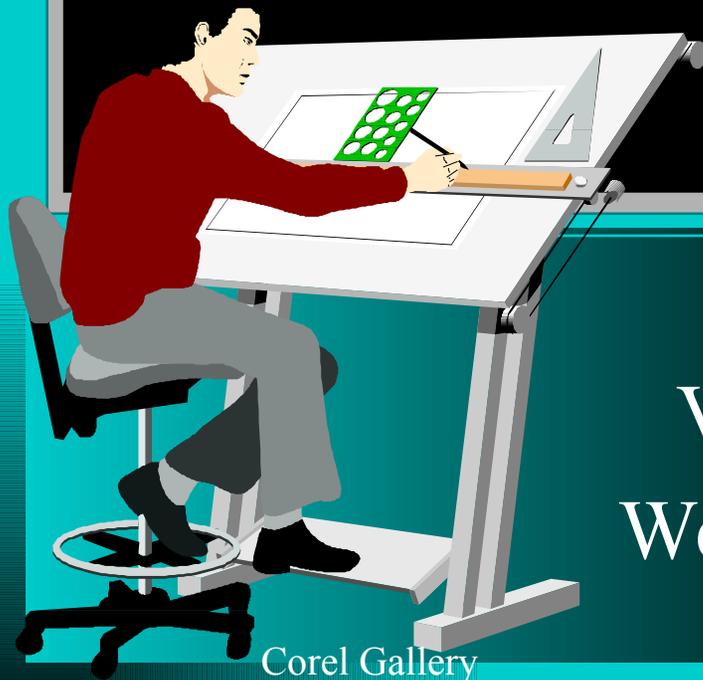


Appreciating Design and Designer



Vern S. Poythress, Ph.D., Th.D.
Westminster Theological Seminary

Corel Gallery

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Designed?



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Designed?



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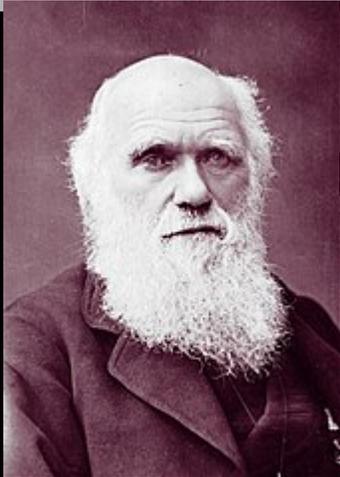
Criteria

- ◆ Clear purpose (function; something useful)
- ◆ Too complex to be accidental

The Human Eye



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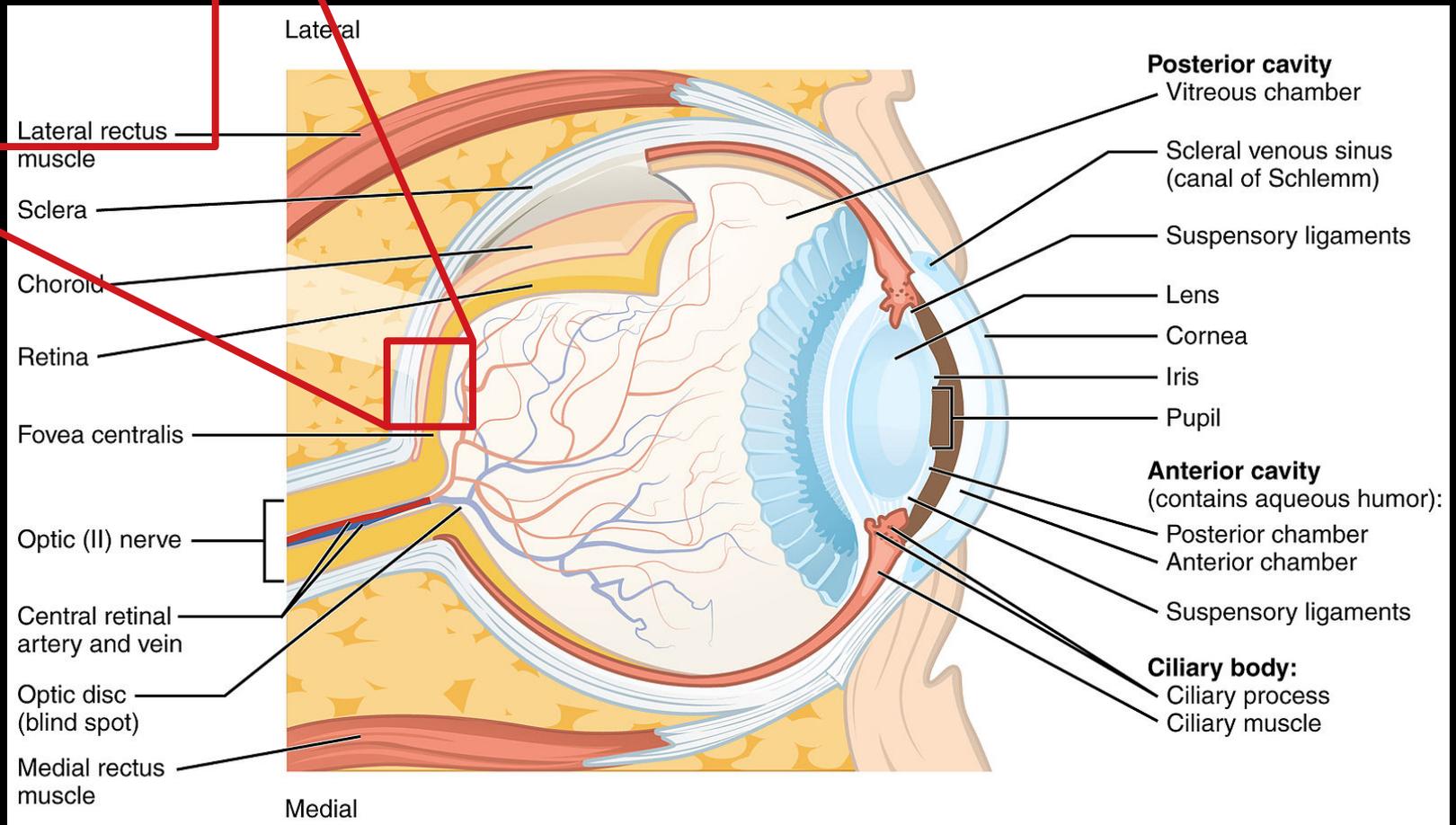
Charles Darwin on the Eye

It is curious that I remember well time when the thought of the eye made me cold all over, but I have got over this stage of the complaint, & now small trifling particulars of structure often make me very uncomfortable.

