

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 no 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.