

SCIENCE AND RELIGION
GRADED PAPER 2 REVIEWS
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Paper 1

This review has a **lot** of detail. That's good, in that it reveals a careful reading of the text and a serious effort to help the author. It's bad, however, in two ways. First, your suggestions are sometimes too detailed, and you wander into editing rather than reviewing. Second, and more importantly, you spend so much time on each detailed item that you somewhat miss the forest for the trees. While you provide good comments on content, they tend to be more focused on the immediate text in question, and not on the larger concepts that pervade the paper.

I noticed your opening "general" section, and that helps, but there should have been more there. The arguments presented in this paper have substantial problems, and you should have addressed those problems more broadly and directly.

Grade: B+

Paper 2

Same thoughts as the previous review. Lots of detail, and here, there's more content in the "general" section. You correctly identify the weak thesis and the muddled, disorganized arguments. Good.

Grade: A-

Review: "The Impossible Reconciliation of Observable Evidence and Blind Faith"
Paper 1

General Comments:

1. Watch formatting. There are exclamation points on the top and bottom right of each page and a # sign in the middle bottom. I think they should be page numbers.
2. Watch spacing between paragraphs. It looks like some paragraphs have a space and a half between them.
3. Parenthetical statements are overused. They should be kept to a minimum and eliminated if possible.
4. Make sure that there is only one space after each period. I cannot tell for sure, but it looks like there might be two spaces after some sentences.
5. In the paper you avoid addressing how science has actually been able to refute many claims that Christianity has made over the years (like the age of the earth). You say that science and religion cannot be combined, yet over the years they have overlapped a lot in how they explain the world. You should make the case for why overlapping is not the same as being combined. I think this is one of the strongest points on the other side and should be addressed.
6. Overall, you drive at a point well and have a clear goal in the paper. This is good. There is also good development and organization.

Paragraph Comments:

Paragraph 1 (Page 1):

1. I would insert "have to" after "constantly" and before "defend" in the first sentence. It is not wrong as it is, I just think that "have to" makes it closer to the sentiment you are trying for.
2. I would use a different word instead of "planted" in the third sentence.
3. About halfway through the introduction, change "that science observes" to "scientific observations."
4. The long parenthetical part in the introduction is unbalanced (by not offering a similar statement in the following sentence about religion) and does not belong in the introduction. I would either cut it or move it (cutting is probably better).
5. Watch your tense in the third to last sentence in the paragraph. "Lost" does not match the present tense used in "attaches" and "claims."
6. The thesis at the end of the paragraph is good and clear. Keep it.
7. The introduction is a little bit long. Eliminating the lengthy parenthetical statement will help, but consider looking it over once more and seeing if there is any excess fat that can be trimmed.

Paragraph 2 (Page 1 & 2):

1. Insert ", one of whom is blind," (with commas) after "starving men" in the second sentence of the paragraph. Later in the sentence eliminate "one of the men is blind" and put a period after desert.

→ Don't direct. You are a reviewer, not an editor.

2. You should eliminate or rephrase the line “This example shows nothing about which man was right, and a metaphorical reading of this situation says nothing about either science or religion.” This undermines your point, especially the latter half, which contradicts the following sentences that go to explain the metaphorical meaning of this story.
3. In the story you tell us what the blind man represents but not what the seeing man represents, even though it may be obvious. You might consider adding “(representing science)” after “seeing man” in the sentence beginning “Perhaps.”
4. The sentence beginning “Yet perhaps” is perhaps unnecessary. Don’t we assume that the blind man had no idea about whether a car would come because he is blind? It is not necessary to eliminate this sentence, but consider its redundancy.
5. There is no comma after “Yet perhaps”.
6. Quote marks are overused throughout the paragraph and the paper. Orphan quotes (for example on the word proofs in the late/middle of the second paragraph) mean very little and add very little and should be avoided if possible.
7. The parenthetical statement “(just as science cannot produce proofs)” seems awkward and poorly phrased.
8. “Both men ascertained the arrival of help” seems awkward to me, but it could be fine.
9. The latter half of the aforementioned sentence is good.
10. In the final sentence of the paragraph, “either” should be replaced with “them” and the word “its” is ambiguous. Which definition does this contradict? Perhaps both? If so plural should be used.

