SCIENCE AND RELIGION
GRADED PAPER 2 REVIEWS

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Paper 1

This review is well organized and generally well written (although informal), and it draws the writers attention to a number of troublesome areas that exist at many different levels. The one substantive omission is the lack criticism for the central argument itself. The thesis is a good one (which you noted), and the arguments are generally aimed at supporting the thesis (although not perfectly, which you also note). However, you fail to observe that the overall **content** of the argument is weak. The reasons presented do not address some of the more vexing arguments (e.g., so how do you know whether a topic will ever be addressed scientifically?).

Grade: A-

Paper 2

This was a well-structured review that addressed all aspects of the paper. The most significant missing aspect of this review is the failure to address possible objections. There are strong and likely objections with which a skeptic would respond to the ideas proposed in this paper, but you do not help the author identify and anticipate them.

Grade: B+

Can purely scientific and religious views of the world be reconciled?

Paper Review

1. **Thesis identification:** "While there are many arguments that place science and religion at odds, a religious scientist is not a contradiction. Instead a religious scientist is an explorer of the natural world presented in God's universe in a way that reconciles scientific and religious views to attain a more complete view of life." Good Idea. I think it is possible for you to say this in about half of the words. The second sentence could use some clarification…especially the phrase "the natural world presented in God's universe."
2. **Quality of arguments. Beginning → end?:** The point you are trying to prove in this paper is that a religious scientist is not a contradiction. Although I think you make several great steps towards this, I was not entirely convinced by the end of the paper. However, if you clarify the intent of each paragraph and each sentence, I think you will easily reach that goal.

Not enough. Not convinced why?

3. **Allow speculation… appropriate?:** Your paper falls under the third topic (can a scientist be religious?...) and focuses more directly upon the question, "Is a scientist who believes in god failing to apply scientific thinking to some parts of the natural world?" Your paper topic choice is obviously appropriate. However, there are some comments you make in this paper that need backing up (and thus may be deemed inappropriate). At the top of the third page you write, "But according to the Bible, even God makes mistakes, feels threatened by mankind's power, "blots out" human life with the great flood, and then continues to create fear in men to control their behavior." These things are said with no actual proof

~~behind them,~~ and unfortunately "according to the Bible" does not suffice. Adding in proof (a quote, maybe?) will make the paper more scientific while at the same time giving your point a more solid background.

4. **Larger structure. Discontinuities?:** The structure of this paper is good, but it is a little mushy. I know that doesn't make sense, but hear me out. There is a lot of extra information that softens your argument. If and when you remove the mush… this will be a much more scientific paper.
5. **Terms defined before use?:** The only issue I have with this (as is explained in no. 6) is that the explanation of the visible light spectrum is not clear enough for someone who does not have any previous knowledge on the subject.
6. **Comment on language. Concise? Excess modifiers?:** this paper needs to be more concise. There are too many commas and excess phrases that do not add to the message of the paper and often confuse the reader. There were many sentences that I had to read over two or three times to understand. The second paragraph had a lot of sentences like this. The first sentence took me two or three times to understand because of its awkward wording. When you explain why the sky was blue because of the visible light spectrum, you do not organize your point in a clear enough way. People who do not already know the reason why the sky is blue (i.e. me) did not get a scientific enough reason. I know that the information was in there, but it was difficult to weed out.
7. **Sentences: intent clear?:** this part of my critique follows naturally after the previous point. Some of your sentences contain so many ideas that the reader becomes lost in all of the words. An example of this is in the first sentence of the

third paragraph: "A question that follows from understanding that a scientist who believes in God is failing to apply scientific thinking on this subject is whether this is important." There are several problems with this. Primary among them is that it begins with "a question" and does not end with a question mark or pose an obvious question. The intent of this sentence is really unclear to me.

8. **Clear transitions?:** One thing you do well on this paper is transition. Each of your new paragraphs has to do with the previous one, but at the same time has something new to say.
9. **Correct word usages?:** The only comment I have here is to watch out for the difference between "complement" (to complete) and "compliment" (i.e. your hair looks nice today)
10. **Too informal?:** Your arguments are formal and appropriate, but the delivery is more informal. Once you restructure your sentences and remove the extra words, the formality will increase.
11. **Mechanics:** Overall your mechanics are pretty good, but I would watch out for using too many commas, because that could get you into trouble as well as befuddle your arguments. (I am a hypocrite for saying that in a sentence with two commas) No - you use them correctly.
12. **Appearance:** It looks good overall. One problem I have is the title. It is very casual. It could be written in a much more assertive way.

Overall you did a great job! With a few touch-ups, this will be an amazing paper!

"A Logical and Desirable Synthesis of Science and Theology Through Reinterpretation of the Bible and Scientific Theory"

Review

Thesis identification: "However, the potential for an appealing fusion of these two seemingly conflicting sides that does not insult the principles of both science and religion is still possible through the careful reinterpretation of Scripture and of scientific discovery." This is a really good thesis. The idea is great, but it is a little wordy. I had to read it through twice to understand it completely

Missing opposition.

Quality of arguments. Beginning → end? Your arguments to support your thesis are very strong, and you reach the conclusion you set out to reach. However, your conclusion is too brief compared to the depth of your main paragraphs (I understand that this may be because you ran out of room). Three sentences in conclusion do not do your argument justice.

Allow speculation... appropriate? Your essay clearly falls under the second question category, and it offers an appropriate analysis of the questions asked there

Larger structure. Discontinuities? Although the ideas flow smoothly, the first sentences in some of your paragraphs do not flow well. For example, the first sentence in the second paragraph is, "In order to construct such a synthesis as the one described above, it is necessary to pinpoint exactly where Gosse failed in his synthetic attempt."

The first phrase is, for the most part, unnecessary. The reader has just read about the synthesis in the previous line, they already know that it is above and they just read the description. Some of the other paragraphs have similar issues.

Terms defined before use: You do an excellent job here. All of the terms you use are very well explained and therefore easily understood. Also, any abstract ideas outside of common knowledge are explained well.

Comment on language. Concise? Excess modifiers? You have no problem with excess modifiers. However, the language in your sentences is off sometimes. An example is the following sentence (found near the bottom of page 2): Due to these reasons, specific communities such as scientists and theologians were repelled by Gosse's synthesis as well as a large part of the general public." This sentence needs to be rephrased. "A large part of the general public" needs to be modified in the same place as "scientists and theologians" because they were both "repelled by Gosse's synthesis" Although moving the general public to the end of the sentence is grammatically correct, it takes away from the power of the sentence. There were a few others like this.

Sentences: intent clear? For the most part, the intent of your sentences is clear. There are no unnecessary sentences. The sentences that did have problems were the ones that lacked in conciseness (see above)

Clear transitions? As I talk about above, you transition well with ideas.

Correct word usages? From what I can see, you use all of your words properly. When it comes to diction, you do a great job as well, but there was one instance when you overused a word. The word "antithetical" to me seems very rare, and you use it twice. You could choose a synonym for it, and it wouldn't take away from the paper.

a fine word (if used correctly).

Too informal? This paper has no issue with formality. From the title, to the structure, to the arguments, to the general look…this paper is golden. There is one instance of you using a word that really took away from the formality of the paper. Toward the end of the first and the beginning of the second page, you use the word "trickster" twice within two sentences. A trickster brings up a visual of the joker from batman. Not necessarily what you wanted I am guessing.

✓

Mechanics: Your paper is pretty mechanically sound from the point of view of a college freshman… The only thing I would check on is your citation.

Appearance: As stated earlier, this paper is very structurally sound and very well written. From the get go, I knew this paper was going to be good because of the very strong title.

Great Job!