– Charles Darwin, letter to Asa Gray, 3 April, 1860.

<https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-2743.xml>

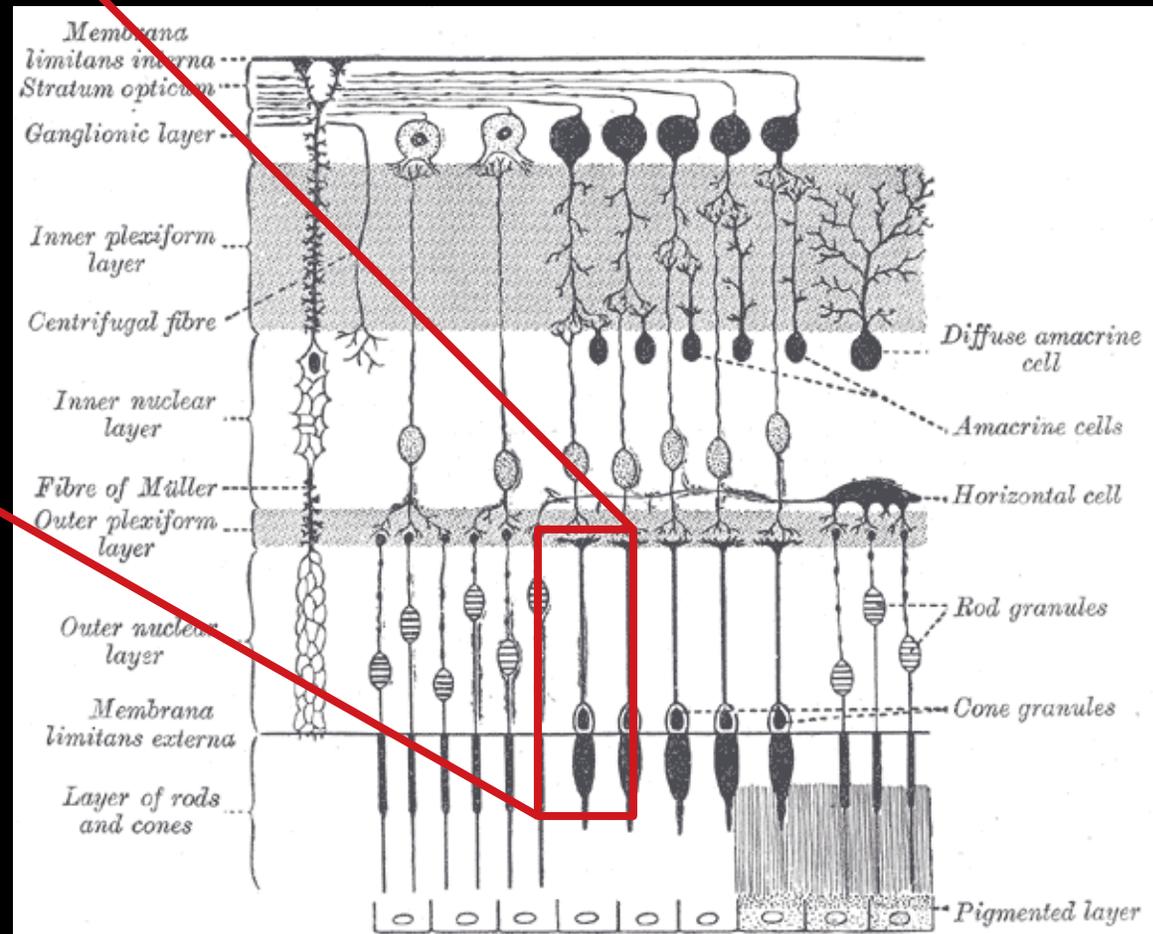
Structure of the Human Eye



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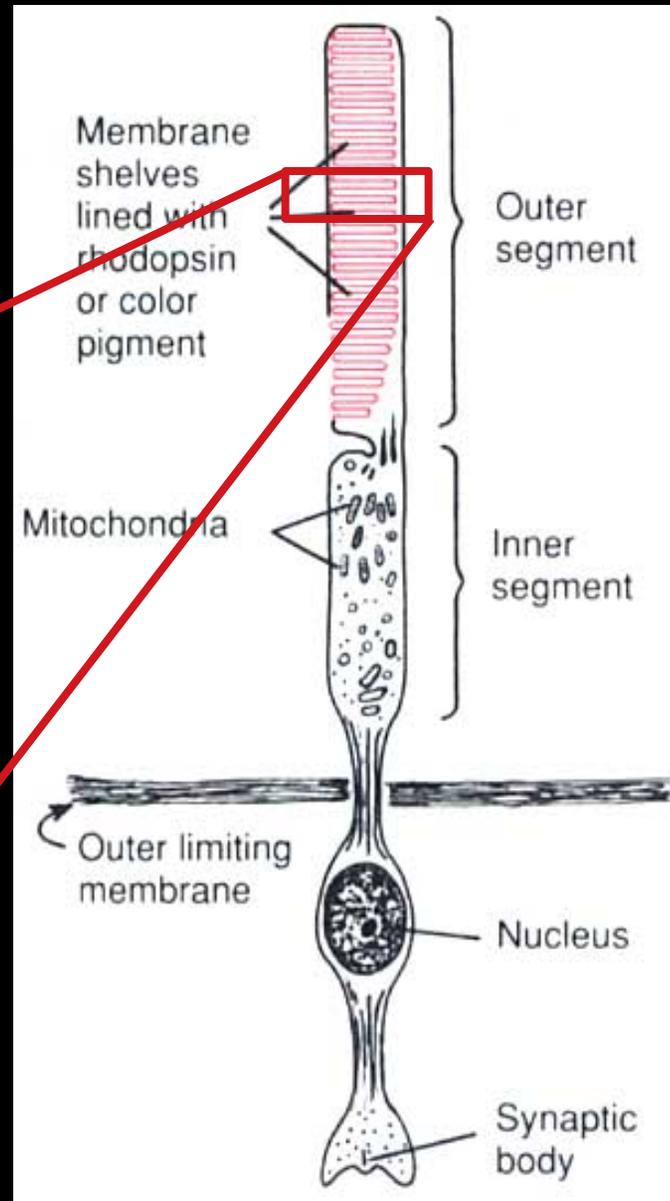
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1413_Structure_of_the_Eye.jpg