Paragraph 3 (Page 2):

1. Citations are good. Make sure to include a bibliography.
2. In the sentence beginning “For the purpose” you say, “we will assume...” In general assuming is not good, especially if you are taking someone else’s conclusion for granted. I would caution against, but the point seems central to the paper. Perhaps change it to a word with less negative connotation, “adopt” or “employ” might make it come off better.
3. Eliminate “in fact” in that same sentence. It is superfluous.
4. In the next sentence, beginning with “Currently,” you state a claim that I feel is unsubstantiated. Science has made progress in disproving old Christian doctrines (i.e. the age of the earth). What is a standstill? What do you mean by “not proven anything one way or another”? Is this just concerning God or all of Christian thought?
5. In the final sentence of the paragraph, “notwithstanding” is one word and remove “either.”
6. Also, the final sentence seems more like it belongs in the next paragraph. Especially the “lose-lose” situation bit is out of place and had me asking where that came from (you have yet to make that point, though you do later).

Paragraph 4 (Page 3):

1. This page is relatively good.

- ✓ 1
2. The word “Let’s” at the beginning of the paragraph is very colloquial, consider revising. Also, contractions are discouraged.
 3. What does it mean to “disprove... immortality”? This is what you state in the first sentence. I feel that science has already done that, perhaps pick another word that better conveys your meaning.
 4. In the next sentence you say “the battle of science and religion.” I would change “of” to “between” demonstrating the fact that it is a “battle.”
 5. The word “Evangelist” implies a preacher. I think “Evangelical” would be more appropriate.
 6. The sentence beginning “Science is” states that the quote is from the Collins interview (in parentheses) and also says that Collins said it (at the end of the sentence). This is redundant.
 7. In the next sentence you say that “science is a child of religion.” Really? I feel like you made a big claim with little to no support.

Paragraph 5 (Page 3):

1. You say in the parenthetical statement that: “Science is the other method able to assess the validity of the Christian doctrines.” What is the first method (other than science)?
2. Change “this case” to “the case” in the beginning of the last sentence of the paragraph. Also, eliminate the parentheses in the sentence (but keep what is in them) and add “of” after “case” to make the sentence work.

Paragraph 6 (Page 3 & 4):

1. The paragraph’s final sentence beginning with “However” could be said more clearly. Consider revising, perhaps breaking it into two sentences. As is, it is unclear.

Paragraph 7 (Page 4):

1. In the second sentence of the paragraph refers to “religious guidelines” and “scientific guidelines.” It is unclear what these “guidelines” are. Perhaps specify or use a more explicit word/phrase.
2. Eliminate “In my opinion” that begins the next sentence. It is repetitive since you are writing the paper and we assume that everything that you write is your opinion.
3. The following sentence states that “blind faith and observable proof cannot coexist.” Why not? Why can’t someone have blind faith in some things and rely on observable proof for others? I think you are referring to when the two overlap they cannot coexist, but this should be clearer.
4. You say, “Gosse’s synthesis is an *attempt*...” Be careful about asserting what Gosse’s motives were. It is unclear that your assertion of his motives is correct. Either rewording or a citation is necessary.
5. In the sentence beginning “Science,” you say that that science explains the earth “as well as” Christianity. Be careful about asserting a hierarchy. What if science explains the earth better than Christianity? Or visa-versa? To what aspects do you refer? Perhaps just state that they both attempt to explain the earth without asserting if one does a better job or if they do an equal job.
6. In the third to last sentence, at the end, insert “a” before “draw.”

7. The second to last sentence brings up an entirely new point that doesn't entirely pertain to your argument. It is way out of the blue. I would eliminate the whole sentence.
8. The paper ends well.

Review: "Reading the Fine Print: Finding Connections Between Science and Religion"
Paper 2

General Comments:

1. The word "between" in your title should be capitalized.
2. Throughout the paper try to vary your sentence length and complexity. You use predominately short, declarative sentences, which are good for this kind of paper, but should be interspersed with longer sentences too. If each sentence is the same, it makes the writing boring.
3. The tone, especially in the first paragraph, is very colloquial. This can be effective at times, but I feel detracts from the respect given to the paper.
4. Try to avoid contractions. In general they are not good.
5. Your thesis is not clearly stated. It would really strengthen the paper if at the end of your introduction you clearly stated what the goal of the paper is going to be. Basically the answer to the question, "What is the point you are trying to persuade me is true?" ✓
6. The paper needs more organization and it needs to be clear where you are headed. Make sure that each paragraph is establishing a certain point, and that these points are leading to proof of your thesis. Organization is especially muddled in on the second page. ✓
7. Be careful with strong, finite words such as "never," "absolute," or "would." Remember that for a "never" statement to be wrong one only needs to find one counterexample. The word "would" implies that you know what might have happened, this is dangerous if you assert something certainly that you are not sure about.
8. The paper, in general, presents lots of evidence but little analysis as it relates to a specific point that you are trying to make. Narrow down that point and then supply the analysis to support it. ✓
9. On the third page especially, it is hard to see exactly what you are driving at. This problem is mostly remedied by the thesis issue I brought up, but just be sure that what you are writing relates to a point. Do not just tell me stuff just for the sake of it.
10. Citations and a bibliography would be helpful. It is particularly good because you can use citations not only to attribute work but also to give credence to your claims.

