

Christianity's crippling fight for power.

Thorough out the battle between science and Christianity, science has continuously proven Christianity wrong. It does so with enough evidence that Christianity is forced to adopt the scientific view. And full adaptation usually means straying from scriptural reasoning. Science appears to be a response to holes in Christianity's explanations. However, science and religion take a similar approach to solving problems. Both attempt to piece together facts based on evidence. Scientific evidence is based only on observation of the natural world while Christianity relies on scripture and its interpretation. Christianity derives strength and validity from scripture. These documents are claimed to be the only proof needed to explain the universe. That validity gives the church great power. Christianity does not accept proof that does not appear in scripture, as it would weaken their base. However, scripture seems to overlook some important points. Christianity does give fleshed out reasons for happenings in the world as well as evidence for it in scripture. However, it strongly shuns outside evidence and labels it heretical. Through science new evidence's validity is noted over and over leaving need for an explanation. Science does not pose a new method to problem solving, it just draws from a broader source. It also is not a single institution seeking power. While the two modes of thought are not fundamentally different, science could only have developed in opposition to Christianity because of the latter's fight for control using strict adherence to evidence in the bible.

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. At first science itself was attacked. Clergymen wondered how it would enrich lives to know the shape of the earth. But this argument was not good enough. It needed to be based on scriptural evidence. Others found the evidence within the bible. They quoted passages like “windows of heaven”, “like a curtain”, and “like a tent to dwell in” as evidence that the earth was flat, with the sky suspended above it. Christianity explained the movement of the sun and relation of “heavenly bodies” to each other. It analyzed religious tools such as the table of shew-bread and used its shape as evidence of the flatness of the earth. And all of this combined was enough proof that the earth was not 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. Slowly, great men of the time accepted the view of the earth as a sphere and as more of the earth was discovered the church was forced to alter biblical theories to it. But still according to interpretations of the bible the earth must be flat. And the church would adhere to this until undeniable scientific evidence was shown. This is the mode for most of the conflicts between science and Christianity.

When the idea of the antipodes was introduced two men of the church, Nazianzen and Lactantius, were immediately skeptical. Lactantius wondered how it made any sense that a person would stand with their feet above their head or how crops would grow down and so on. And this was a logical argument at the time. However, like denouncing science, this was not based enough on scripture for the church. The church notes that persons on the other side 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 antipodes in their travels. Later on, Pope Zachary's interpretation of Job is held as evidence against the antipodes. And centuries later it is still believed that the antipodes do not exist. Other men of the church sought to uphold the scriptural evidence and found more support. However upon the voyage of Magellan religious doctrine lost its hold on the notion of the antipodes. It was soon after, when empirical evidence, like the measurements of the earth, was collected that Christianity lost the battle.

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 the pestilence. The persecution of persons as agents of the devil, specifically witches, was not based entirely on scripture. It had influences from older religions that fed into Christianity. However 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 in an attempt 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. But it proved difficult to explain why it was that the most pious suffered the greatest number of deaths, while the most heretical went unpunished.

When persons insisted on cleaning prisons and cities there was a radical change in the spread of disease. The church was forced to acknowledge its fault, again because of unquestionable evidence. In fact it changed so much that now Christianity states that "*cleanliness is near to godliness*".

After conflicts like these it seems reasonable to establish that science and religion are enemies. Despite their similarities Christianity continuously shunned scientific evidence. Because of the power of the church the evidences fell out of favor for long stretches of time, only to be reinforced by some new discovery in the future. Science builds upon itself. It starts from understanding simple objects and uses them to decipher the more complex. As it addresses more complex questions it shows and creates holes in Christianity's explanations. Christianity assumes that it had the answer on the first go and does not seek to change its understanding. When science reveals a problem, rather than attempt to incorporate the new evidence Christianity fights it and holds on to its older explanations. This seems to be the nature of Christian knowledge. But as science moves forward it leaves Christian thought further and further behind until it becomes undeniable that Christian thought 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.