Retinal Layers

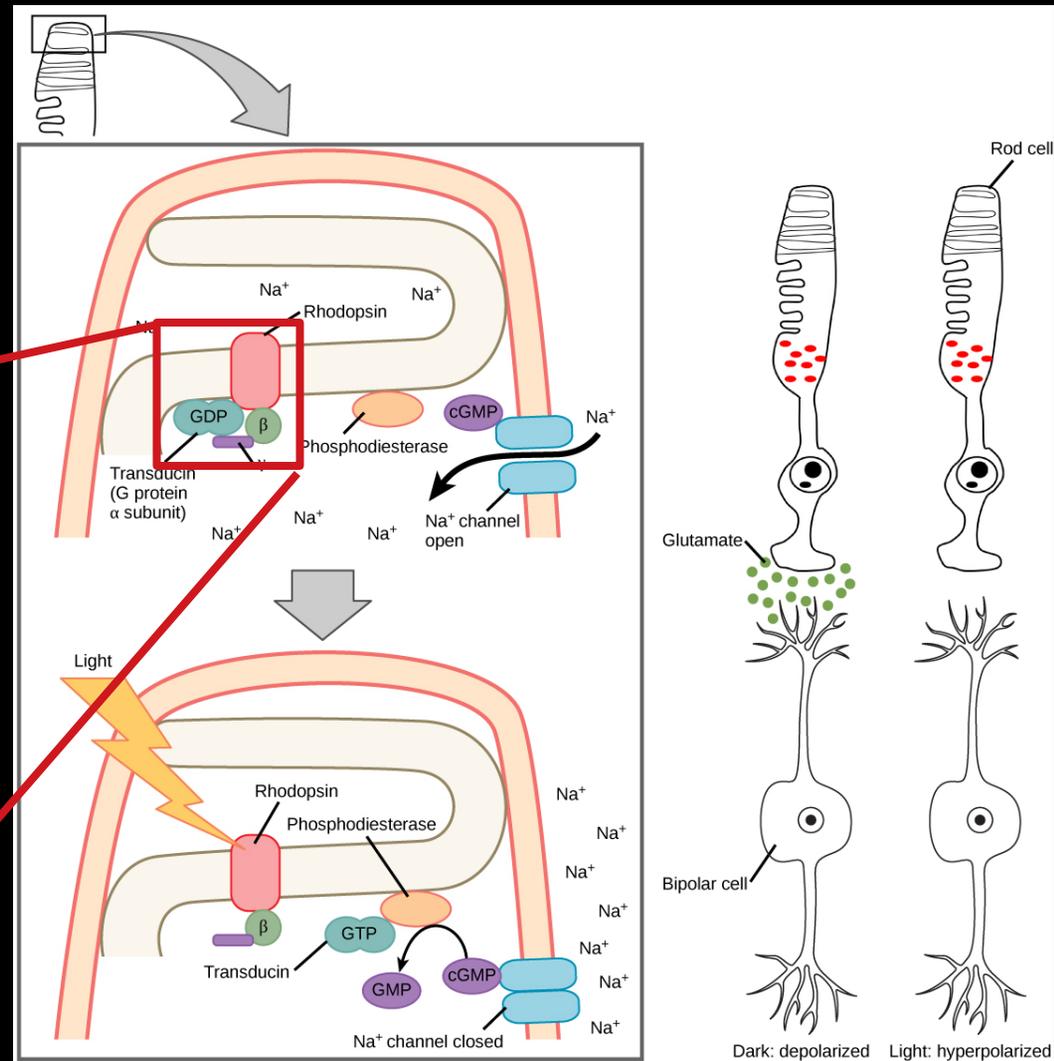


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Retinal photoreceptor cell (rod or cone)