Paragraph Comments:

Paragraph 1 (Page 1):

1. The introduction is too long; try to cut out anything unnecessary pieces.
2. The first sentence of the paper is rather bland. It does not draw the reader in. Consider revising.
3. You refer to "personal questions" in your opening sentence. What does "personal" mean in this context, especially when we are considering two disciplines not two people?
4. In the next sentence "experimented on" should be replaced with "tested." Experimented on puts a preposition in a part of the sentence where it should not be.

5. In the third sentence you list the three things with which religion concerns itself. The way the sentence is constructed, each of them should be able to complete the sentence individually, meaning that each should work with “of the universe.” It is unclear what “cause of the universe” means. I would consider revising the word “cause” in that list.
6. In the sentence beginning “However,” the word “certain” (before “degree”) should be eliminated. It is superfluous as the sentence means the same thing without it.
7. Right before the sentence beginning “Even though” you mention a “reusable method.” I am unsure what you mean by this. What is a non-reusable method? You may be able to just eliminate this entirely, or change the word “reusable” to something a little closer to what you mean.
8. In the third to last sentence of the paragraph, you assert that “there has never been a time in human history...” this is a strong assertion, especially with no citation to back it up. I cannot think of a contradicting example, but there might be one and never is a strong word. Also, I feel like the sentence implies that science is only questioning authority, when I think many people would agree that it is more than that.
9. The second to last sentence in the paragraph ends with “that.” Change “that” to “it.”
10. In the last sentence you state that “Science did not have the intention...” This is dangerous because you are purporting to know the intentions of science. You may well be right, but I do not feel that this is unequivocally true such that you can state the intentions of science.
11. Change the semicolon in the last sentence to a comma. Semicolons are hard to use so do not use them unless you really feel you need to and you are sure you are using it right.
12. Eliminate the parentheses around “non-Christian,” make it plural, add a comma before it, and eliminate people. (i.e. “different, non-Christians saw it...”) “People” is ambiguous and you had already defined who “people” is.

Paragraph 2 (Page 1):

1. “Vice versa” is very colloquial, but I think works in this sentence.
2. I think the word “lays” should be “lies.” This is a very common grammatical confusion, and I am not sure I am right, so I would suggest looking it up in a grammar book.

Paragraph 3 (Page 1 & 2):

1. In the second sentence eliminate “otherwise”.
2. On the second page at the top, the semicolon is misused. I would either use a comma or eliminate “since” and use a colon.
3. Try not to use orphan quotes, as on the word “fact” near the end of the paragraph. The quotes do not mean much in that context. Look for this elsewhere too.
4. Evil is a strong word. It is okay in this context but take caution when using it.

Paragraph 4 (Page 2):

1. The sentence “We can live twice as long as we could have a century ago” is awkward. I think it is the “could have” part. Read it to yourself, it might be fine and just sound awkward to me.

Paragraph 5 (Page 2):

1. Do not start the paragraph with “However.” However refers to some kind of contradiction with what you just said. It usually should not start paragraphs, and I do not see what is being contradicted from the previous statement. The word can just be eliminated here.
2. Do not use ellipses. The first sentence of the paragraph is fine without them.
3. In one of your questions you refer to “all this.” What is “all this”? It is a very ambiguous phrase.
4. In the middle of the paragraph you state that “Evidence was provided...” What evidence? The Church usually does not provide evidence except for the Bible, that is the nature of faith.
5. The use of “because” later in the sentence is wrong. Because implies a causal relationship. Just because the Church had absolute power does not mean that people could not find fault. Perhaps they could not express it, but they could still (and sometimes did) find it. Also, be careful with “absolute” power. Power tends to never be absolute.
6. In this paragraph it seems as though you are contending that the Church had “credibility” and acceptance. However, this seems to be contradicting your other claim of the Church’s power. If the Church only has acceptance through its power, it does not have credibility. There is a difference between people believing in something and the Church making them believe something under threat. Both conditions probably existed at the time, just make sure you distinguish between people believing because they want to and people believing because they have to.
7. In the second to last sentence of the paragraph you say “science was accredited by the Church.” What aspects of science? Certainly not all scientific findings because the Church still disputes some findings. But some were accepted, be sure do distinguish to what “science” refers.

