

# Are science and religion in conflict philosophy essay

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Are Science and Religion in Conflict? Science and religion have been at odds over what is accepted through faith and church dogma. These two disciplines, which for centuries have long been debated, are coming to terms through a better understanding of history and a mutual respect through the scientific process. From the times of Socrates to Copernicus, to the scientific writings of Galileo, Newton and Einstein, we find religion and science locked in eternal conflict. At one time science was beginning to make huge strides and was hidden away from the public for fear of religious persecution. Now it seems religion has begun embracing science not only to reinforce what religion says it has known all along to the realization of sciences' ability to understand the complexity and beauty of God's creation. What was once considered heresy, science and religion are more and more finding a mutual balance if not a genuine respect for each other not only in theory but in practice. Once the practice of science or the publication of results and theory could, as in the case of Galileo, get a person in serious trouble with the church. Galileo published his findings of observations, through the use of his new invention the telescope, that the earth was not the center of our solar system but instead the sun was. For this he spent the last 10 years of his life under house arrest his life and further publications censored along with a public apology and recanting of his papers (Mosser 2011). He was later, as we all come to know, proven to be correct to the dismay of the church. He was lucky; many others were tortured and subsequently killed in a variety of cruel ways. Being a scientist was a risky business back then and in some ways still can be. One of the more enduring arguments between science and

religion remains, from the position of the church, God created the heavens and the earth in six days and on the seventh day he rested. Science insists six days would be impossible and for the church, nothing is impossible for God. The crux of the issue is how long is a day. Humans arbitrarily delineate a day as 24 hours or from rise to sunrise. Time as Einstein proved to the scientific mind is relative to one's place in space and is merely a frame of reference which humans can use to give meaning to events which we can perceive. So how long is a day? If time is relevant and arbitrary then our learned perception of time is only relevant to humans and therefore God's day, is relevant to a whole different perspective. One day biblically could then be a billion years, or even more. One of the arguments of religion is that time itself is not the important issue but the linear events as recorded in religious text. Faith here is at issue and scientifically cannot be proved. Fideism, simply put is the belief independent of reason. Given traditional proofs of God, the argument of design along with the cosmological argument of God as the "first cause" these estemiological arguments give reason to question contemporary scientific beliefs. Religious text, the Judeo-Christian Bible for example, tells of great disasters, destruction of ancient cities and migrations of large amounts of people along with long lost, to history, geographic areas of land. These for generations were long held beliefs and until relatively recent times, were brought into close scrutiny. Science for some and public opinion admonished these firmly held beliefs ridiculing those who still believe. It was science itself who began dispelling their own claims through the work of archeologists, geneticists and other scientific disciplines. As time passes, which we have seen is relative anyway, and

human knowledge, which philosophically can itself be argued, more and more religious beliefs are shown to be more accurate and correct all along. What religion, and its dogma, have insisted for centuries, is slowly being proven to the scientific mind. These two disciplines have demonstrated more and more agreement to stories and historical references and continue to work together and in the traditional scientific method. These have given way to the "principle of charity," where each discipline now gives latitude to each other's views until there is reason or more definitive proof that it is not. Religion, at least as it appears to me, has always provided a comfort in times of personal need. I have found many ways of providing proof of existence of God that satisfies me. I, along with these beliefs have had no real reason to doubt the stories and lessons which I have studied for years. Although I have had no personal need to verify these stories and beliefs, it is satisfying to finally have science validate for them what I have believed since childhood. On the other hand, those who have chosen not to believe in religious doctrine, i. e. Carl Marx who claims God is a creation of man rather than man a creation of God, continue philosophically to convince their followers they are right. Of course, the views of the methodological naturalist, will continue to seek the answers to their questions through the laws of nature, the known physical laws verses the more spiritual held beliefs. These arguments will continue back and forth as they have for eons and science will continually challenge the strongly held beliefs religion has repeatedly defended for time in memoria. Darwinism will be debated and atheists will continue to publicly and politically push their agendas. Religion, then, continues to be the social, philosophical and political target, one which seems, must to be disproved.

Religious views really do not and really have not changed only scientifically proven correct. There appears to be an ulterior motive, a need to deny the existence of God, prove what religion teaches is false. One could philosophically debate the issue of good versus evil within this framework or is man by virtue of his own free will, doomed to reject what he cannot fully understand. Time and science along with religious patience, which is part of its doctrine, have repeatedly shown that what is recorded in religious text is slowly being supported by those disciplines taking on the challenges of continuing human knowledge. With debate continuing over whether or not faith is justified or if God even exists, we must first look deep within the mind of man. Even this will be debated as the brain versus the mind is philosophically argued. However, the mind of man or what could be called the soul, remains an innate concept throughout mankind's history. Man has always felt there is something more or is this all I am? Socrates thought the soul was separate from the body and in his view saw his death as a cure or a release. Aristotle had a belief in the human soul or mind and wrote about these things giving way to modern disciplines of "Philosophy of Mind." The concept is not new and contemporary, science is. Beginning to delve deeper into this subject, a subject long established and understood by religion. Self-awareness along with, again, innate knowledge and values such as right and wrong do not give rise to a better understanding of science rather than a greater understanding of a higher power or as religion refers to as God. Science uses techniques of inquiry, forming hypotheses, theory and then testing these theories and getting results that are verifiable and repeatable. They will publish their findings and open themselves up to scrutiny by their

peers. The philosophy of religion as agreed upon by both Kant and Kierkegaard, God cannot be proven by reason alone. Metaphysical examination can be difficult without faith or reason. But as human beings we have within us all, the capacity to leap beyond logic and reason and do sometimes experience the metaphysical or a religious experience. This is very distinct from what we can experience in any other way giving religion strength within us, which for those who live their lives according to their religion seem to have a more balanced perception of life in general. This can give a person a stronger position from which to debate philosophy in general. So, is science and religion in conflict; yes and no. Both are disciplines that use different tools to achieve the same result, truth. One uses more empirical evidence where the other more factual, but both have found common ground based within their own disciplines providing answers satisfying both. They can and must always be connected because there are always those who need to know more.