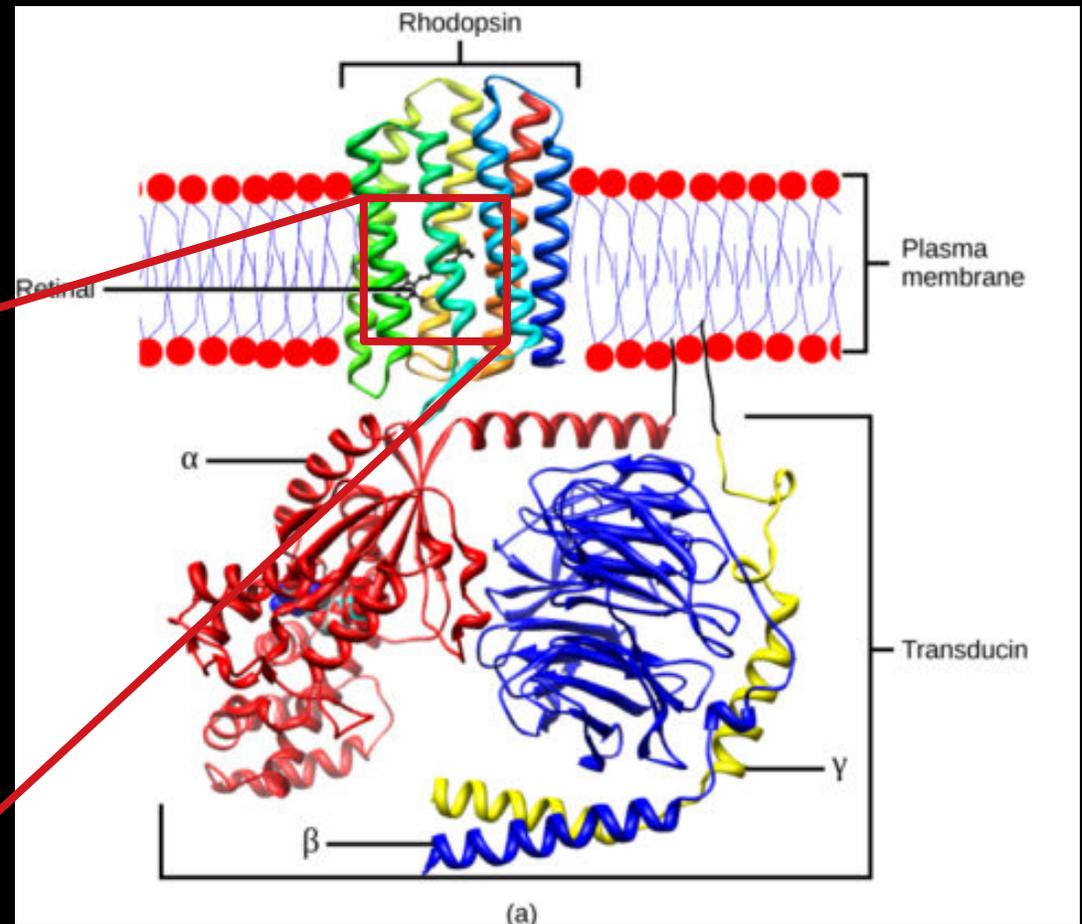
Molecular Cascade in Phototransduction



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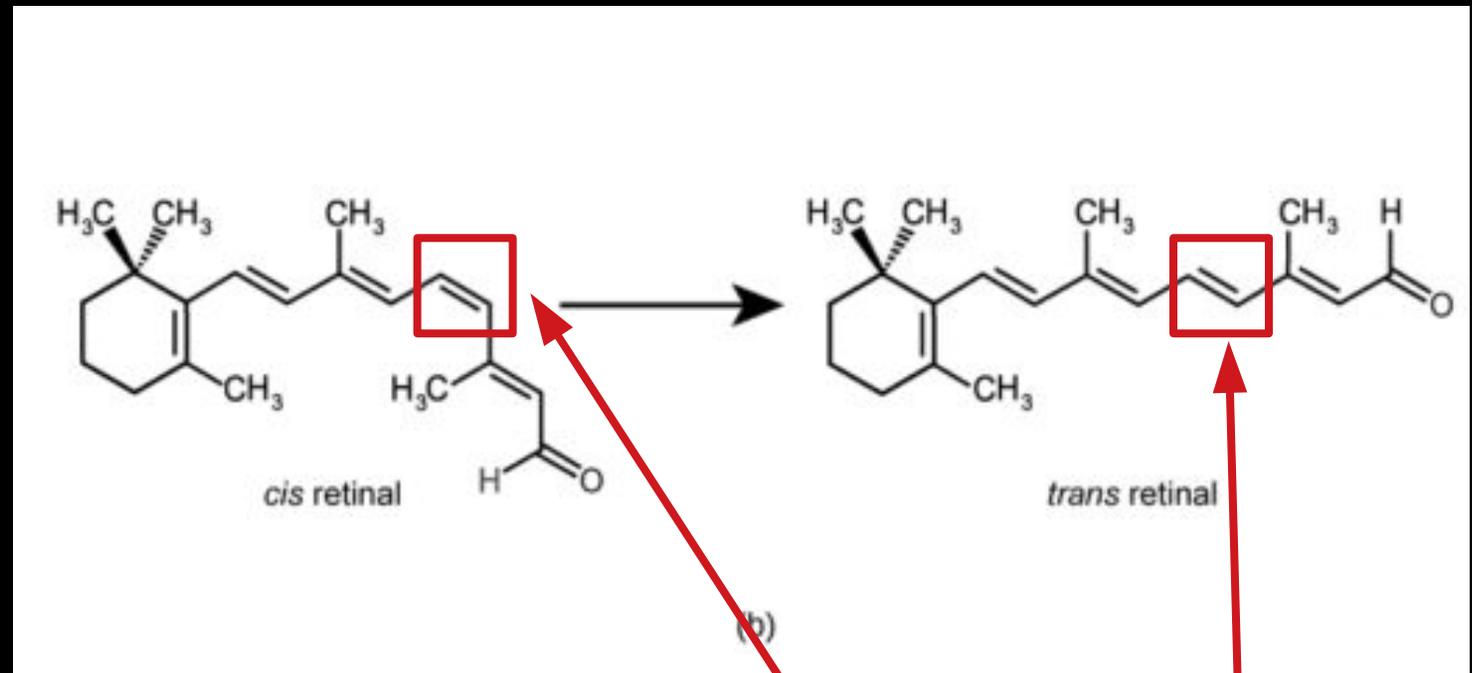
Rhodopsin in Plasma Membrane



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Retinal Transformed by Light



