint of revelation and knows little of the empirical methods of the sciences. In fact, major religions are only now coming out of a deliberate separation from the scientific world, led by some of theology’s most eminent scholars. Theologian Ronald Cole-Turner has reminded us that the church moved into a period of isolation from science and technology some fifty years ago through the leadership of theologians like Karl Barth and later Langdon Gilkey. Religion’s rejection of science as a resource for theology contained one primary advantage: religion was insulated from the misuse of science and from the disturbing theories of science that could be interpreted to explain away the uniqueness of human beings and human consciousness. The fallacy of this approach, which Gilkey has since admitted, is seen in the almost total isolation of religious values from our culture. Cole-Turner describes this failure and the desirability for a new engagement with science and technology:

The disadvantage is that this strategy alienates theology not only from science but from the natural world itself. If the scientific interpretation of nature has no implications for



Christianity, then Christian interpretation of creation has no consequences for science's understanding of nature. Skeptics quickly asked whether Christianity had any consequences at all. Was it nothing but a set of stories intended to motivate good behavior? Or was it an isolated language game, a way Christians talk in church but untranslatable into the common speech of the broader culture? Christianity was no longer taken seriously because it made no claim. It was simply God-talk, empty and irrelevant to life in the world.

Now, however, science and technology have permeated our whole conceptual universe, even redefining human consciousness. Our theology has been pushed off the conceptual map of contemporary thought, leaving science with its largely unchallenged reductionistic assumptions to define our existence. Our strategy of isolation must end, and our Christian convictions must be brought into an honest engagement with science and technology. Thus transformed, our theology can seek to transform this culture of science and technology. Then our theology and ethics might join with our science and technology in a new alliance to search for the future of humanity God intends.<sup>5</sup>

John Templeton is also eager for a "transformed theology," but with less emphasis on problem solving and more concern for a humble spirit and an open mind. Again in *The Humble Approach* he says:

There are clear scriptural bases for advocating the need for an inquiring and open mind. According to St. Luke, Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone who asks, receives, and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks it shall be opened" (Luke 11:9–10, New American Standard). Maybe God reveals Himself where He finds an inquiring mind—an open mind.

In the Acts of the Apostles St. Paul said, "The God who made the world and everything in it . . . made from one every nation of men . . . that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel after Him and find Him. Yet He is not far from

each of us, for "In Him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your poets have said, "For we are indeed His offspring" (Acts 17:24-28, NAS).

Christ came to reveal God to men. But because of the limitations of human minds and human language, maybe less than one-hundredth part has been handed down to us. It is easy for us to realize how ignorant and primitive were the Jews of two thousand years ago and the Hindus of three thousand years ago. We should be humble enough to admit that if they had only perhaps one-tenth of one percent of all knowledge, we may have only one percent, even though the little glimpses we do have are indeed awesome.

One following the humble approach thinks it possible that God may want to reveal Himself further than He has done to date in any major or minor religion. He may be ever ready to give us new revelation if we will but open our minds to seek and inquire, but first we must rid ourselves of that rigidity and intellectual arrogance that tells us we have all the answers already. Like natural scientists who already assume the humble approach in their studies, maybe we should recognize that the law of creation is a law of accelerating change. Human language has always been too inadequate and restricted to utter all truths once and for all. The human mind has never been ready to receive all knowledge.

Time, space, and energy are the limits of our lives as they are the limits of our knowledge. God, of course, is not bound in these ways. He is the Creator of the awesome vastness of His cosmos. He knows each person's most fleeting thought just as He knows the power of a quasar and the intricate complexity of a DNA molecule. His most marvelous and mysterious creation on earth is the human brain with its indwelling mind. With the use of our minds, we can participate in some small ways in the creation of matter and even life itself. It should be clear to us that even though we are seriously hampered by our human weaknesses, we are means to share with God his readiness to reveal Himself to us. We have a duty of humility, the duty to be open-minded.<sup>6</sup>

This, then, is the foundation upon which John Templeton's spiritual investment program is proceeding. Since 1987,

the ideas he has proposed have been formalized as major programs of the John Templeton Foundation with the words "humility theology" to signify the goal of a new attitude of humility toward the Creator God on the part of the theological community. Implied also is the importance of openness to the discoveries of current science; most recently Sir John has suggested that our goal should be a new science in which additional spiritual knowledge is sought by the empirical and statistical methods of science. He has called this new goal "humility theology science."