

# A holistic context for understanding the categories of religion and state

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# Our view of knowledge

<b>Total length</b> (includes approaches)	389 metres (1,276 ft)
<b>Length of main arch span</b> (pier to pier)	161.8 metres (531 ft)
<b>Rise of arch</b> (above pins)	55 metres (180 ft)
<b>Clear height</b> (above high water level)	26 metres (85 ft)
<b>Total height</b> (above high water level)	59 metres (194 ft)
<b>Width</b> (bridge)	17.08 metres (56.0 ft)
<b>Width</b> (approaches)	24 metres (79 ft)
<b>Total weight of steelwork</b> (arch only)	3,556 tonnes
<b>Total weight of steelwork</b> (including approaches)	7,112 tonnes
<b>Total number of rivets</b> (including approaches)	777,124



Did I tell you anything about the Tyne Bridge or what it *means*?

# The Epistemological grid v1

- Evidence based judgements
- The empirical as intrinsically more valuable
- Reason as the supreme arbiter of all things
- The analytic mode
- Works well for “hard sciences” (Physics, Chemistry)
- Unparalleled prevalence within the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Reached its intellectual zenith with logical positivism
- Popularised in “new atheism” (scientism)

# The Epistemological grid v2

- There is a whole class of propositions that empirical data is of no significance but they are still meaningful (Wittgenstein)
- To distance discussion of religion and state from theology reifies it of most of its content
- Soft sciences interpret data
- Data itself is just information, it acquires meaning as it is interpreted

# Separating church and state, religion and politics 1

## **Kant – philosopher of the Enlightenment**

- Pietism emphasised personal religious experience rather than dogma
- Kant's parents were pietists
- He had a pietist education
- Reason was to judge all things
- Kingdom of God and civil polity were bound together in by a commonwealth of ethical principles (the 'pure laws of virtue', 'the Good Principle')
- Dump the latter, assert the former as arbiter of all truth

# Separating church and state, religion and politics 2

## **The intellectual descent**

- Empiricism
- Atheism
- Naturalism – the putative heirs of positivism
- Fundamentalism
- Premillennial dispensationalism
- Dump Kant's foundation but keep reason as the arbiter of all things
- Tolerate the church on the fringes of society

# Rediscovering religion and state 1

- The papal superstate
- John Wycliffe – a sovereign has authority over the clergy within his realm
- Moses separated his executive authority from the priestly authority
- Moses established civil government where leaders were chosen by the people, for the people
- The priestly role included education, primary healthcare, building inspection, arbitration in civil disputes involving moral issues
- The physical world was of equal importance to the priest as the spiritual
- Luther and Calvin believed in vocations, reforming society has a whole
- The State was to deliver justice and to facilitate at a national level in crisis

# Rediscovering religion and state 2

- Religion and state were separate but not independent
- The state could censure the religious leaders when they failed in their duties to the people
- The religious leaders ensured the state remained just
- State and church, religion and politics are expressions of the divine creation mandate to subdue and rule the Earth – to create culture



# The presumption of atheism

- Autophagic capitalism
- The rotting offal of modernity