Retinal = Vitamin A aldehyde

flip a
carbon bond

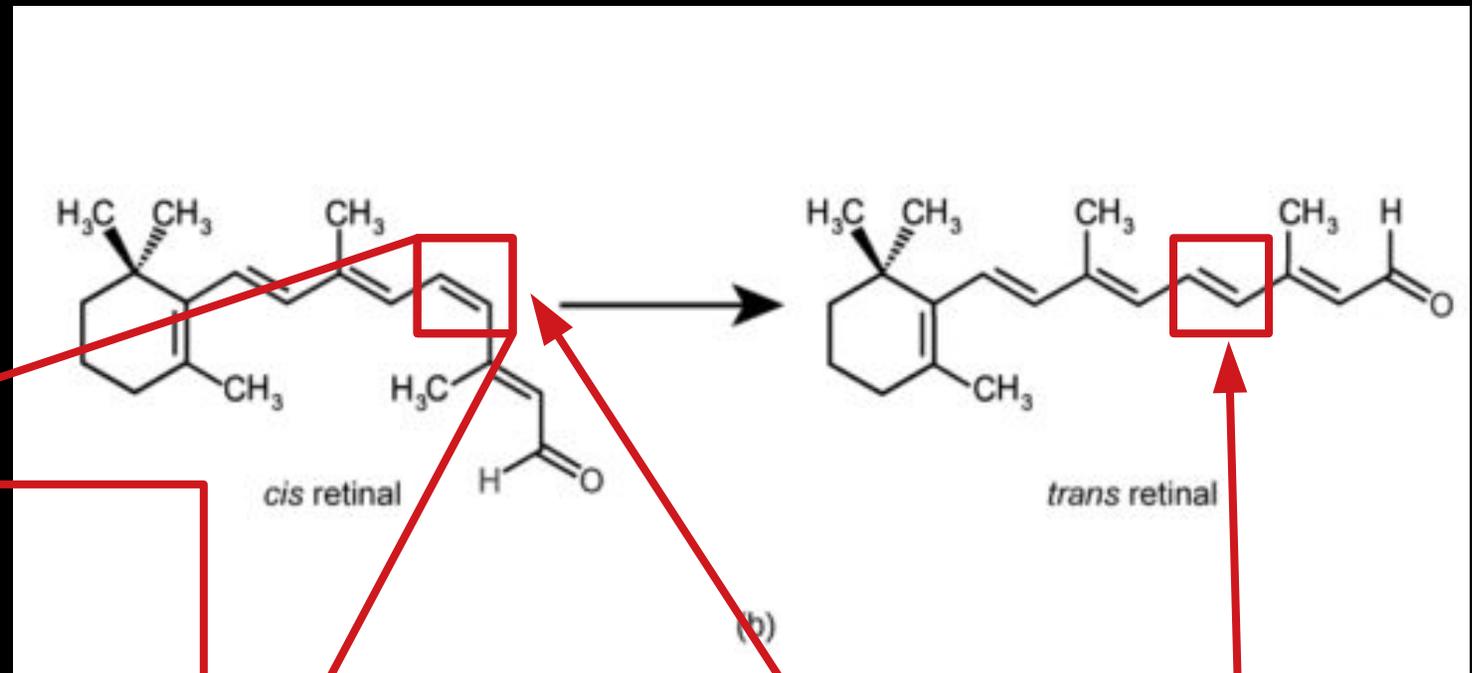
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What Do You Answer If You Want "Chance"?

- ◆ Look at the other instances like it.
- ◆ Common ancestor
- ◆ (Never mind filling in the intermediates)
- ◆ But how did it get going at first?
- ◆ It must not be hard if it happened several times.
(Bacterial photochromes vs. rhodopsin)

