

SCIENCE AND RELIGION
GRADED PAPER 2
MWANZAA BROWN

The thesis and arguments

Your thesis is not clearly stated, nor does it really become sharp at any point in the paper. In so far as it can be identified, it is unsurprising and bland. Claiming that science and religion conflict, and that religion, in response, attempts to limit or suppress science, is more of a given than a conclusion.

Most of your paper comprises not arguments, but recitations of the historic episodes presented in White. Each of these episodes could have been presented with a brief statement and a reference to White's text. On a related note, your failure to cite White (or some other text on the history of these episodes) in these portions of the text borders on plagiarism. You are paraphrasing another author's construction, contributing little or nothing of your own, all without quotation or citation.

Ultimately, this paper has little content.

The writing

There are errors in grammar, punctuation, word choice, and idiom throughout this paper. It strongly needs editing.

Items marked on the paper

(1) Not a good start: the first word of the title is grammatically incorrect. That should read, "Christianity's"—the "crippling fight for power" belongs to Christianity, so that first word should be possessive, not plural. This error appears throughout the paper.

(2) *Supposed truth* provides *validity*? That seems an inherently false claim. *Supposed truth* should only be able to provide *supposed validity*.

(3) When was the last time that a Christian organization labeled all of science to be *heretical*? Be accurate; such overstatement doesn't help persuade your reader.

(4) Why are you recounting the tale of the antipodes? That's been done by White. Your job is to persuade your reader of some point, and retelling the story doesn't help. If the reader needs to know the story, you provide a one or two sentence summary along with a citation, and then get on to the critical observations and conclusions. This paragraph is mostly filler.

(5) Christianity, as a belief system and a loosely organized set of communities, cannot correctly be anthropomorphized in this way. **Who** among Christians relishes this conflict? That's an odd claim for which you need support (and a purpose).

Grade: C-

①
Christianities crippling fight for power

WC: They use history? No.

Mwanzaa Brown

Science and Christianity have ~~historically~~ fought to establish that their view of the world is correct. Throughout this battle science has continually proven religion wrong and become the dominant authority on explanations of the natural world. Science provides evidence for its theories and the testability and repetition ^{x repeatability}

with which the evidence is observed provides science with its backing. However, Christianity has evidence too. Scripture is closely analyzed and used to as explanation for Christianities beliefs. ^① And it is the supposed truth in these ^{grammar}

②

documents that has provided Christianity's validity. There is a fundamental difference, however, in how science and religion solve problems. Science begins without a theory and builds one based on evidence. Christianity must find a theory in the Bible, and therefore molds the facts to this theory or ignores them ~~all together~~.

It is this ignorance ^{WC.} that has fueled the fight. Christianity attempts to keep dominance and labels science heretical ^③, but science has concrete evidence for its claims and it

becomes undeniable that Christianity is wrong. Christianity is then weakened and needs to adapt to the scientific view in order to maintain some validity. Since this

happens almost cyclically it seems established that scientific discovery weakens Christianity and thus Christianity seeks to stifle science.

One early example is the notion of the Earth as a sphere. It was proposed loosely by the Greeks and swayed the minds of a few early fathers of the Church.

However most of the clergy saw this as a potential attack against scripture and its interpretation of the world. At first science itself was attacked. Clergymen wondered how science finding that the earth was a sphere would enrich lives ~~at all~~. But this

Passive.

Thesis?

Huh?

of what?

passive.
Also, only some validity.
What does "some" mean here?
What? Ambiguous antecedent.

for whom? for what purpose?

argument was not good enough, it needed to be based on scriptural evidence.

Run-on sentence.

Passages like "windows of heaven", "like a curtain", and "like a tent to dwell in" were quoted as evidence that the earth was flat, with the sky suspended above it.

Citation?

Christianity explained the movement of the sun and relation of "heavenly bodies" to each other. And all of this combined was enough proof that the earth was not

for what?

spherical. Then, to keep power, it is said that any who did not hold this idea of the world would be subject to Gods wrath. Yet scientific evidence was found for the

passive

empirical

spherical shape of the earth. Slowly, great men of the time accepted this view and

the Church was forced to alter its Biblical theories. This is the rhythm for most of the conflicts between science and Christianity.

W.C

When the idea of the antipodes was introduced two men of the Church,

passive

Nazianzen and Lactantius, were immediately skeptical. Lactantius wondered how it

support? Citation?

awk

made any sense that a person would stand with their feet above their head or how crops would grow down. And this was a logical argument of the time. However, like

Not logical - persuasive, even rational.

W.C

awk

denouncing science with regards to the shape of the earth, this was not based

what?

enough on scripture for the church. The church notes that persons on the other side

4

of the world would not be able to see the second coming of Christ. It was also

argued that the apostles reached the whole world and there is no mention of the

How much later? Relevance?

antipodes in their travels. Later on, Pope Zachary's interpretation of Job was held as

later than what? When did we start?

evidence against the antipodes. And centuries later it was still believed that the

antipodes did not exist. Upon the voyage of Magellan religious doctrine lost its hold

on the notion of the antipodes. Perhaps the most convincing evidence was

awk & semantically flawed.

established here when missionaries observed people living in the antipodes.

Christianity again was forced to change its theories.

A less blatant argument between Christianity and science is the one over hygiene. However it shows Christianity's full turn upon the solidification of scientific evidence. At one point it was thought that "filthiness was akin to holiness". That to be clean was to be vain. And it was thought that disease was a pestilence bestowed by God or a saint as punishment for sins. St. Gregory the Great perpetuated this idea when he saw the archangel sheathing his sword to signify the end of a pestilence. It was also believed that agents of the devil were able to spread disease. And the persecution of these agents, specifically witches, was rooted in scripture and its interpretation. The teachings of clergy men and the papal bull of Pope Innocent VIII were instrumental in spreading a hatred for witches. In the attempt to stave disease countless persons were tortured and killed and numerous fetishes were used to appease God and the saints. It was in the 17th century that Robert Boyle noted that some disease was a result of nature. He attempted to reconcile disease as a punishment with disease as something that could be prevented by science. But it proved difficult to explain why the most pious (and filthy) were plagued the hardest and the more heretical (yet slightly more clean) were spared. When it was insisted that prisons and cities were cleaned there was a radical change in the spread of disease. It was discovered that the unclean, not witches spread disease. Science discovered germ theory and vaccines. However, the sheer change in the amount of disease outbreaks were evidence enough that the church had been wrong. The church was forced to acknowledge its fault, again

More
filler.

because of unquestionable evidence. In fact it changed so much that it is now said that "*cleanliness* is near to godliness".

After conflicts like these it seems reasonable to establish that science and religion are enemies. Christian theory has been proven false again and again and Christianity seems to lose some of its validity each time. This is the fundamental reason for the discourse between science and religion. But science does leave room for religion, for while it answers questions of what and how it is notorious for leaving

why unanswered. Christianity seems to relish in this, keeping God and his plan as a way to establish meaning in the world. And some scientists find a synthesis.

Christianity could also find a synthesis, embracing science to deal with questions of the natural world and keeping its hold on questions of the metaphysical.

of Not much
of conclusion.

5

grammar.

Almost meaningless statement.

Huh?