Paragraph 6 (Page 2 & 3):

1. I would eliminate or change “personal” in the first sentence of this paragraph. It implies a human quality about the histories which I think are closer to “specific” or “respective” histories.
2. On the third page, the first sentence on that page ends with “heretic forms of praise.” “Heretic” should be changed to “heretical” and “praise” should be “worship.” Worship is a more faith-based idea (I can praise you for doing a good job, but I likely would not worship you). Heretic is the wrong form of the word.
3. The beginning of the next sentence could be eliminated. It does not follow from the last thought very well as it relies on the assumption that Christians were thought to be heretical because they were monotheistic. This could be true, but is not necessarily true. You could just as well start the sentence with “Christianity was seen...” and I think it would flow better.

Paragraph 7 (Page 3):

1. Eliminate “deadly” in the beginning of the first sentence of the paragraph. This goes along with the advice we have received about modifiers.

2. Be careful, again, with words like “only” as seen in the third sentence of the paragraph. It is very absolute.
3. In the following sentence you refer to “the time power and wealth...” To what “time” are you referring? This is a general and ambiguous assertion. Additionally, without further substantiation, I struggle to believe this point. It should either be supported more or have a citation to give it credibility.
4. Eliminate “so” in the sentence beginning “The first scientists...” (after the word “more”) It is superfluous and makes more sense without it.
5. The font of Russell’s book title and the two words after it are in a different font or size than the rest of the paper. Also, include Russell’s first name if this is the first mention of him.
6. The words “had the” after the book title in the same sentence are not grammatically consistent with the quoted text that follows. Even though you are quoting text, you must find a way to make it grammatically consistent. This might entail using square brackets to replace words or using ellipses to indicate words that have been taken out.
7. Does the capitalization of “SAFE” in the quoted text appear in the book? If so, never mind. If not, you should use italics if you want to emphasize something. If you do use italics for emphasis, you have to not that (usually done in a parenthetical statement right after the quoted text).
8. The in the final sentence of the paragraph, you state that “early scientists closeted their ideas.” This is dangerous because you lump all scientists together. Perhaps add “most” before “early” as to show a trend and not state an absolute.

Paragraph 8 (Page 3 & 4):

1. Insert a comma after “persecution” in the first sentence of the paragraph. Since this is a list, it should contain commas after the first two elements.
2. The last sentence of this paragraph makes a good and valid point. However, I do not see how this point relates to the rest of your paper or to your thesis. It seems out of the blue.

Paragraph 9 (Page 4):

1. Watch the tense change between the first and second sentences (“works” is present tense in the first sentence and “adapted” is past tense in the second sentence).
2. Capitalize “god” in the second sentence. God is capitalized when singular and referring to one god.
3. The second to last sentence in this paragraph uses that phrase “of what was truth.” I would change it to the less awkward phrase “about the nature of truth” and add a comma before “and.”
4. I think “comprehensible” at the end of the paragraph is the wrong word. Consider using an alternative.

Paragraph 10 (Page 4):

1. This is a one-sentence paragraph, which is unconventional. I would suggest trying to incorporate it into another paragraph.

2. At the end of sentence you say, “accept or adapt.” First, this implies only two options. What about reject? Also, accept and adapt seem interlinked to me, doesn’t religion usually end up accepting *and* adapting to some of the claims science makes.

Paragraph 11 (Page 4):

1. The phrase “to take the title of” is wordy and can just be replaced with “the” in the opening question of your final paragraph.
2. The end of the second sentence is a bit awkward. I might just end it with a period after “akin to holiness,” or perhaps incorporate the word “cleanliness” in earlier, but “cleanliness” is awkward where it is.
3. You refer to science as “the former” in the last sentence. I think it would be better to just say “science” because “the former” requires the reader to remember and look back a few sentences to be sure that you are referring to science.

Your paper has some good core elements. Organization and more focus will make it much stronger. You bring up good evidence, make sure you put it to good use driving home a point.