Retinal Transformed by Light

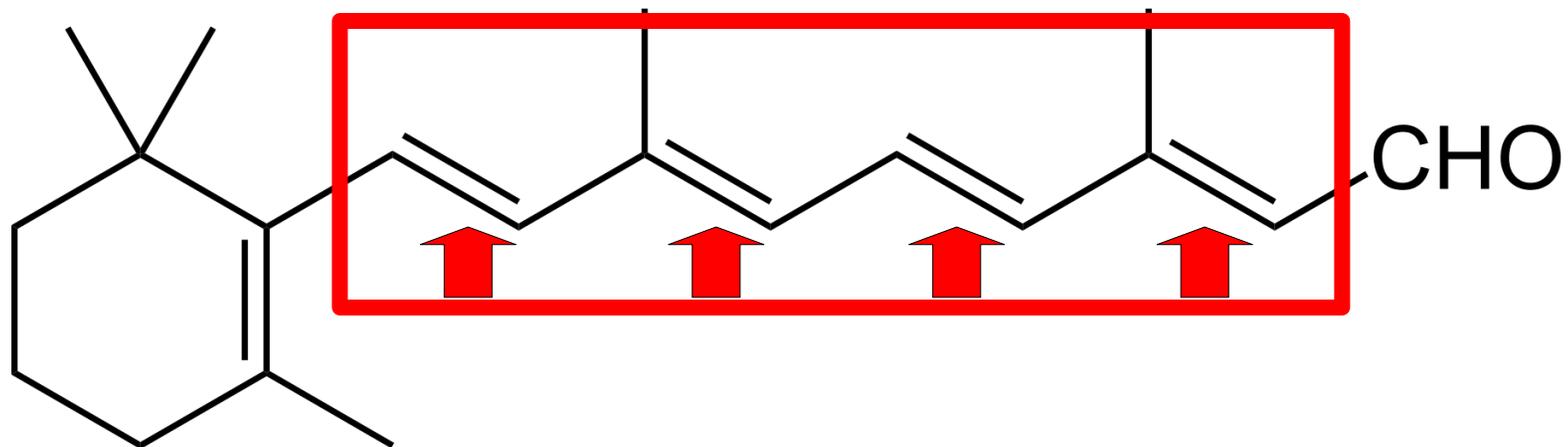


flip a
carbon bond

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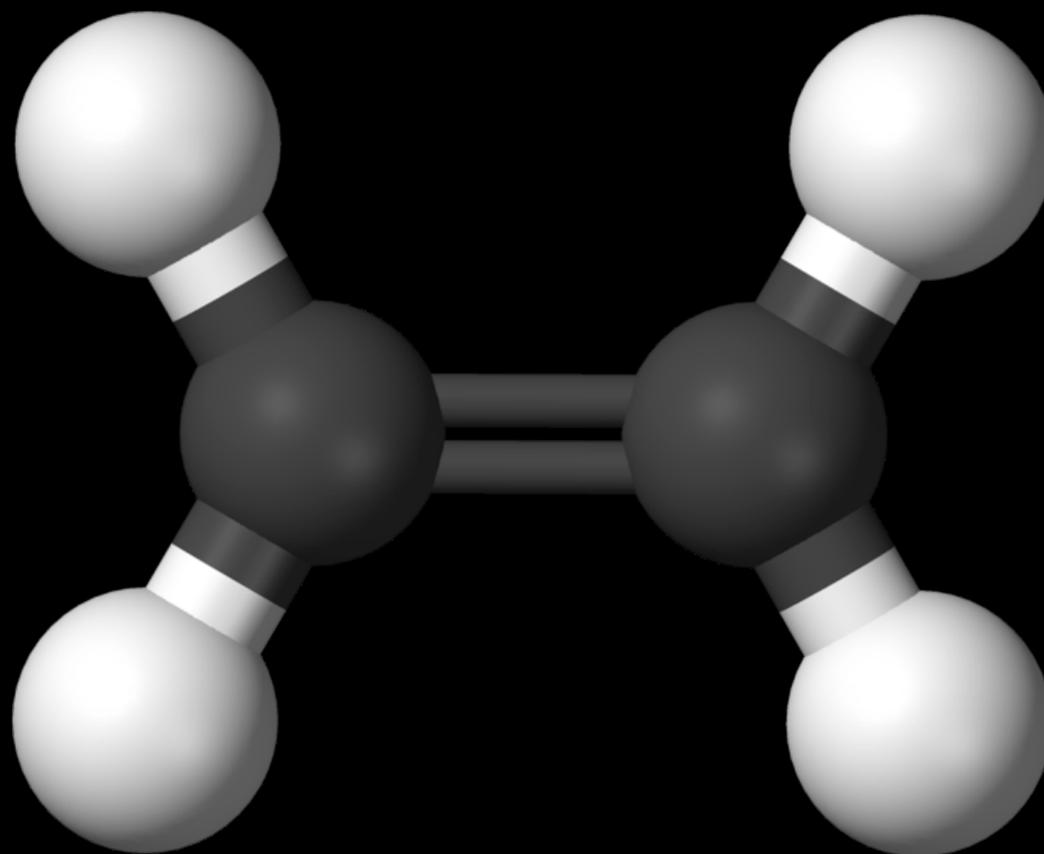
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Retinal's Structural Rigidity



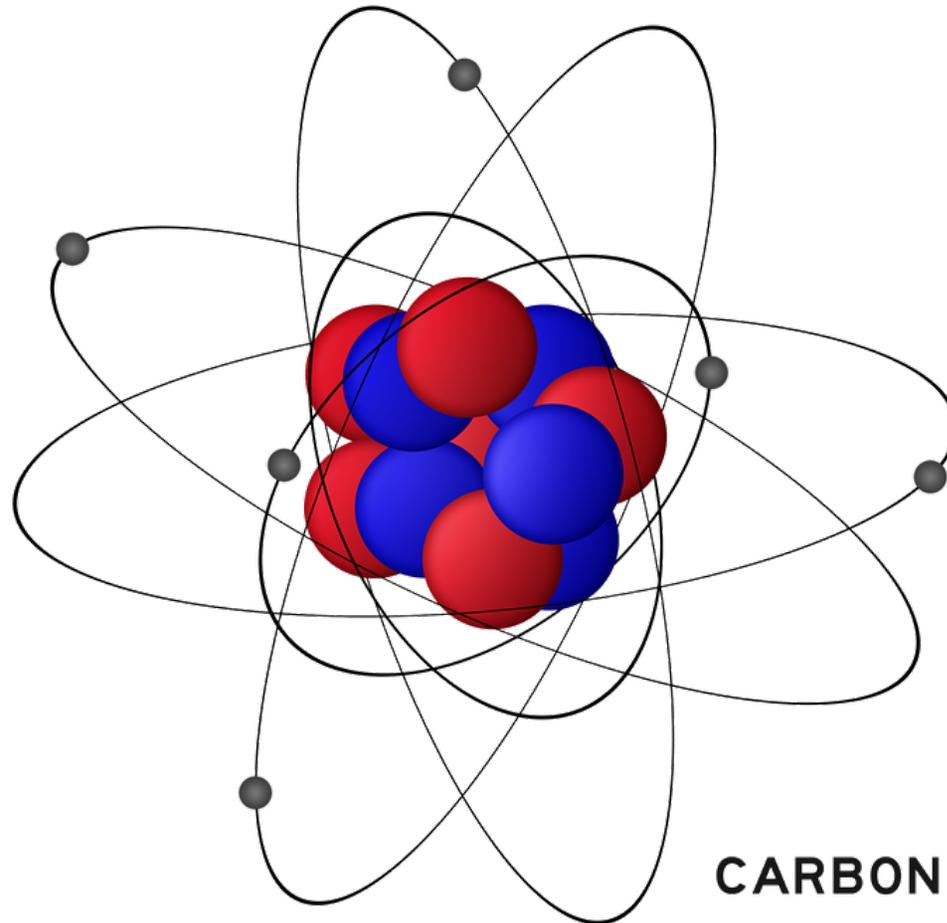
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Double Bond for Carbon Atoms



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Carbon Atom



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Features of the Carbon Atom

- ◆ Four covalent bonds, by quantum mechanics
- ◆ Double bond makes possible flipping structures ("cis" and "trans")
- ◆ Makes possible complex molecular structures (e.g. proteins)
- ◆ Nuclear resonances make it attainable by fusion of four helium atoms

Design in the Carbon Atom

Would you not say to yourself, "Some super-calculating intellect must have designed the properties of the carbon atom, otherwise the chance of my finding such an atom through the blind forces of nature would be utterly minuscule. A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature. The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question."

— Fred Hoyle, "The Universe: Past and Present Reflections." *Engineering and Science*, 45/2 (November, 1981): 8–12 [12].

Questions about Design

- ◆ Does design imply a designer?
- ◆ Is the world as a whole designed?
- ◆ Why is science possible? (science as designed)
- ◆ How do we recognize design?
- ◆ Why is it so hard for some people to admit design?

B. Design Implies Designer?

What is design?

Who is the designer?



Definition of "Design"

"to create, fashion, .. according to plan."

"to conceive and plan out in the mind."

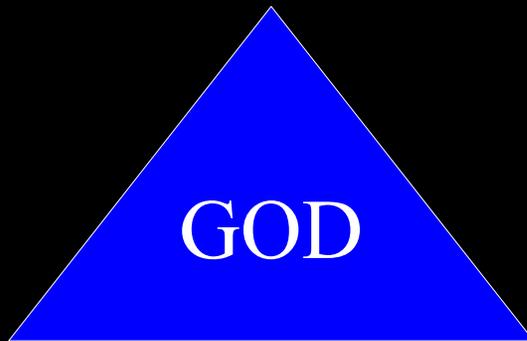
– *Merriam-Webster* online

The mind and plan belong to someone.
Purpose and intention belong to persons.

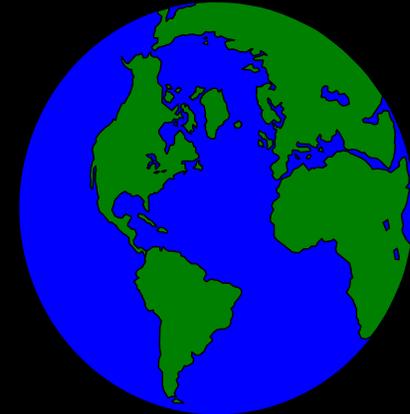
C. Is the World as a Whole
Designed?

Levels of Design

divine



World



human

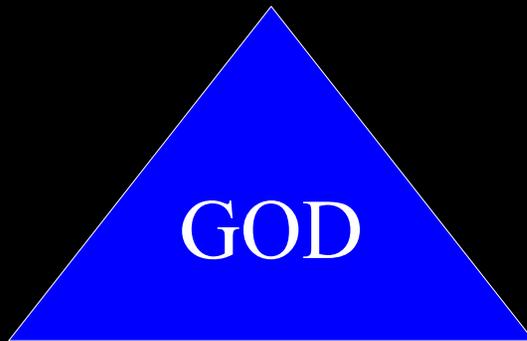


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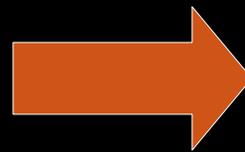
Human Evaluation

divine



Monotheism
vs. atheism

human



Admit
design

CC0

D. Why Is Science Possible?

Why is there
anything at all?

Why are there
regularities?



The Pieces

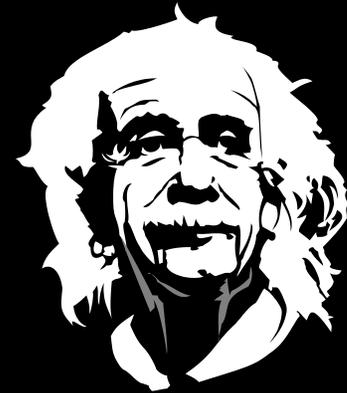
Law

$$E = mc^2$$

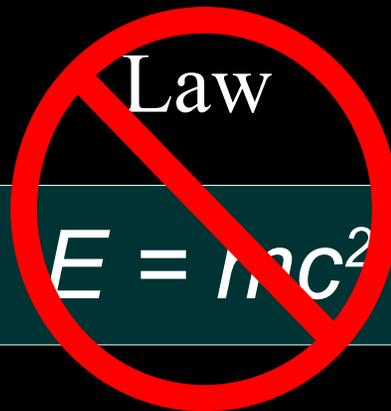
World



Persons



Polytheism

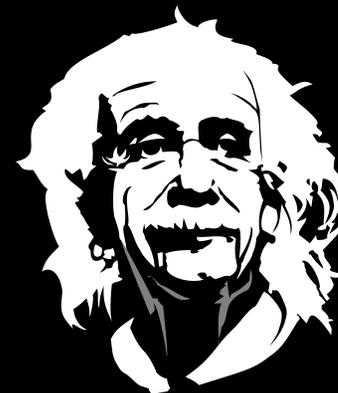


gods in
conflict

World



Persons



Philosophical Materialism

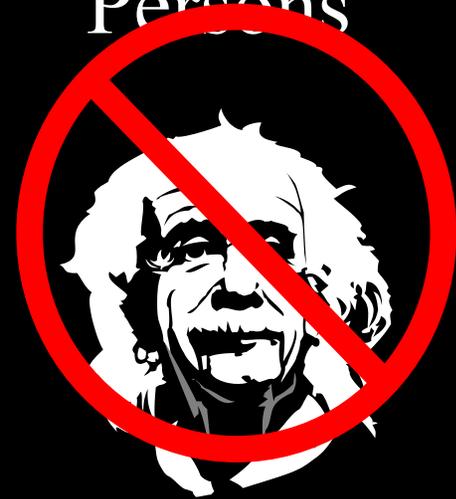
Law

$$E = mc^2$$

World



Persons



Postmodern Relativistic Subjectivism

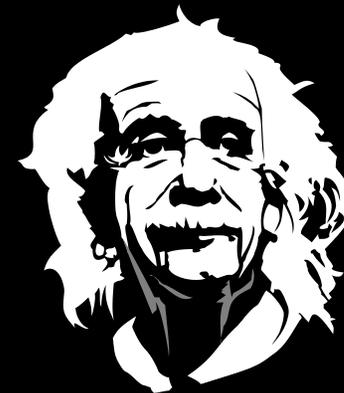
Law

$$E = mc^2$$

World



Persons



Rationalism

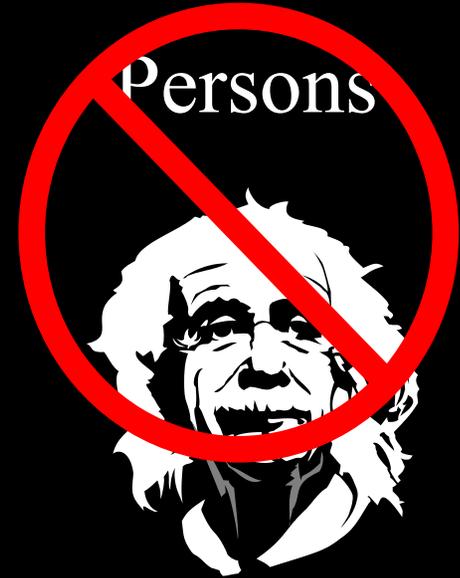
Law

$$E = mc^2$$

World



Persons



The Mystery of Interaction

Law

$$E = mc^2$$

World



governs

conforms

supports

understands

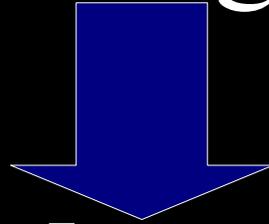
supports

understands

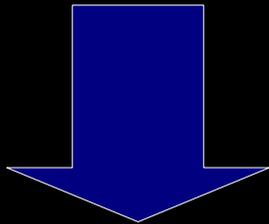
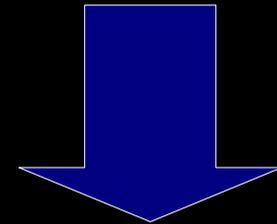
Persons



Design



Law

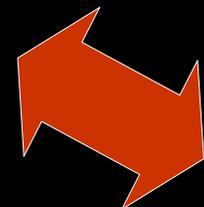
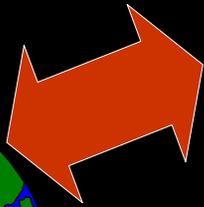


World



$$E = mc^2$$

Persons

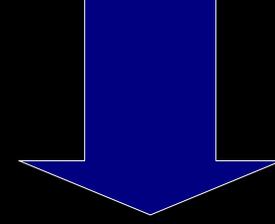
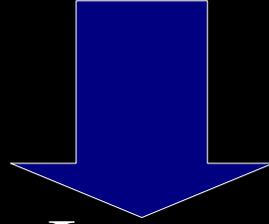
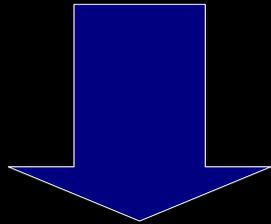


God

powerful

rational

personal



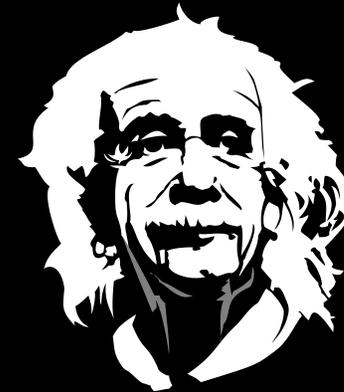
World

Law

Persons



$$E = mc^2$$



Testimony of God

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. – Romans 1:19-20

Divine Nature

powerful

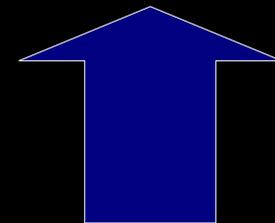
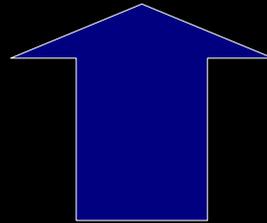
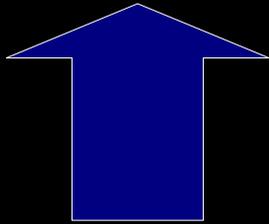
rational

personal

omnipotence

rationality,
wisdom

personality



divine nature

Suppressing the Truth

... who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. – Romans 1:18

Multiple Testimony

powerful

rational

personal

testifies

testifies

testifies

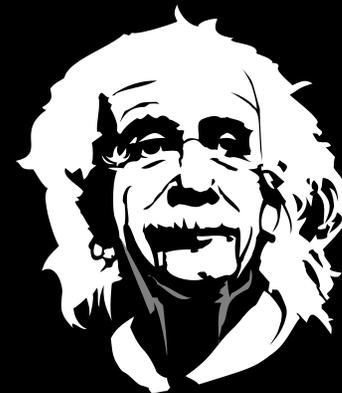
World

Law

Persons



$$E = mc^2$$



Father wisely plans

GOD

Son powerfully executes

Spirit personally present

powerful

rational

personal

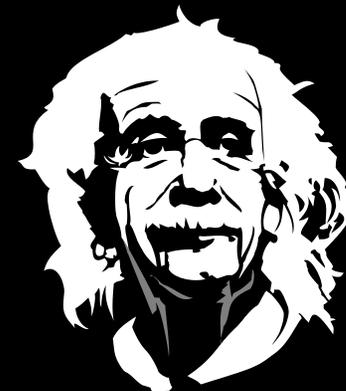
World

Law

Persons



$$E = mc^2$$



E. Recognizing Design

Open My Eyes

Open my eyes, that I may behold
wondrous things out of your law.

– Psalm 119:18

Sense of wonder

Easy If You See

The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.
– Psalm 19:1-2

GOD

image
of God,
in tune

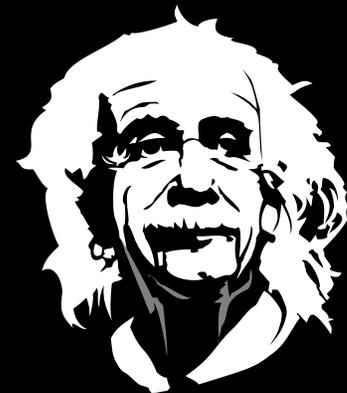
World

Law

Persons



$$E = mc^2$$



We Need Reconciliation

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus
Christ. – Romans 5:1

F. Why Is It Hard to Recognize Design?

What Design and Whose Recognition?

- ◆ Everything is designed
- ◆ Some things more obviously designed
- ◆ We all know it
- ◆ We all suppress the knowledge
- ◆ For some things, hard to evade
- ◆ New discoveries catch us,
dredge up what is suppressed

Invoking Design

- ◆ Everything we see is designed by God
- ◆ If you decide to appeal only to lawfulness, you leave out one possibility for origins and for exceptional events (miracles)
- ◆ The rejection of design is ideologically influenced
- ◆ The key factor is blindness